

THE SYMBOLS OF ETERNAL RETURN  
AND THE ETERNAL RETURN OF SYMBOLS  
IN FRIEDRICH NIETZSCHE'S *ALSO SPRACH ZARATHUSTRA*

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## ABSTRACT

This work argues that Nietzsche employs the circle image to communicate his idea of eternal recurrence in *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*. The recurrences of circular and diurnal symbols (cycles) represent the eternal return on both contextual and narrative levels, thereby creating within the narrative the ring of rings, the ring of recurrence, i.e., affirmation of affirmation, as implicit in the circular image of the will willing itself. Importantly, it demonstrates that diurnal symbols represent the eternal recurrence by returning to themselves in the text, while Zarathustra's identity changes throughout the diurnal cycle: morning symbolises his rebirth; noon, his maturity; evening, his decline; and midnight, his death – thereby manifesting the literary hero's affirmative, creative response to meaningless existence in accordance with the doctrine of life affirmation. Nietzsche's work is revealed to harbour a hidden symbolic diurnal structure comprised of twelve chronological diurnal cycles representing his most abysmal thought. The underlying structure revealed by this reading demonstrates the eternal recurrence to be the unifying idea of *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*.

Conflicts in existing interpretations of the eternal return reflect their commentators' failure to solve the problem of its communication in Nietzsche's work due to their underestimation of the symbolic form of the doctrine. Employing the methods of analogy and association, this project undertakes to solve this problem by examining the relation between the circular and diurnal symbols and the eternal recurrence. Careful analysis reveals the three-dimensional character of the doctrine as the return of the moment inaugurating the moment and sequence of time: the return of same meaninglessness, meaningful differences, and same meaningfulness – through the roundness (moment, or same meaningfulness) and continuity (sequence, or meaningful differences) of circular symbols and the moment (moment, or same meaningfulness) and temporality (sequence, or meaningful differences) of diurnal symbols, employed to counter the same meaninglessness of daily existence. Thus, while the circular and diurnal symbols incorporate the idea of eternal recurrence, thereby emphasising its life-affirmative aspect, the eternal return calls for the creative recurrence of circular and diurnal symbols, with the symbols and the eternal return merged into one creative, affirmative whole.

## ABBREVIATIONS

AZ – *Also sprach Zarathustra*

EH – *Ecce Homo*

ER – Eternal Return or Eternal Recurrence

BGE – *Beyond Good and Evil*

BT – *The Birth of Tragedy from the Spirit of Music*

FW – *Die fröhliche Wissenschaft*

GM – *On the Genealogy of Morals*

GS – *The Gay Science*

HH – *Human All Too Human*

KGW – *Kritische Gesamtausgabe, Werke*

TI – *Twilight of the Idols*

TL – “On Truth and Lie(s) in an Extra-Moral Sense”

TSZ – *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*

WP – *The Will to Power*

WM – *Der Wille zur Macht*

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACT.....	ii
ABBREVIATIONS.....	iii
TABLE OF CONTENTS.....	iv
LIST OF TABLES.....	vi
Epigraph.....	vii
Chapter 1: Introduction.....	1
The Meaning of Eternal Return: Rationality vs. Existence.....	14
I. Eternal Return in Nietzsche’s <i>Nachlass</i> Material.....	15
1. ER as Cosmology.....	16
2. ER: Analytical Readings.....	18
3. ER as Metaphysics.....	24
4. ER: Cosmology vs. Existence.....	28
5. ER as an Aesthetic Phenomenon.....	30
II. ER as Life Affirmation.....	32
1. Jaspers: ER as a Consequence of the Death of God.....	33
2. Soll: ER as a Possibility.....	35
3. Magnus: Attitudinal Version, ER as a Test and Ideal.....	37
4. Deleuze: ER of Differences.....	40
5. Rosen: ER as Cosmology, Anti-Christian and Anti-Platonist.....	41
6. Seung’s Reconciliation of Cosmology and Existence.....	43
Chapter 2: Analysis of the Eternal Return in “On the Vision and the Riddle”.....	46
1. ER as Metaphor (Stambaugh) vs. Literal Existentialness (Hatab).....	46
2. Zarathustra’s Image.....	52
3. The Deductive Argument.....	54
4. An Objection to the Deductive Argument.....	60
5. Time Models.....	63
6. The Temporal Argument.....	70
7. ER as Life Affirmation.....	77
Chapter 3: Introduction to Nietzsche’s Symbolic Language.....	83
Chapter 4: Aesthetic Interpretations of Eternal Recurrence.....	108
1. Bertram: <i>Mythological</i> Reading.....	110
2. Higgins: <i>Musical</i> Interpretation.....	112
3. Hatab: <i>Repetition</i> as ER.....	116
4. Parkes: <i>Mobility</i> -Based Interpretation.....	119
5. Jappinen: <i>Poetic</i> Correspondence: <i>Symbol</i> and <i>Narrative</i> as ER.....	121
6. Parkes: <i>Psychological</i> Interpretation with <i>Metaphorical</i> Implications.....	124
7. Puszczalowski: ER of the <i>Seasons</i> .....	132
8. Ryan: <i>Astral</i> Interpretation.....	134
9. Alderman: ER as a <i>Dramatic</i> Re-Enactment.....	137
10. Nitske: (Undeveloped) <i>Diurnal</i> Interpretation 1.....	140
11. Solomon and Higgins: (Undeveloped) <i>Diurnal</i> Interpretation 2.....	142
12. Nehamas: ER as a <i>Literary Narrative</i> .....	145

Chapter 5: Circular Symbols and Eternal Recurrence .....	149
I. Reasons for Teaching through Metaphors .....	149
II. Introduction to Literary Interpretation.....	164
Chapter 6: The Circular Representation of Eternal Return .....	185
I. Analysis of the Circular Images in <i>The Gay Science</i> .....	185
1. The Musical Box in GS 109 .....	186
2. The Lane in GS 233 .....	188
3. War and Peace in GS 285 .....	190
4. The Hourglass in GS 341 .....	193
II. Analysis of the Circular Images in <i>Thus Spoke Zarathustra</i> .....	196
1. Eagle and Serpent: Wide Circles in “Zarathustra’s Prologue” .....	198
2. The Self-Propelled Wheel in “On the Three Metamorphoses” .....	200
3. The Self-Propelled Wheel in “On the Way of the Creator” .....	202
4. The Self-Propelled Wheel in “On Child and Marriage” .....	204
5. The <i>Ring</i> in “On Love of the Neighbor” .....	207
6. The Ball in “On Free Death” .....	211
7. The Ring in “On the Virtuous” .....	215
8. The Circle in “On the Vision and the Riddle” .....	217
9. The Snake in “On the Vision and the Riddle” .....	221
10. The Belts in “Upon the Mount of Olives” .....	225
11. The Apple in “On the Three Evils” .....	227
12. The Circles in “On Old and New Tablets” .....	230
13. The Circular Images in “The Convalescent” .....	234
14. The Ring in “The Seven Seals (Or: the Yes and Amen Song)” .....	239
15. The Ring and the Ball in “At Noon” .....	245
16. The Ring in “The Drunken Song” .....	249
Chapter 7: Analysis of the Diurnal Symbols in <i>Thus Spoke Zarathustra</i> .....	254
Pre-Cycle .....	257
1 <sup>st</sup> Day Cycle .....	260
2 <sup>nd</sup> Day Cycle .....	266
3 <sup>rd</sup> Day Cycle .....	274
4 <sup>th</sup> Day Cycle .....	282
5 <sup>th</sup> Day Cycle .....	290
6 <sup>th</sup> Day Cycle .....	298
7 <sup>th</sup> Day Cycle .....	300
8 <sup>th</sup> Day Cycle .....	306
9 <sup>th</sup> Day Cycle .....	315
10 <sup>th</sup> Day Cycle .....	322
11 <sup>th</sup> Day Cycle .....	330
12 <sup>th</sup> Day Cycle .....	343
Table: 12 Day Cycles and Main Events: .....	366
<i>Concluding Thoughts on the Diurnal Structure</i> .....	367
Summary .....	381
BIBLIOGRAPHY .....	384

## LIST OF TABLES

Table: 12 Day Cycles and Main Events .....	366
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Epigraph

**NIETZSCHE**

*He's never more ill than his willing  
Encroached by reproaches exceeding;  
The heavenly valley unveiling,  
He'll take off the cover of breeding:*

*Within a secluded location  
He lives in the mansion of wonder;  
In homely and warm isolation  
He dreams now of lightning and thunder.*

(Ivan Zhavoronkov  
*Philosophical Stones in Poetical Tones 38*)

## Chapter 1: Introduction

In the study that follows I take the position that the major problems in philosophy, especially in humanities, remain centred around communication, which involves the question of *expression* and *understanding*. This is especially true of the much-debated idea of eternal recurrence (ER) in Nietzsche's most complex work, *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* (TSZ). I believe that certain difficulties arising in explicating and, especially, locating the doctrine within the text, to which attest numerous conflicts in existing interpretations, stem from the lack of appreciating the symbolic form of eternal recurrence. I therefore propose to solve the problem of the communication of the eternal recurrence by arguing that the key to the understanding of this fundamental idea should be sought through the circular and, especially, diurnal symbols Nietzsche uses to communicate his doctrine – the life-enhancing symbols, the recurrences of which incorporate and reinforce, while being called for by it, the doctrine of life-affirmation.<sup>1</sup> It will thus be established that, while the circular symbols represent the idea of eternal recurrence

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<sup>1</sup> My earliest mention of Nietzsche's diurnal symbols representing the eternal return dates back to my BA/MA thesis entitled "Symbolism in Friedrich Nietzsche's *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* (comparing the original German with the Russian, English, and French translations)", Department of Foreign Languages and Department of Russian and Foreign Literature, V.I. Vernadskiy Taurida National University (also known as M.V. Frunze Simferopol State University), Simferopol, 2002. («Символика произведения Фридриха Ницше «Так говорил Заратустра» (в сопоставлении оригинала с русским, английским и французским переводами)». Кафедра английского языка и литературы, кафедра русской и зарубежной литературы. Таврический национальный университет им. В.И. Вернадского (Симферопольский государственный университет им. М.В. Фрунзе). Симферополь, 2002.) ["Simvolika proizvedeniya Fridrikha Nitsshe 'Tak govoril Zaratustra' (v sopostavlenii originala s russkim, angliyskim i frantsuzskim perevodami)." Kafedra angliyskogo yazyka i literatury, kafedra russkoy i zarubezhnoy literatury. Tavricheskiy natsional'nyy universitet im. V.I. Vernadskogo (Simferopol'skiy gosudarstvennyy universitet im. M.V. Frunze). Simferopol', 2002.]. See the published excerpt from this work in I.N. Zhavoronkov, O.V. Masliyeva, A.E. Nazirov, "The Problem of Adequacy in the Literary Translations of the Symbols in Friedrich Nietzsche's *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*." Proceedings of the Sixth Conference at the G.R. Derzhavin Academy ARSII (or ARLA – the Academy of Russian Literature and Fine Arts). Russian Publishing House "Kultura" ("Culture"). St-Petersburg, 2008. 3 – 10. Print. (И.Н. Жаворонков, О.В. Маслиева, А.Э. Назиров, «Проблема адекватности литературного перевода символики произведения Фридриха Ницше «Так говорил Заратустра» – Сборник трудов шестой конференции АРСИИ им. Г.Р. Державина – Российское издательство «Культура» – Санкт-Петербург – 2008, стр. 3 – 10.) [I.N. Zhavoronkov, O.V. Masliyeva, A.E. Nazirov, "Problema adekvatnosti literaturnogo perevoda simboliki proizvedeniya Fridrikha Nitsshe 'Tak govoril Zaratustra' " – Sbornik trudov shestoi konferentsii ARSII im. G.R. Derzhavina – Rossiyskoye izdatel'stvo "Kultura" – Sankt-Peterburg, 2008, str. 3 – 10]. Print. My earliest suggestion that the symbols in Nietzsche's text return to themselves dates back to my MA major research paper entitled "Symbolism in Friedrich Nietzsche's *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*", the Graduate Programme in Humanities, York University, Toronto, 2009.



through repetition on both contextual and narrative levels, the diurnal symbols do so, most importantly, by constituting a chronological sequence of twelve diurnal cycles throughout the text, from beginning to end – where the recurrences of both circular and diurnal symbols (cycles) on the narrative level create the ring of rings, the ring of recurrence, i.e., affirmation of affirmation, as implicit in the circular image of the will willing itself. As the diurnal narrative unfolds, Zarathustra’s identity will be seen to change throughout the diurnal cycle: morning symbolises his rebirth; noon, his maturity; evening, his decline; and midnight, his death, which reflects, through the diversity of meanings it inaugurates, his affirmative, creative response to the meaninglessness of existence, the very essence of the eternal recurrence as the doctrine of life affirmation. It will be concluded, primarily, that the dynamic cyclical diurnal symbolic structure of *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* portrays the eternal recurrence as the work’s unifying idea.

The debate about Nietzsche’s Eternal Recurrence is a long-standing one. Nietzsche himself never clearly articulated this idea. Instead, he presented his doctrine in three different ways: 1) the eternal recurrence in “The Greatest Weight” (*The Gay Science* (GS) §341; 1882) is offered as a hypothesis written in fable form – as a kind of test; 2) the *Will to Power* (WP) section 1066 (March – June 1888) from the unpublished *Nachlass* material provides an analytical discussion of the eternal recurrence; and 3) *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* (1883 – 1885) attempts a poetical representation of the eternal recurrence, a sort of a combination of 1 and 2. For Nietzsche himself, the latter of these contained the most important expression of the eternal recurrence, something we know from his autobiographical essay, *Ecce Homo* (1888), where he cites numerous passages from it and references it as a book on eternal return.<sup>2</sup>

Much research has been done on the topic of eternal recurrence. Interpretations range from philosophical and scientific to philosophical and literary ones and, generally, may be

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<sup>2</sup> I use eternal recurrence and eternal return interchangeably.

divided into philosophical and aesthetic ones.<sup>3</sup> The philosophical interpretations include the following main classes: ontological readings (e.g. Heidegger; Deleuze); cosmological readings (e.g. Löwith; Danto); existential readings (e.g. Jaspers); and normative readings (Kantian, moral, ethical, GS 341 their source). Most interpretations are centred around the relation between the cosmological version and its existential imperative. The aesthetic interpretations comprise mythological (Bertram), musical (Higgins), repetitive (Hatab), mobility-based (Parkes) and others (see Chapter 5) and attend to the language in which the doctrine is expressed. While the former tend to disregard the language of eternal recurrence, thereby losing much of the affirmative force of the doctrine while locating it within the confines of a particular passage or a set of passages, the latter do not (fully) account for the relation between the idea and its means of expression, thereby leaving a gap in understanding how the language, under the influence of the doctrine, functions within the text. Moreover, there is no single aesthetic interpretation that captures the recurrent character of the work – that shows the recurrence of images within the text, that this recurrence constitutes the work’s structure and, finally, that this recurrent structure, in turn, represents the idea of eternal recurrence. It is crucial, therefore, to come up with such an interpretation in order to fully appreciate both the life-affirmative aspect of the eternal recurrence and the recurrent language of affirmation in which the doctrine is expressed – as the unifying idea of Nietzsche’s work. It would ultimately justify his own comment that *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* is a book on eternal return.<sup>4</sup>

The main conception of Nietzsche’s *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, the eternal recurrence of the same, has been studied in different ways. But Zarathustra’s doctrine has not been duly approached from the symbolic perspective I follow in this dissertation; namely, I consider the

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<sup>3</sup> While philosophical interpretations are chiefly concerned with the meaning of eternal return, aesthetic interpretations tend to focus on the literary means of its expression.

<sup>4</sup> See the second sentence in the first section of “Thus Spoke Zarathustra” in Nietzsche’s *Ecce Homo* (295).

form or expression of the eternal recurrence as manifested (falsely) through circular images or symbols, with the focus on the *solar* aspect of *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*. In particular, I read the eternal recurrence in light of circular images and diurnal cyclical symbols to establish its poetic veil or mask; I read the circular images and diurnal cyclical symbols, in turn, in light of the eternal recurrence to show that they return to themselves. This novel approach opens up a new (symbolic) dimension of both the eternal recurrence and the language of Nietzsche's text. It views his language as affirmatively recurring and his teaching (affirmation of existence) as having a life-enhancing, figurative or symbolic representation, with the recurrence of circular and diurnal symbols revealing the circular character of the doctrine.

I show that, although Nietzsche denies that the eternal recurrence is a circle (which would make it historical), he still uses the *image* of the circle to communicate his doctrine. In fact, the poet-philosopher is observed to make abundant use of circular symbols (e.g., the circle, the ring, the wheel, etc.), as well as cyclical diurnal symbols (morning, noon, evening, and midnight) to communicate his fundamental idea; namely, he employs the *circle* image (*Kreis* or *Ring*) to convey his *Grundgedanke*. The problem of the circle image in representing the eternal return has not been duly explored in Nietzsche scholarship. A comprehensive study of the relation between the circle image and the eternal recurrence will purge the eternal recurrence – the doctrine of affirmation – of cosmological blemishes often imputed to it, while restoring its poetic, symbolic form. The following couple of passages will introduce my position on the problem of the relation between the circle image and the eternal recurrence.

In his recent contribution to *The Oxford Handbook of Nietzsche* (2013) entitled “Eternal Recurrence”, Loeb argues for the cosmological interpretation of the eternal recurrence in *The Gay Science* and *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* and critiques basically all predecessors, especially Ivan

Soll, Arthur Danto and Bernd Magnus for disregarding *mnemonic evidence* for Nietzsche's doctrine on the grounds "that the same cannot recur" (Loeb 653). Loeb's reading, therefore, implies a kind of a cosmological circle. My work, however, suggests that what we shall come to analyse as Nietzsche's deductive argument (which may be consistent with the cosmological doctrine as presented in section 1066 of *The Will To Power*) for the eternal recurrence should be incorporated into the will's affirmation of existence through joy and that the poetical expression of the doctrine, paradoxically, employs the image of the circle. In this regard, my claim gravitates towards Keith Ansell-Pearson's interpretation of the eternal recurrence as the return of the singularity of the moment,<sup>5</sup> which I take up and develop into several types of return after dwelling upon Alan White's similar interpretation.<sup>6</sup> But, contrary to Ansell-Pearson's view (that "the singularity of the moment... makes the circle appear" (19)), the circle for Zarathustra is merely a poetical, visual image, rather than an entity that the singularity of the moment inaugurates: the former (the image) cannot be caused by but only communicates the latter (the singularity of the moment) figuratively. It is important not to confuse the image of the circle with the argument for the eternal recurrence, since time, for Zarathustra, as we shall see, is not a circle.

A few further elaborations should be made with regard to this image. I use the term circle in two distinct, though metaphorical, senses. The first refers to the eternal recurrence with cosmological implications and the second to its existential version. In this regard, we have two notions of the circle here: the dwarfian circle and Zarathustra's or Nietzsche's circle. The former

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<sup>5</sup> Ansell-Pearson, Keith 1 – 21, esp. 14 – 19. Every effort has been made to put all footnotes and parenthetical references at the ends of sentences. However, many are used mid-sentence for emphasis and clarity of ideas.

<sup>6</sup> That is, the return of same meaninglessness, same meaningful differences, and same meaningfulness. See Chapter 2 below for more detail.

is denied by Zarathustra when he gets angry with the dwarf, who says that time is a circle.<sup>7</sup> The latter is used by Nietzsche merely as a figure of speech to suggest or communicate the eternal recurrence as the return of the moment throughout the text. A mathematical claim such as  $1+1=2$  can be understood; the geometrical notion of the circle is also understandable and, like the equation, reflects a calculative approach to the world. But whenever Nietzsche invokes the circle image through such images as a wheel, a ring, an apple or anything that is round and/or circular in reference to the eternal recurrence, he does not mean that the doctrine is a circle in a geometrical or cosmological sense. Rather, it is a symbolic (metaphorical, figurative, poetic) circle, a circle that invokes whatever it is intended to invoke, in this case, eternal return, through association in poetry while emphasising the essence of the object of invocation, in this case, again, the life-affirmative function of the doctrine.<sup>8</sup> So there is a basic distinction between a geometrical and a figurative circle. This has to be borne in mind while studying Nietzsche's images and doctrine.

The main source and the object of study, as indicated by the title, is Nietzsche's *Also sprach Zarathustra*, the main source text of circular symbols. *The Gay Science* as a book containing imagerial passages on eternal return and preceding *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* will also be engaged and will serve as preparation for this analysis of circular symbols. It is crucial to use the original German for analysis to ensure the presence of the symbols in the source text, which may be missing in its translations. The standard English translation by Walter Kaufmann will be provided alongside the most important quotations from the original for comprehensive purposes.

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<sup>7</sup> Also a figure of speech, namely a metaphor, in itself though intended by the dwarf in a cosmological (rational) sense.

<sup>8</sup> See Chapter 5 for the significance of philosophising in figurative language. It discusses the life-affirmative quality of the metaphoricality of the circle inherent in circular images.

In light of the problem outlined above, the purpose of this study is to explore the language and philosophy of *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*. The subject of study is the language of circular images or symbols and the doctrine of the eternal recurrence, and the goal is to unfold the relationship between the circular and diurnal cyclical symbols and the eternal return in order to show how Nietzsche communicates his major idea. The original contribution consists in solving the problem of how the eternal recurrence is communicated in Nietzsche's *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, which is achieved through the analysis of circular images, including the discovery of twelve symbolic diurnal cycles constituting both the work's dynamic cyclical structure and a figurative representation for the teaching of the eternal recurrence. To attain the desired results involves developing a fitting methodology, whose major principles I offer below.

The research is done at the intersection of philosophy, literature, language, and culture, which requires the interdisciplinary approach offered by Humanities. The methodological foundation of study proposed to attempt to solve the problem of the communication of the eternal recurrence in *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* employs the methods of analogy and association, which will help to analyse the literary-philosophical text by examining the image of the circle in relation to the eternal recurrence on both contextual and narrative levels, including the relation of the diurnal symbols to biological metaphors (rebirth, maturity, decline and death) and unearthing implicit diurnal symbols within the text to make the day cycle complete (for some diurnal cycles seem to miss diurnal symbols). This study is confined solely to the above-mentioned questions and is not looking at the religious or historical implications of Nietzsche's work, or its place in modernity. The following brief chapter-by-chapter outline will reveal the dissertation's structure, methodology and findings in more detail.

This work comprises seven chapters: the first two dwell on the meaning of eternal return; the third, on Nietzsche's unique language; and the remaining ones, on the representation of the doctrine. To fulfil its purpose, this study first examines the meaning of eternal recurrence by drawing on various philosophical interpretations in the first two chapters and proposes a temporal, existential interpretation of what comes to be a three-dimensional eternal recurrence (the return of same meaninglessness, meaningful differences, and same meaningfulness) that combines moment and sequence (i.e., the unity of time and eternity). After the examination of various cosmologico-analytical and ethical interpretations (Chapter 1), the question of time will become central to Nietzsche's idea of eternal recurrence as life affirmation and the doctrine will be interpreted as the eternal return of the moment (Chapter 2). The temporal characteristics of the doctrine developed in the second chapter will be considered in relation to the properties of circular and diurnal symbols in the fifth chapter and its trilateral character repeatedly revealed through the analyses of circular and diurnal symbols in the sixth and seventh chapters.

Once the temporal implications of eternal recurrence's existential meaning have been established in the second chapter, attention will be turned to the means of its representation. Both negative and positive responses to Nietzsche's original symbolic language will be explored, especially for their relevance to his idea of eternal return (Chapter 3). Various aesthetic interpretations of his doctrine (by Bertram, Higgins, Hatab, Nehamas, and others) will be examined to elicit a lack in the study of circular and especially diurnal symbols (Chapter 4). Further, a number of life-serving reasons will be suggested for Nietzsche using symbolic language for communicating his philosophical idea(s), in light of which the nature of the relation between circular symbols and eternal recurrence will be outlined and principles for their analyses worked out. Jaspers' observation of Nietzsche's sensitivity to the times of the day and Bishop's

study of symbols of transformation from Chapter 3 and different solar aesthetic interpretations by Jappinen, Parkes, Puszczalowski, Ryan, Alderman, Nitske, and Solomon and Higgins from Chapter 4 will be looked at as being useful for developing the diurnal argument for the doctrine: the eternal recurrence of diurnal symbols represents the idea of eternal recurrence (Chapter 5). Thus, working from the existing figural approaches to Nietzsche's text in the third chapter to the discussion of the form or expression of the eternal recurrence in light of a number of diverse aesthetic interpretations in the fourth chapter, it is established in the fifth chapter that Nietzsche's doctrine bears two types of analogy: geometrical and temporal (or transformational) to the circular and the diurnal symbols, respectively. This allows for practical analyses of both types of circular symbols in the last two chapters on the grounds of there being symbolic relations between the characteristics of the symbols – the roundness and continuity of circular symbols and the moment and temporality of diurnal symbols – and the moment and sequence of eternal recurrence. The following links will be established: the roundness (same meaningfulness) and continuity (meaningful differences) of circular symbols and the moment (same meaningfulness) and temporality (meaningful differences) of diurnal symbols represent, through explicit and/or implicit repetition and/or invocation, the moment (same meaningfulness) and sequence (meaningful differences) of eternal recurrence, thereby countering the meaninglessness of everyday existence. These formal connections will furnish the ground for analyses of the circular and diurnal symbols in relation to the eternal recurrence in the last two chapters.

The practical analyses of the circular symbols (Chapter 6) and diurnal cyclical symbols (Chapter 7) in *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* will show how the circular images of eternal return function within the text, while making a case for the four-part diurnal book structure, as against those who believe in the tripartite division or do not consider the eternal return the main



conception of the book at all (e.g., Lampert, Loeb). In the sixth chapter, it is shown that the circular symbols, while indicating the idea of eternal recurrence on the contextual level, return to themselves through repetitive invocation on the narrative level, thereby also representing the doctrine. The recurrence of circular symbols on the narrative level will reveal what will turn out to be Zarathustra's nuptial ring – the symbol of his marriage to eternity – in “The Seven Seals (Or: the Yes and Amen Song)”, the ring of rings, the ring of recurrence, i.e., affirmation of affirmation, as implicit in the circular image of the will willing itself. In the seventh and most important chapter, it is demonstrated that the diurnal symbols represent the eternal recurrence through their circularity in the text, i.e., that they return to themselves through repetitive invocation, while Zarathustra's identity changes throughout the diurnal cycle: morning symbolises his rebirth; noon, his maturity; evening, his decline; and midnight, his death – thereby manifesting the character's affirmative, creative response to the meaninglessness of existence in accordance with the message of the eternal recurrence as the doctrine of life affirmation. The recurrence of diurnal symbols and cycles – the return of temporal symbols and cycles – will reveal most perfectly the temporal character of the eternal recurrence, thereby creating, on the narrative level, the ring of rings, the ring of recurrence, i.e., affirmation of affirmation, as implicit in the circular image of the will willing itself. It will thus be discovered that Nietzsche's book harbours an implicit, hidden symbolic diurnal structure comprised of twelve chronological diurnal cycles representing – and incorporating – his most abysmal thought (i.e., an unconditional affirmation of bottomless existence through the unity of time and eternity). This helps to appreciate his own word for the eternal recurrence being the fundamental conception of *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*.

In conclusion, the above analyses will allow us to penetrate the hidden life-affirmative aspect of Nietzsche's most complex work, namely the circular and, especially, diurnal representation of his most abysmal thought – the unity of the symbols and the eternal recurrence of the same – thereby solving the problem of the symbolic communication of the doctrine while establishing a well thought-out temporal structure in *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*.

The following major findings will be reached:

1. Nietzsche intends a close relation between the circular symbols and the idea of eternal recurrence, and he is quite fond of employing the circle image in communicating his doctrine;
2. Both his circular and diurnal images, indicating the return of meaningful differences within the sequence of time, function as an affirmative response to the meaninglessness of existence;
3. Some circular symbols proper not only represent the eternal return but also constitute their own recurrences through repetition in the text. The recurrences of circular symbols in themselves indicate the doctrine of eternal return so that the latter comprises the contextual symbolisations of the doctrine, thereby creating the ring of rings, the ring of recurrence, i.e., affirmation of affirmation, as implicit in the circular image of the will willing itself;
4. Most importantly, Nietzsche employs diurnal symbols to communicate his idea of eternal recurrence in *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*. These create symbolic diurnal cycles that unfold chronologically throughout the entire text, from beginning to end, i.e., the diurnal symbols recur within a diurnal cycle while the diurnal cycles recur within the diurnal narrative structure. Each diurnal symbol and each diurnal cycle expose Zarathustra's

identity in a different light, thereby suggesting the repetition of meaningful differences countering the return of same diurnal meaninglessness – all of which symbolises the eternal recurrence of the same on the contextual and the narrative level, respectively. The return of diurnal cycles within the narrative creates the ring of rings, the ring of recurrence, i.e., affirmation of affirmation, as implicit in the circular image of the will willing itself;

5. The twelfth day cycle confirms that Nietzsche intended his diurnal symbols to return to themselves and that this symbolic diurnal recurrence incorporates the joy-based argument for the eternal return, thereby endorsing the unity of the symbols and the doctrine;
6. The twelve diurnal cycles create a narrative structure of their own. This proves the work to be systematic (in support of Fink, Gadamer, Shapiro, Gooding-Williams and Seung's views), contrary to the belief that it lacks a coherent structure (e.g., Megill) or that it does not include the fourth part (e.g., Lampert);
7. Finally, the discovery of the recurrence of symbols in Nietzsche's *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* – the circularity of diurnal symbols in the text being this work's main original contribution to Nietzsche studies – proves that the poet-writer's choice of literary language is not random but evinces a clear thinking on his part and that his language deserves special attention and commendation.

The significance of this study consists in a number of theoretical and practical functions it entails: 1) the humanistic function seeks to enlighten the human mind so that it does not mistake the eternal recurrence for a cosmological doctrine. It does so by removing the crippling effect of rationality, thus restoring existential meaning to its affirmative origin; 2) the linguistic function

illuminates the creative, affirmative, symbolic language used in communicating the doctrine, thereby enhancing the reader's creative existence and imagination through creative interpretation and self-(re)interpretation; 3) the pedagogical function combines the first and the second and entails teaching the findings of this research at university level to students of philosophy and philology, humanities and social sciences, religion and culture; 4) the research function proves valuable by directing scholars' attention to the use of original language for the solution of philosophical and other humanistic problems; 5) the selective function addresses itself to the whole of humanity in the hope of reaching readers in a manner that allows them to appreciate and incorporate the idea of eternal recurrence and its symbolic form.

Having set ourselves the task of learning the relation between the eternal return and the circular and diurnal symbols and how this relation manifests itself in *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, we now turn to the meaning of eternal recurrence in the first two chapters before engaging – through the preliminary discussion of Nietzsche's original language in the third chapter – in its symbolic communication in the fourth through seventh chapters to uncover the eternal return of diurnal symbols as both an artistic representation of the doctrine and the work's unifying structure.

## **The Meaning of Eternal Return: Rationality vs. Existence**

In this chapter it is demonstrated that Nietzsche intended the eternal recurrence primarily as an existential rather than as a cosmologico-scientific doctrine. It is argued that the eternal recurrence is neither a line nor a circle but the desire to relive one's same life as if in a circle, i.e., repetitively, thereby affirming one's existence.<sup>9</sup> For this purpose it is necessary to discuss both Nietzsche's published (GS 341 and TSZ "On the Vision and the Riddle" 2) and unpublished (*Nachlass* material, especially WP 1066) passages on eternal recurrence and existing philosophical (cosmologico-analytical and existential) interpretations thereof. There is no ideal way to organise various interpretations of the eternal recurrence chronologically because of an overlapping of the topics and approaches philosophers undertake or return to in their discussion or critique of the views their predecessors or contemporaries hold. The decision has been made to group major interpretations around Nietzsche's three main passages on eternal recurrence according to the kind of interpretations they have spawned or invited, beginning with the cosmologico-analytical and working towards the existential ones. The existential aspect of eternal recurrence developed through the discussion of WP 1066 and GS 341 in, respectively, sections I and II of Chapter 1 will lay the ground for the discussion of the temporal aspect of eternal recurrence, as presented in "On the Vision and the Riddle", in Chapter 2.

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<sup>9</sup> For the relationship between repetition and affirmation, one can be said to affirm one's life by willing to live it again, i.e., all regret is ruled out.

## I. Eternal Return in Nietzsche's *Nachlass* Material

In this section it will be shown that the true (existential) meaning of the eternal recurrence should be sought outside of the various cosmologico-analytical (Simmel, Danto, Zuboff, Löwith, Loeb), metaphysical (Heidegger), aesthetic (Hatab) interpretations or arguments centred mainly around WP 1066, as these interpretations retain much (cosmological) *circularity*, which, by definition, precludes viewing the eternal recurrence in life-evaluative terms, something that is reserved for section II of Chapter 1 (and continued in the next chapter).<sup>10</sup> Yet, at the same time, it will be shown that neither of these interpretations, at bottom, presents the eternal recurrence as either literally circular or literally linear in character. However, a study of the existential interpretations that follow section I will reveal that they still bear a tinge of cosmological circularity.

WP 1066 features the eternal recurrence as a scientific hypothesis, meaning that finite force and infinite time will have the world eternally recur as the same.

If the world may be thought of as a certain definite quantity of force and as a certain definite number of centers of force—and every other representation remains indefinite and therefore useless—it follows that, in the great dice game of existence, it must pass through a calculable number of combinations. In infinite time, every possible combination would at some time or another be realized; more: it would be realized an infinite number of times. And since between every combination and its next recurrence all other possible combinations would have to take place, and each of these combinations conditions the entire sequence of combinations in the same series, a circular movement of absolutely identical series is thus demonstrated: the world as a circular movement that has already repeated itself infinitely often and plays its game *in infinitum*.

This conception is not simply a mechanistic conception; for if it were that, it would not condition an infinite recurrence of identical cases, but a final state. Because the world has not reached this, mechanistic theory must be considered an imperfect and merely provisional hypothesis. (WP 1066)<sup>11</sup>

Wenn die Welt als bestimmte Größe von Kraft und als bestimmte Zahl von Kraftcentren gedacht werden *darf* — und jede andere Vorstellung bleibt unbestimmt und folglich

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<sup>10</sup> If defined in terms of circularity, existence would be reduced to a mathematical or mechanistic exercise.

<sup>11</sup> English translations by Walter Kaufmann.

*unbrauchbar* — so folgt daraus, daß sie eine berechenbare Zahl von Combinationen, im großen Würfelspiel ihres Daseins, durchzumachen hat. In einer unendlichen Zeit würde jede mögliche Combination irgendwann einmal erreicht sein; mehr noch, sie würde unendliche Male erreicht sein. Und da zwischen jeder „Combination“ und ihrer nächsten „Wiederkehr“ alle überhaupt noch möglichen Combinationen abgelaufen sein müßten und jede dieser Combinationen die ganze Folge der Combinationen in derselben Reihe bedingt, so wäre damit ein Kreislauf von absolut identischen Reihen bewiesen: die Welt als Kreislauf, der sich unendlich oft bereits wiederholt hat und der sein Spiel in infinitum spielt.

Diese Conception ist nicht ohne Weiteres eine mechanistische: denn wäre sie das, so würde sie nicht eine unendliche Wiederkehr identischer Fälle bedingen, sondern einen Finalzustand. *Weil* die Welt ihn nicht erreicht hat, muß der Mechanismus uns als unvollkommene und nur vorläufige Hypothese gelten. (*KGW* VIII 3, WM 1066)

This section sparked a debate centred around the possibility and evidence for the eternal recurrence on a cosmological scale, the consequences of such a possibility or lack thereof, and its relation to Nietzsche's other main idea – the will to power, as well as the question of ethics and aesthetics. The following discussion attempts to unfold various arguments and interpretations while showing the incompatibility of the cosmological version of the eternal recurrence with the question of human existence, i.e., the cosmological cycle or circle of the universe with the existential cycle or circle of a human-world relationship, which in itself is fundamentally no cycle or circle at all.

### **1. ER as Cosmology**

Some have tried to dispute Nietzsche's position outlined in the section above. One of the earliest interpreters of Nietzsche's doctrine was Georg Simmel, who, in *Schopenhauer und Nietzsche: Ein Vortragzyklus* (1907), attempted to demonstrate that, in Hatab's words,

it is possible to have a finite number of elements in a certain arrangement that would never repeat itself, not even in infinite time. He [Simmel] asks us to imagine three wheels on a common axle, each of which is marked at a point on its circumference and lined up precisely with the other wheels at these points. If the wheels are then rotated at speeds of

n,  $2n$  and  $n/\pi$ , they can turn eternally without ever returning to the original alignment (Hatab 1978: 109).<sup>12</sup>

However, Simmel's demonstrative argument is undermined by the false premise it contains: the rationality of the whole experiment, which, for Nietzsche, is repugnant to the illogical nature of existence. In "Reflections on Recurrence," Ivan Soll stressed that Simmel's argument depends on the rational regulation of recombination patterns, in the certain arrangement and speeds of the wheels, but that for Nietzsche, (re)combination was random in what he called "the great dice game of existence" (WP 1066).<sup>13</sup> Simmel's refutation, therefore, is weakened. Lawrence Hatab rightly points out that the eternal recurrence as a cosmological theory:

is inadequate not because it is false, but because it allows the possibility that a phenomenon which stems essentially from the inward dynamics of will, will rather primarily be considered as an objective, mechanical description of the workings of the external world, i.e. a scientific statement, thereby passing over its internal foundation.... No objective statement is safe from attack by another objective perspective, and the eternal recurrence is no exception (Hatab 1978: 109).

Milic Capece calls the eternal recurrence "intrinsically unverifiable" (63).<sup>14</sup> Indeed, no demonstrative proof can be offered for the eternal recurrence because doing so would necessitate taking up a perspective or position external to the world. The eternal recurrence can neither be proven nor disproven, within the context of science (Hatab 1978: 109). Yet Nietzsche calls the eternal recurrence "the most *scientific* of all possible hypotheses" (WP 55). Hatab may be right in believing that Nietzsche intends it to be understood in contradistinction to science as expressing some telos. So it is to refute the telos in science that Nietzsche advances the eternal recurrence as the most scientific hypothesis (Hatab 1978: 109). Thus, although Nietzsche's philosophy rejects mechanism (while Simmel's counter-argument attempted to impute it to Nietzsche), the eternal recurrence as a cosmological doctrine fails for lack of objective

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<sup>12</sup> Simmel. See esp. 250, 251.

<sup>13</sup> Soll. See 327, 328.

<sup>14</sup> Cited in Paul Edwards, ed., *The Encyclopedia of Philosophy*.



(counter)evidence. Nevertheless, it still stands paradoxically as the most (anti-)scientific hypothesis.

To sum up: ironically, Simmel tries to disprove the circularity of the eternal recurrence by means of the rational rotation of the wheels, i.e., *circles*. Soll, on the other hand, rejects the rationality in the circularity of the eternal recurrence, thereby showing that the eternal return is not a circle and, therefore, cannot be represented by a wheel or a circle. Capec further implies that there is no proof either for such a ‘wheel’/‘circle’ or ‘no wheel’/ ‘no circle’. Dialectically, Hatab, in his turn, means the eternal return to have an implicit wheel or circle designed to counter the linearity (*telos*) of science. It will be later shown that the eternal return is not a circle, whether implicit or explicit.

## **2. ER: Analytical Readings**

Over the next six decades Nietzsche’s doctrine underwent metaphysical, existential and cosmological interpretations by Heidegger, Jaspers and Löwith, respectively, in Germany; new standard English translations of Nietzsche’s major works were made available by Walter Kaufmann, who purged Nietzsche of racist and anti-Semitic blemishes for the Anglo-American world; while Arthur Danto argued against the widespread prejudice of regarding him as an erratic philosopher, that Nietzsche’s philosophy is systematic and coherent.<sup>15</sup> As a result of the study in this period, WP 1066 gave rise to an analytical approach to the doctrine which is closely associated with the eternal recurrence as cosmology. This approach argues that the eternal return cannot take place because the world as such does not change. In Chapter 7 of *Nietzsche as Philosopher* (1965, 2005), Danto provides an *analytical* reading of the eternal recurrence. He attempts to show that Nietzsche’s “scientific” proof for the doctrine in section 1066 of *The Will*

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<sup>15</sup> See subsections 3 and 4 of this section for Heidegger and Löwith, respectively, and subsection 1 of section II for Jaspers.

*to Power* is illogical because the concept of the finite amount of energy can have no bearing on the finite number of states [*Lagen*] of energy (Danto 203 – 209). He concludes that in the eternal recurrence “there is no passing away and no true becoming in the world. There is an eternally frozen mobility” (*ibid.* 211). A closer look at the argument will find Danto listing the following three premises for the eternal recurrence:

- (1) the sum-total of energy is finite;
- (2) the number of states [*Lagen*] of energy is finite; and
- (3) energy is conserved.

He further provides additional propositions for the eternal recurrence to be true:

- (4) Time is infinite;
- (5) Energy has infinite duration;
- (6) Change is eternal;
- (7) Principle of Sufficient Reason.

In “Recent Discussions of Eternal Recurrence: Some Critical Comments”, M.C. Sterling demonstrates that Danto wrongly believes that:

- (a) The first three premises are logically independent, i.e., they do not cause one another;
- (b) Nietzsche was mistaken in believing the finite number of states (2) to be entailed by the finite amount of energy (1), when in fact, according to Danto, they are independent;
- (c) Taken by themselves, premises (1), (2), and (3) do not entail eternal recurrence.

Sterling insists that Nietzsche’s ontology must be considered first in order to understand what he meant by “amount of energy” and “state of energy,” and that they are interconnected (265). He finds that “...if ‘amount of energy’ is given the same meaning as ‘number of ontological units,’ and if ‘state of energy’ means the same as ‘state-of-interaction of these ontological units,’ then a

finite amount of energy implies a finite number of states of energy; for, on the assumption of an all-or-none sort of interaction, a finite number of ontological units entails a finite number of states-of-interaction of these units” (266).

Similarly, if “amount of energy” means the same as “number of force-centres” and “state of energy” means the same as “states-of-combination of force-centres,” then, based on the assumption that “...the number of states-of-combination will be finite when the number of force-centres is finite” (267), a finite amount of energy implies a finite number of (states-of-combination of) energy.

Thus, the eternal return has been shown to be logically possible. Danto’s logical argument, however, is not based on any implicit rationality in the eternal recurrence as cosmology. It rather presupposes the chaotic, irrational circular movement of the universe. But, even if it is irrational, is it indeed circular as is presupposed? Furthermore, there is and can be no possible empirical evidence for the doctrine. Even if there were, or even if the proof is logically valid, then the following question would arise: What value has the eternal return for human existence? Let us keep these questions in mind for now.

Analytical readings such as Danto’s further raise questions about difference and identity and their relation to personal significance. In “Nietzsche and Eternal Recurrence,” Arnold Zuboff claims that the doctrine of eternal recurrence has no personal significance that would justify a Nietzschean revaluation of all values (understood as changing one’s opinions about the worth of *this* life as opposed to life in the *beyond*) (Zuboff 343 – 357). According to Zuboff, there are two non-Nietzschean interpretations of eternal recurrence which negate its imputed personal significance: the ‘insulating’ version and the ‘Leibnizian’ version.

1. The ‘insulating’ version – Difference

Accordingly, “the recurrence of a life means not the repetition and return of the same man, but rather the generation of a series of men, each a mere duplicate of the last” (Zuboff 345). This version is based on mere numerical difference. Upon this reading, there is “an infinite number of completely distinct, though exactly similar persons; to use Zuboff’s expression, the recurring individual would be numerically ‘insulated’ from one another” (Sterling 276). Thus the insulating version occurs within the *linear* conception of time, where every moment is quantifiable, numerically distinct, but has the same content, same identity.

## 2. The ‘Leibnizian’ version – Identity

Accordingly, based on numerical identity following Leibniz’s Law (i.e., the identity of indiscernibles: if an entity, x, is identical, or has all the same properties, with an entity, y, then it is one identity), as Sterling has it, “the experiences of this present life *simply are* experiences of that future life entailed by eternal recurrence” (Sterling 276). The latter version is the opposite of the former version. That is, the numerical identity of the recurring individual is counterposed to his or her numerical difference. Numerical identity is a pure mathematisation of the numerically different recurring individual, like  $1+1+1+1+1n$ . The digit 1 is qualitatively the same, though numerically different, on the one hand, and numerically identical, on the other hand. Here qualitative and numerical identities coincide in meaning. The ‘Leibnizian’ version is merely a perspectival variation of the ‘insulating’ version of the eternal recurrence. In both cases, the individual has no personal experience as distinct from others because both the ‘insulating’ and ‘Leibnizian’ versions negate the personal significance of eternal recurrence, i.e., “an *eternalization* of my experiences” (Sterling 276, 277).<sup>16</sup>

Simply put, if I am the same, then I am not different from myself, i.e., I have no different experiences; but if I am different, then I am no longer *me* (Zuboff 352). Thus, difference rules

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<sup>16</sup> All italics in the original unless otherwise specified.

out identity while identity rules out different experiences. But according to Nietzsche, Sterling reminds us (277), *I shall have additional experiences when I come back*. Indeed, the possibility of *cloning*, for example, would allow for a case where the individual would be numerically different, though qualitatively the same, the only difference being in age and experience: the famous Brazilian TV series/Telenovella *O Clone (The Clone)* (2001 – 2002) features Leo-Edvaldo-Diogo (named after, on the one hand, Edvaldo, the lover of the surrogate mother, Deusa, and, on the other hand, Diogo, who died as a teenager in a helicopter crash, following which his twin brother, Lucas, was cloned by Doctor Albieri to replace the tragic loss) as a replica of the now 40-year-old Lucas in his twenties, where the clone is identically the same genetically yet numerically (as well as experientially) different. In reality, however, with ethical questions put aside, Leo is neither Diogo nor Lucas; he is simply himself, though at times he experiences things similarly to both his cell-donor and his cell-donor's late twin brother. In short, the question of identity is tricky and, given that everything changes, there is no (fixed) identity as such: you are different than you are, says Nietzsche, for the one and the same true God that has allowed only for one perspective is now dead.<sup>17</sup> Interestingly, cloning is seen by Doctor Albieri as a possibility to have eternal life, to conquer time and existence once and for all, which he says has been the sole goal of humanity since time immemorial, by allowing the same individual to be born again and again, something that may be regarded – and Albieri does occasionally mention Nietzsche's genius – as inspired by the idea of eternal recurrence.

Going back to Sterling's critique of Zuboff, in a non-deterministic universe there would be different experiences only, since conditions would be different even if the power-centre,

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<sup>17</sup> See Nietzsche's *On the Genealogy of Morals* (III, 28: 162, 163) on the meaning of the ascetic ideal with its one perspective on suffering, that of *guilt*. Nietzsche means that a multiplicity of perspectives reflecting a multifarious identity is to follow the ascetic ideal becoming self-conscious within the demise of Christian values that have provided only one perspective so far. The change of perspectivism includes questions of personal identity. One's perspectives, I take it, reflect the manifestations of one's (changeable) identity.

Zuboff, is the same. There would be the same Zuboff, Sterling explains, but living not on Earth (but on another planet) and doing not philosophy (but physics, for example) (279). What Zuboff means is that *variations exceed exact repetitions* or recurrences: that is, many variations are needed to produce a repetition. Sterling, however, disagrees, saying that *variations would not be different from recurrences*, that is, each variation is already a recurrence (Sterling 281). The grand conclusion that Sterling makes upon reviewing Zuboff's claim is that:

...Nietzsche's injunction to "So live that you must desire to live again" would be applicable, in the same degree, to this present life [for it will recur eternally]; to all variations of this present life [for they will recur eternally]; and to all the exact recurrences of both this life and its variations [for they will recur eternally]. Moreover, obedience to this, Nietzsche's Eternalistic Imperative, is the ultimate behavioral outcome of a Nietzschean revaluation of all values (*ibid.*).

Sterling's interpretation must assume that there is either a finite or an infinite number of recurrent variations. While the former, though hardly capable of being fathomed, rules out personal significance, the latter removes the finitude from the former, leaving no chance for recurrence whatsoever. An infinite variation could not recur identically, for that would be a contradiction in terms. When Sterling says "all variations" he means a finite number of them, for, besides the term 'all' expressing finitude, the quantity of variations is subject to Nietzsche's conception of a finite world (WP 1066). He must therefore assume that, at bottom, there is a finite number of recurrent variations (of this present life), i.e., *a finite number of possibilities*. The latter, as noted earlier, is inconsistent with what I take to be the infinitely creative nature of the human will.<sup>18</sup> Decision and choice are still ruled out by the finite circle of possibilities implicit in Sterling's critique of Zuboff's mathematical interpretation of the eternal recurrence as numerical difference – *line* and/or numerical identity – *point*, which proffers no personal

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<sup>18</sup> It is true that limitations of finite states of force allow for finite combinations in infinite time (WP 1066). But this would be a calculative approach toward existence. It would eradicate the infinite, existential creativity and interpretation of the will.

significance in the revaluation of values. Thus, the true meaning of the eternal recurrence should be sought elsewhere – outside of analytical reading.

Generally, Nietzsche's argument for the eternal recurrence of the same in WP 1066 does not establish that the circulation of the world and its time are literally circular. Neither does it show that the circulation of the world and its time are linear. Rather, the eternal recurrence can be understood as *repetition*, which does not take either a circular or linear course, for otherwise such a new conception would be purely mechanistic in character, something Nietzsche disproves about the world for the lack of intention in the latter.

### **3. ER as Metaphysics**

About a quarter of a century later after Simmel's attempt to disprove the plausibility of the eternal recurrence, which time showed to have failed, the doctrine received a different perspective when it invited consideration not as a stand-alone idea but in light of Nietzsche's other main concept – the will to power. According to Heidegger, this defined Nietzsche as a metaphysician, on the one hand, and showed that the eternal recurrence should be incorporated into the will, on the other. However, prior to Heidegger's interpretation, the two ideas were regarded as incompatible. In *Nietzsche der Philosoph und Politiker* (1931), Alfred Baeumler, an official Nazi interpreter of Nietzsche, claimed that the eternal recurrence and the will to power are irreconcilable concepts. Baeumler "makes it easiest for himself by regarding [the doctrine] 'as the expression of a highly personally experience' that is 'of no consequence' to Nietzsche's 'system,' for 'if taken seriously' it would 'shatter the coherence of the philosophy of the will to power'" (Müller-Lauter 85). That is, whereas the will to power presupposes an accumulation of power the eternal return simply puts a limitation on such an increase.

Apparently, Baeumler envisions the eternal recurrence as a finite circle that encompasses finite force rather than a line – an infinite line that would otherwise allow force to increase infinitely as Nietzsche’s concept of the will to power, Baeumler thinks, warrants it. In other words, Baeumler unknowingly espouses the dwarfian view, that time is a circle (“On the Vision and the Riddle” 2: 270 to be considered in Chapter 2, especially sections 3, 4, and 6, below).

In his *Nietzsche* lectures (from the 1930s), Martin Heidegger, in sharpest contrast with Alfred Baeumler’s assertion, interpreted Nietzsche’s doctrine of eternal recurrence in conjunction with the will to power, i.e., “in terms of the history of metaphysics. For him the theories of eternal recurrence and the will to power expressed the same thought” (Müller-Lauter 85).<sup>19</sup> So it is fundamentally not possible to speak of the eternal recurrence and the will to power as two separate concepts necessarily conjoined, for there is only one thought. Heidegger explains these two aspects of ‘one thought’ in terms of essence and existence. “The determination ‘will to power’ answers the question of being with respect to *what it consists of*; the determination ‘eternal return of the same’ answers the question of being with respect to *its way of being*” (Heidegger I: 463f., cited in Müller-Lauter’s footnote 7, p. 210.). Being as a whole is the will to power (*Was-Sein*, essence) manifesting itself as eternal recurrence (of the same will to power) (*Daß-Sein*, existence) (Heidegger *Nietzsche* II.15f.).

Upon Heidegger’s ontological/metaphysical interpretation of Nietzsche’s doctrine, the eternal recurrence and the will to power appear to be one idea. The will to power is the essence of the world while the eternal recurrence is the manifestation of that essence. Hence the eternal

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<sup>19</sup> See Heidegger, *Nietzsche* II.14.



recurrence of the will to power. Furthermore, the *Übermensch* is a human being who is the embodiment of the eternal recurrence of the will to power and is able to *will* the eternal return.<sup>20</sup>

Given the two aspects of this one thought, Heidegger believes that Nietzsche still opted for the primacy of the eternal recurrence over the will to power: the manifestation of the will to power as eternally recurring is the very essence of that will to power. For that reason, in *What is Called Thinking?*, Heidegger calls Nietzsche the last metaphysician. Hatab brilliantly summarises Heidegger's extensive reading of Nietzsche's philosophy:

For Heidegger, metaphysics is the attempt to establish the fundamental character of all beings, and he suggests that Nietzsche's basic notions of will to power, revenge, deliverance from revenge, and eternal recurrence of the same offer a metaphysical interpretation of the Being of beings, or what beings *are*. In *What is Called Thinking?*, Heidegger focuses upon the eternal recurrence as Nietzsche's 'one and only thought' (Heidegger 50), as the aim and source of all Nietzsche's thinking. (Hatab 1978: 114)

According to Nietzsche, Western thinking is characterised by the will's revulsion or revenge against time and its "it was". The purpose of the eternal recurrence of the same, then, on Heidegger's reading, is to transform "a metaphysics of revenge into a metaphysics of affirmation, as the eternal recurrence is the 'metaphysics of the Being of beings' (Heidegger 106)," through the will willing the coming and going of the past, its own past, to eternity, i.e., through the will willing itself, its own eternity (Hatab 1978: 115). In other words, the deliverance from Western metaphysics' and religion's revulsion against time and becoming is achieved

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<sup>20</sup> The *Übermensch* is translated as Superman (Thomas Common), Overman (Walter Kaufmann), and Overhuman (Graham Parkes). Parkes Graham's 'Overhuman' is a preferable translation for '*Übermensch*', rather than Thomas Common's 'Superman' (more poetic) and Walter Kaufmann's 'Overman' (more philosophical), as it is free from gender connotations while preserving the philosophical implications of the German prefix *über* ('over' in the sense of 'above and beyond'). See Parkes Graham's "Introduction" to his own translation of Nietzsche's *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* (2005). See also my discussion of the three translation variants of '*Übermensch*' in "The Evolution of Nietzsche's *Übermensch* in *Also sprach Zarathustra* Through Translation." «Поэтика Ницше», ред. А.Э. Назиров и др. Межвузовский сборник научных статей. – СПб. (Санкт-Петербург): Изд-во СПбГУСЭ (Санкт-Петербургский государственный университет сервиса и экономики), 2010. 143-163. [*Poetika Nitsshe*, ред. А.Е. Nazirov i dr. Mezhvuzovskiy sbornik nauchnykh statey. – SPb. (Sankt-Peterburg): Izd-vo SPbGUSE (Sankt-Peterburgskiy gosudarstvennyy universitet servisa i ekonomiki), 2010. 143-163.] (*Nietzsche's Poetics*, ed. A.E. Nazirov, An Interuniversity Collection of Scientific Articles. – SPb. (Saint Petersburg): Saint-Petersburg State University of Service and Economics Publishing, 2010. 143-163. Print.) I use 'Overman' and 'Overhuman' interchangeably for a variety of purposes.

through the will willing itself by willing the constant recurrence of every “it was”, i.e., by willing the eternal recurrence of the same. Thus, Heidegger’s interpretation makes Nietzsche a metaphysician.

Loeb offers two criticisms of Heidegger’s reading of Nietzsche’s doctrine. The first criticism holds that Nietzsche’s permanence is in fact transient (i.e., not constant as according to Heidegger); the second, his transience can in fact recur as the same (as opposed to Heidegger, who believes it cannot). Let us look more closely at Heidegger’s interpretation through Loeb’s perspective.

According to Heidegger, Nietzsche aimed to liberate the will from its aversion to time, transience, and ceasing to be, by introducing a metaphysical doctrine that would have transience abide: “Only in such a way that, as transience, it does not just constantly pass, but always comes to be. It would abide only in such a way that transience and what ceases to be return as the selfsame in its coming. But *this recurrence is itself abiding only if it is eternal*” (Heidegger, “Who is Nietzsche’s Zarathustra?” 1977/1954: 74). (Loeb 665, italics mine.)

Basically, Heidegger’s claim is that the Nietzschean flux of becoming eternalises itself as *fixed* through the eternal recurrence of the same, making Nietzsche a metaphysician. “But this is clearly a misreading of Nietzsche’s doctrine,” Loeb insists. Moreover, “Heidegger himself seems to admit this when he writes that for Nietzsche the permanence does not consist in something static, but in a recurrence of the same (1977/1954: 69),” for metaphysics seeks eternity outside temporality while Nietzsche’s eternity is secured within the infinite flow of time (Loeb 666).

When Heidegger further claims that “there is nonetheless concealed an aversion to mere transience” within Nietzsche’s teaching and that in this way “even Nietzsche’s thinking moves within the spirit of reflection-to-date” (Heidegger 1977/1954: 76), he “simply assumes that Nietzsche’s doctrine is false, and that the transient does not in fact ever recur as the same” (Loeb 655 – 666). Yet for Loeb it does (given his cosmological interpretation of the eternal recurrence):

it returns as qualitatively the same yet numerically different.<sup>21</sup> But such an objective reading as Loeb's erodes the will from the eternal recurrence, something Karl Löwith had discussed earlier in his *Nietzsche's Philosophy of the Eternal Recurrence of the Same* (*Nietzsches Philosophie der ewigen Wiederkehr des Gleichen*, 1956).

#### 4. ER: Cosmology vs. Existence

Löwith takes both Nietzsche's cosmological and existential interpretations seriously. He finds Nietzsche's cosmological version of eternal recurrence "incompatible with the ethical imperative to choose to live each moment in such a way that you could will its eternal recurrence... How can one *will* what must happen in any case?" (Bernd Magnus, "Foreword to the English Translation" xv). In other words, Löwith detects a contradiction "between (1) the cosmological version, a goal-lacking *fact* devoid of meaning, and (2) the 'anthropological' *value* of the normative version" (Hatab 2005: 117).<sup>22</sup> As is clear, Löwith interpreted the doctrine mainly cosmologically. He believed that Nietzsche's many contradictions could be traced to the one *basic contradiction* "consisting in the fact that Nietzsche repeats the ancient view of the being of the world at the apex of modernity, and thus repeats Greek cosmology on the ground of a post-Christian anthropology of willing.... Löwith's interpretation is, then, ultimately oriented on the history of Western thought" (Müller-Lauter 85).

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<sup>21</sup> See Paul S. Loeb, "Eternal Recurrence" (645 – 671). Loeb reads Nietzsche's doctrine as Zarathustra's "*dying revelation* of his life's eternal recurrence" (Loeb 650), where the protagonist is "the antipode of Plato's Socrates" (Loeb 350) who affirms his life, saying Yes to the demon in GS 341. His interpretation relies on *mnemonic* evidence for Zarathustra's doctrine as portrayed by the howling of the dog from distant childhood in "On the Vision and the Riddle": the eternal recurrence of the qualitatively same but numerically different. Thus, the eternal recurrence would mean Zarathustra's bodily *death* and *rebirth* (recurrence) as opposed to the Platonic re-incarnation of Socrates' pure soul in the *Phaedo* (Plato interprets Socrates as happy since he is liberated from the wheel of re-incarnation, for his debt to the god of health, Asclepius, will be paid, whereas Nietzsche sees Socrates' ease as that he has viewed his life as a disease).

<sup>22</sup> See Löwith 1997: 83.

Intervening via Heidegger's metaphysical interpretation, Lawrence Hatab in his *Nietzsche's Life Sentence* has argued "against any kind of fact-value polarity in Nietzsche's thinking..." (Hatab 2005: 117). In other words, there is no distinction between fact and value for Nietzsche. In fact, value *is* fact, though not in the sense of objectivity or even subjectivity, but of creativity (*ibid.*). Now, in this regard, in arguing against Heidegger's metaphysical interpretation of the eternal recurrence, Hatab, I believe, engages the latter's aesthetic nature. He writes, "Heidegger wants thought to go beyond determinate being to the 'otherness' of Being, which is other-as-ground. Now I do not want to suggest that Nietzsche's thought is really Heidegger-in-disguise, but (contrary to Heidegger) we can at least declare it to be utterly non-metaphysical in nature" (Hatab 1978: 115). His reason for this is that "[b]ecoming is Nietzsche's starting point [but] metaphysics establishes a 'freeze' on becoming through 'being,' determinate principles and representations..." (*ibid.*). He insists that "...Nietzsche's eternal recurrence (as well as will to power) is a direct reflection of a totality, a world-process of Becoming, an affirmation of form generated from and transparent to formlessness, and is not therefore a metaphysical representation which rests solely in determinate being" (*ibid.*). Now, he goes on, "...since form necessarily gives way to the formless, its only concrete eternity is recurrence.... Eternal recurrence is therefore the self-affirmation-of-the-world; it is not a call to affirmation, it *is* affirmation" (Hatab 1978: 116). In short, the world affirms itself as the world of eternal recurrence, whose transcendence "is not a going-beyond, but a *letting-in*, one that nevertheless requires a release, beyond subject, object and substance. Beginning as an isolated subject, man is not raised above the world but released *into* the man-world unity" (*ibid.*). Thus, Hatab's critique and interpretation with intrinsic aesthetic implications intends to supersede Heidegger's metaphysical perspective of Nietzsche's doctrine.

## 5. ER as an Aesthetic Phenomenon

Indeed, Nietzsche calls the eternal return “Being”, which he stamps upon becoming (understood as will to power in this context). He gives shape to things through the eternal return when he writes: “To imprint (*aufprägen*) upon becoming the character of being [i.e., to impose the *strong man* (ER) upon the *wise man* (WP), to merge the two: saying Yes to both Yes’s and No’s in the past, present, and future, as according to Müller-Lauter<sup>23</sup>] – that is the supreme will to power... That *everything recurs* is the closest approximation of a world of becoming to a world of being” (WP 617). As is clear, one must have sufficient will to power to imprint the character of eternally recurring being upon ever-changing becoming, upon the will to power. The eternal return, or “Being,” therefore, gives *form* to the shapeless, Dionysian becoming through the power of that becoming. If life is justified as an aesthetic phenomenon (BT, “Forward to Richard Wagner” 5) („*nur als ästhetisches Phänomen ist das Dasein und die Welt ewig gerechtfertigt*“, *KGW* III 1, *Die Geburt der Tragödie*: „Vorwort an Richard Wagner“ 5) and “the supreme will to power” (WP 617) consists in imprinting the character of being upon becoming, then the eternal return is precisely the aesthetic means of justifying becoming, a means essential to the very nature of becoming. In conclusion, becoming justifies itself as an eternally recurring phenomenon, while the eternal return answers the question “*How* does one respond to

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<sup>23</sup> See Wolfgang Müller-Lauter, *Nietzsche: His Philosophy of Contradictions and the Contradictions of His Philosophy* (120). “One type (of being-in-the-world of the two types of the overman – the *strong man* and the *wise man*) is concerned with dissolving in the stream of becoming, desiring oneself and everything else unrestrictedly again and again. He is the mighty one insofar as he corresponds to change and in such correspondence goes beyond any fixable particularity of willing. The other seeks to fixate his dominance in the will to return for all times. In such a fixation, the eternalization of his dominance, he becomes the mighty one. Although both want recurrence, they want something different in and by it. But since the recurrence *is* only as a thought and a doctrine, its meaning remains insurmountably split into a duality. While the contradictions in Nietzsche’s lines of thought seem to be overcome, in the end they break open again in a fissure that we come upon repeatedly in all his essential statements.” (Müller-Lauter 120, 121) The contradictions in Nietzsche’s philosophy do not stem from Nietzsche but from the nature of philosophical problems, such as the problem of the relation of unity and diversity.

becoming?” by holding becoming eternally recurring. Thus, read aesthetically, the eternal recurrence could be conceived of as a creative self-justifying *circle* of becoming.

Overall, Nietzsche’s doctrine as metaphysics views the eternal recurrence as a cycle, or, simply put, as a circle, which is the very character of the will to power. On Heidegger’s reading, the eternal recurrence is not, literally, a circle, but merely manifests itself as one. Since the doctrine is incorporated into the will, the will (to power), when it counters metaphysics’ revulsion against time and its “it was”, manifests itself merely as a circle, i.e., the will wills itself as if in a circle. In sum, the eternal recurrence is the *circle of the will* and should not be taken as literally circular. Loeb’s critique of Heidegger’s reading is based on his own cosmological interpretation, according to which the eternal recurrence could be conceived of as a qualitatively same yet numerically different circle, still a circle within which, if one recalls Löwith, the will would be out of place. Hatab’s critique aims to refute the circularity implicit in Löwith (who gravitates towards the cosmological version) while transforming Heidegger’s metaphysical circle of the will into the aesthetic circle of the world-man unity. The next section will put the question of the meaning of the eternal recurrence on a new foundation by focusing on its existential versions, thereby attempting to disprove the circularity attributed to Nietzsche’s doctrine.

## II. ER as Life Affirmation

In this section it will be shown that the remnants of *circularity* – the legacy of cosmologico-analytical readings – implicit in various existential versions of Nietzsche’s doctrine – those of Jaspers, Soll, Magnus, Rosen, and Seung – must be replaced by the existential implications of the circle of *repetition* in Hatab’s and Deleuze’s interpretations, which will prepare the ground for further consideration of the eternal recurrence as the return of the moment of sameness and difference within the infinite flow of time. For this purpose, it is necessary to turn to the existential passage on eternal recurrence in *The Gay Science*.

Nietzsche’s first explicit passage on eternal recurrence is contained in GS 341. This section spawned mainly normative and existential interpretations of the doctrine. The eternal recurrence is presented in fable form, with overtones of a hypothesis, but so demonically realistically that it forces the reader to believe in it. The voice speaks of a demon that comes to tell you that you have lived and will live exactly the same life an infinite number of times. The existential question at the end of the speech is whether you desire to relive your life infinitely.

*The greatest weight.* – What, if some day or night a demon were to steal after you into your loneliest loneliness and say to you: “This life as you now live it and have lived it, you will have to live once more and innumerable times more; 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!”

Would you not throw yourself down and gnash your teeth and curse the demon who spoke thus? Or have you once experienced a tremendous moment when you would have answered him: “You are a god and never have I heard anything more divine.” If this thought gained possession of you, it would change you as you are, or perhaps crush you. The question in each and every thing, “Do you desire this once more and innumerable times more?” would lie upon your actions as the greatest weight. Or how well disposed would you have to become to yourself and to life *to crave nothing more fervently* than this ultimate eternal confirmation and seal? (GS 341: 273, 274)

*Das grösste Schwergewicht.* — Wie, wenn dir eines Tages oder Nachts, ein Dämon in deine einsamste Einsamkeit nachschliche und dir sagte: „Dieses Leben, wie du es jetzt lebst und gelebt hast, wirst du noch einmal und noch unzählige Male leben müssen; und es wird nichts Neues daran sein, sondern jeder Schmerz und jede Lust und jeder Gedanke und Seufzer und alles unsäglich Kleine und Grosse deines Lebens muss dir wiederkommen, und Alles in der selben Reihe und Folge — und ebenso diese Spinne und dieses Mondlicht zwischen den Bäumen, und ebenso dieser Augenblick und ich selber. Die ewige Sanduhr des Daseins wird immer wieder umgedreht — und du mit ihr, Stäubchen vom Staube!“ — Würdest du dich nicht niederwerfen und mit den Zähnen knirschen und den Dämon verfluchen, der so redete? Oder hast du einmal einen ungeheuren Augenblick erlebt, wo du ihm antworten würdest: „du bist ein Gott und nie hörte ich Göttlicheres!“ Wenn jener Gedanke über dich Gewalt bekäme, er würde dich, wie du bist, verwandeln und vielleicht zermalmen; die Frage bei Allem und Jedem „willst du diess noch einmal und noch unzählige Male?“ würde als das grösste Schwergewicht auf deinem Handeln liegen! Oder wie müsstest du dir selber und dem Leben gut werden, um nach Nichts *mehr zu verlangen*, als nach dieser letzten ewigen Bestätigung und Besiegelung? — (KGW V 2, FW IV 341, 250: 7 – 31).

Upon reading the above passage, especially the final words, one hears primarily Nietzsche’s urge for making a decision against the background of the nihilism of values, which has interesting ties with the ontological origin of the eternal recurrence to be considered below.

### **1. Jaspers: ER as a Consequence of the Death of God**

Karl Jaspers in his *Nietzsche: An Introduction to the Understanding of His Philosophical Activity* (*Nietzsche: Einführung in das Verständnis seines Philosophierens*, 1936) views the eternal recurrence as stemming from Nietzsche’s proclamation of the death of God earlier in GS 108 (also in GS 125) or later in “Zarathustra’s Prologue”. The eternal return as a new “absolute” is to replace the God of other-worldliness (Jaspers 352 – 367). Hatab (whom I follow here) expounds on this idea as follows:

For Jaspers, *Existenz* must have transcendence to fulfill itself; the transcendence of eternal recurrence escapes us, though he asserts it did not for *Nietzsche*; in other words, eternal recurrence had a concrete existential significance for him but not for us. Therefore, as far as we are concerned eternal recurrence has a genuine philosophical significance, but not an existential one – it merely finalizes the death of God by putting an end to all other-worldliness and overcomes the nihilism inherent in such a destruction (Hatab 1978: 110).



Hatab, however, tries to establish the opposite, that the eternal recurrence is the cause of God's destruction:

eternal recurrence has an existential-onto-logical dimension, a world-grounding vision from which everything in Nietzsche's thought, including the death of God, follows. The eternal recurrence is a consequence of the death of God; on the contrary, the death of God follows from the vision of the world as valuable and sufficient in itself, as eternally recurring (Hatab 1978: 110).

If Hatab is right, then Zarathustra must already be the teacher and affirmer of the eternal recurrence when he announces the death of God in the Prologue. Yet this fact is explicitly revealed by Nietzsche only in Part III. Until then, he merely uses various images of eternal recurrence, which lends the eternal return a poetic turn.

Jaspers' question of the relation of being and becoming within the concept of the eternal recurrence of the same is as important as his question of primacy in the relation between the eternal recurrence and the death of God. First, Jaspers correctly notes that Nietzsche's concept of eternal recurrence as an imperative paradoxically provides an infinite number of possibilities to choose from. The new imperative "so to live that you must wish to live again" is "a mere form, capable of receiving a limitless number of contents.... This imperative does not demand definite types of action, ways of behavior, and modes of living; it even leaves room for the most radical contrasts and for judgments that mutually exclude each other as contrary with respect to value" (Jaspers 359). Second, Jaspers, much like Löwith, notes the incompatibility of Nietzsche's existential injunction with the cycle of eternal return. "The *inevitably predetermined* becoming within the ring of eternal recurrence and the *freedom to live* under the new imperative in such a way that I will *want* to relive this life forever seem to exclude one another" (Jaspers 362). At this point Jaspers wavers between the eternal recurrence as primarily "a *physico-cosmological hypothesis*" (*ibid.*) and the eternal recurrence as the unity of moment and eternity incorporated

into the will. He concludes by appealing to Nietzsche's motto *amor fati*, whereby freedom and fate are one (367). Love of fate, according to Jaspers, "seizes being within becoming" (368). In other words, Nietzsche is seen as the advocate of active submission to fate (369), which makes one feel the presence of an *existential* circle in Jaspers' interpretation of the eternal recurrence still entrenched paradoxically in its *cosmological* implications, which, like other various versions of the cosmological circle of the doctrine as a scientific hypothesis, can be further countered by the *imaginary* circle with normative implications in Soll's interpretation of the eternal recurrence as a *possibility*.

## **2. Soll: ER as a Possibility**

The eternal recurrence as an existential ideal is a variation of Kant's categorical imperative. The psychological aspect of the eternal recurrence is based on this sentence from GS 341: "The question in each and every thing, 'Do you desire this once more and innumerable times more?' would lie upon your actions as the greatest weight." In this regard, those who reject the cosmological version have advocated the *normative* interpretation: one should act as if the doctrine were true.

Ivan Soll, for example, views eternal recurrence as a mere *possibility* that could have a profound psychological effect on us (324, 325). He builds his argument on Nietzsche's note: "Even if the repetition of the cycle is only probable or possible, even the thought of a possibility can deeply move and transform us, not just what we can perceive or definitely expect! What an effect the possibility of eternal damnation has had!" (XII, 119)" (Nietzsche cited in Soll, "Reflections on Recurrence", 325). The eternal recurrence as the greatest psychological weight, therefore, does not have to be true to have us well- or ill-disposed towards ourselves and the world (Soll 323). Furthermore, Nietzsche did not consider it necessary to publish the logical

proof for the doctrine precisely for this reason, and not because he was uncertain about the plausibility of its demonstration: “all that is really required is a demonstration of the doctrine’s possibility” (325).

While Soll looks at the eternal recurrence as the greatest weight that *should* weigh upon one’s actions, Sterling believes that, for Nietzsche, it in fact *does* weigh upon one’s actions “as the greatest stress” (Sterling 274). Sterling holds that Nietzsche “is principally making a *factual claim*” (*ibid.*), which, as we know from our previous discussion, would erode the will. To be different or indifferent about the eternal recurrence (for example, of joy and suffering) is a second issue, he believes. He further makes two objections against Nietzsche and Soll: 1) there will always be “individual differences” in terms of believing in the eternal recurrence, i.e., different people will take the eternal return differently, not necessarily as the greatest weight; and 2) the remoteness of the future recurrence of the self diminishes the impact of believing in the doctrine, i.e., for example, I would be more concerned, says Sterling, if a planet-wide nuclear explosion was going to happen ten years from now, and even more concerned if it was going to happen ten minutes from now (Sterling 274, 275). Sterling’s objections are quite valid, but he is misled in assuming that the eternal return is an objective fact. Contrary to both Soll and Sterling, Loeb argues that “in both *The Gay Science* and *Zarathustra*, Nietzsche indicates the necessity of eternal recurrence” (Loeb 663).

But Soll’s version is problematic. In referencing Bernd Magnus’ *Nietzsche’s Existential Imperative*, Seung points out that “[i]f you assume its truth, it would have a crippling effect on your behaviour. You have to believe that whatever you do will be another repetition of what you have done countless times already in the past. You cannot even properly say that you are making

a decision because whatever you may decide has already been decided in the past” (Seung 124). So a decision is apparently ruled out.

Gilles Deleuze attempted to eliminate this crippling effect by letting go of the past and holding on only to the future of the eternal return, which, in his reading (*Nietzsche and Philosophy* 68), prescribes the following practical principle, as epitomized by Seung: “Whatever you will, you should will it in such a way that you also will its eternal return” (Seung 124). Thus the agent should behave as if the entire future were open for possibilities and never be affected by the past events in the eternal return. “Faced with a totally open future, the agent functions as a truly creative agent. But such an open future cannot be permitted in the ring of eternal recurrence” (*ibid.*). That is, if the future is open, then there is no (closed) eternal recurrence.

The inference that may be drawn from the above discussion is that while Soll’s imaginary circle presenting the eternal recurrence as a *possibility* ousts Jaspers’ existential circle as outlined in the preceding section, the former is still amended by Deleuze’s futuristic circle in terms of his emphasis on the repetition of future rather than past actions, which allows for an open future perspective, yet leaves the cosmological taint after removing the imaginary aspect of Soll’s circle of repetition as a possibility.

### **3. Magnus: Attitudinal Version, ER as a Test and Ideal**

Dissatisfied with both the cosmological and normative versions of eternal recurrence, some commentators have advocated the *attitudinal* interpretation of the doctrine, as a *test*. Magnus says that this interpretation is not concerned with the truth value of the doctrine. It is designed by Nietzsche only for testing one’s attitude towards one’s own existence (*Nietzsche’s Existential Imperative* 142).

In this regard, in *Nietzsche's Existential Imperative*, chapter 3, "A Question of Nietzsche's Text", Magnus argues that much of Nietzsche's writing is motivated by "the presentation of an existential imperative and ontology in allegory which is designed to function as an alternative to the dominant tradition" (Magnus 70, 71). In other words, Nietzsche's idea of eternal recurrence functions as an "eternalistic countermyth" against the Platonic-Christian tradition (154). Its essence is as follows:

What the doctrine of eternal recurrence teaches is not what the world is, but how it might be taken, given a certain attitude toward it. That attitude is one of radical affirmation – indeed I have called it celebrating life – and is thus to be understood as the form of life which is no longer nihilistic... The doctrine of eternal recurrence is intended to capture the attitude of *Übermenschlichkeit* (154, 155).

Nietzsche characterized Christianity as Platonism for the masses (BGE, Preface). The reason for his critique of the tradition is that, as Magnus put it,

Both Platonism and Christianity suffer from persistent defects, namely the denigration of becoming, the justification of man and world by recourse to a beyond, a consolatory account of experience. Platonic-Christian 'otherworldliness' may be said to be symptomatic of decadence for Nietzsche, because it takes life itself to be a condition of distress, something to be surmounted (Magnus 165).

Thus, in order to overcome nihilism, as according to Zarathustra, the individual must learn to say, "Was *that* life? Well then! Once more!" (III "On the Vision and the Riddle" 1: 269), thereby responding in the affirmative to the question: "Do you desire this once more and innumerable times more?" (GS 341).

But is the eternal recurrence an existential ideal which should guide human action? Is it a test in the first place? My answer is no because any test requires a rational tester and a rational testee. In this respect, Hatab argues against the eternal recurrence as an existential ideal, insisting that one does not respond rationally to the question in GS 341 but rather spontaneously, that instinctive, spontaneous action is the core of the eternal recurrence: "It is not a reflective

criterion for action, but a call for spontaneous affirmation of action, regardless of criteria. It concerns the eternal value of action and not eternity as a measure for action; *Nietzsche is not a moralist*" (Hatab 1978: 111). It is true that Nietzsche does not prescribe action.

Action subsequent even to a consideration of eternal recurrence is action according to an external criterion, whereas Nietzsche's prototype is the man of instinct, he who acts in automatic harmony with the flow of life, through a breakdown of substantial criteria, with the strength and courage to trust the unconscious. In thus rejecting being and embracing becoming, it is spontaneous action which truly affirms the world-flux. Therefore, spontaneous, criterionless action *is* the affirmation of the eternal value of action; hence eternal recurrence cannot serve as a criterion for action, as the foundation of eternal recurrence is spontaneity. (Hatab 1978: 111)

Given that action, in fact, spontaneous action, is the foundation of the doctrine, "[e]ternal recurrence... is not 'come across,' it is *brought forth*; it is not true, but *made* true, willed. Again, the issue is not whether the eternal recurrence is 'true' or not (its objectivity) but the *mode of its apprehension*" (Hatab 1978: 105). The eternal recurrence is a circular experience of the self and the world. It can only be apprehended inwardly (*ibid.*). "The issue is not primarily cycles, but the *now*. In other words eternal recurrence is not the objective consideration of repetition but the inward *value* of the world, as *worthy* of repetition" (106).

But what is the condition of the emergence of eternal recurrence? The eternal recurrence, Hatab correctly stresses, emerges only after one first confronts negativity and affirms Becoming (111). "Again, eternal recurrence emerges as a *result* of a [-n Apollonian] vision out of [Dionysian] annihilation. Only *after* facing negativity does the world emerge as beautiful, i.e. as *positive-out-of-negative*, and hence as *worthy of return as it is*" (112). In this regard, it is worth recalling that Zarathustra confronts the negativity of the old saint in the backwoods, the herd in the market place, the hermits, the soothsayer, the small human, and the higher men. He later affirms the eternal recurrence of the small human symbolising this negativity. Hatab concludes by saying that

No ideal (including the eternal recurrence) can itself prompt the affirmation of life, though it can raise the issue.... [T]his affirmation-out-of-negation is therefore the precondition for eternal recurrence, and thus its psychological effect as a pre-established formula is only a consequence of its emergence through a visionary (Nietzsche), and merely a prelude to its appropriation (by us) out of the affirmation of Becoming. Again, it is the leap into the negative that is the starting-point for Nietzsche's thought (cf. Z "The Tree on the Hill"); so too, eternal recurrence must begin here, and not be distorted by interpretations which limit it to the psychological effect of an abstract theory or ideal (Hatab 1978: 112).

The eternal recurrence, therefore, is not an abstract ideal but a consequence of an affirming experience, and only then an ideal. Existence precedes essence. Nietzsche first experienced affirming vision, then communicated his desire for eternal recurrence.

Translated into the language of the circle, the above discussion shows that Magnus' *attitudinal* circle – when the question whether the eternal recurrence can be lawfully regarded as true or false is no longer a question in repute (i.e., a question that one should no longer be concerned with) – is a calculated and devastating blow to both Soll's and Deleuze's circles, which yet gets absorbed in the softness of Hatab's desired circle of mere repetition (where 'circle' is used figuratively): that is, Hatab's spontaneous desired response to existence as worthy of recurrence or repetition is no longer Magnus' implicitly rational response to recurring life intended as a test. Hatab's idea of the mere repetition of the same can be further considered in seemingly opposing, Deleuzian terms – as the same repetition of differences.

#### **4. Deleuze: ER of Differences**

While Hatab interprets the eternal return as the desire to relive (affirm) the same – the circle of *repetition* – Deleuze reads the teaching as the desire to relive (affirm) the sameness in difference – the circle of *repeated diversity*. According to Deleuze, what returns, then, is not the same but the different, the singular, something that is new, life-enhancing and life-affirming, in short, a *selective being*; "recurrence is itself affirmed by the passage of diversity or multiplicity"

(Deleuze 1985: 86). In other words, the Deleuzian diversity (and diversity in action) repeats and affirms itself eternally so that it transforms the Hatabian desire for the same – the circle of *repetition* – into the desire for the same character of the different (different moment and action) – the *circle (repetition) of the (same) character* of the different, a new version of the Deleuzian futuristic circle outlined above, which does away with the implicit remainders of the cosmological circle of the eternal recurrence as a possibility (Soll) while charting a new course in the exploration of the moment as repetition (I will expand on this through Alan White’s and Ansell-Pearson’s interpretations below).

In view of life affirmation through the return of diversity, Deleuze points out that there are two versions of the eternal recurrence in *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, one represented by the “sick” Zarathustra and another by the “convalescent” Zarathustra. The sick Zarathustra is horrified to realise that the small human, and everything lowly, will also return eternally. The convalescent Zarathustra, however, is full of joy to realise that the creative, at once selective and exceptional *Übermensch* has sufficient will to power to affirm life in its difference and plenitude. Thus Zarathustra is different – reborn every morning, for example. But an attempt has been made (by Rosen, below) to read Deleuze’s interpretation away from the circle of repeated diversity inaugurated implicitly by Nietzsche’s doctrine of eternal recurrence. This attempt espouses the idea of the doctrine being a counterargument.

##### **5. Rosen: ER as Cosmology, Anti-Christian and Anti-Platonist**

In *The Mask of Enlightenment: Nietzsche’s Zarathustra*, Stanley Rosen attempts to reduce the Deleuzian circle of repeated diversity back into the cosmological circle by claiming that “Deleuze simply falsifies Nietzsche’s doctrine when he claims, very clearly in his *Nietzsche*



*and Philosophy*, that the eternal return is not the return of a particular arrangement of things, and so that ‘only action and affirmation return’ (xi)” (Rosen ix), as outlined above.

Rosen reads the eternal recurrence as conceived by Nietzsche against Christianity and Platonism, thus gravitating towards the cosmological version of the doctrine. Drawing on the chapter entitled “On Redemption” (Part II), Rosen argues that in the chapter entitled “On the Vision and the Riddle” (Part III) “Nietzsche offers the teaching of the eternal return as a replacement for the doctrine of Christian redemption... a substitute for the Christian gift of eternal life” (Rosen 177, 178). (Of note is that Loeb reads the doctrine as an anti-Socratic deathbed revelation – that life is not a disease but is worth living.) He points out that the eternal recurrence serves two purposes: “The anti-Christian character of the book takes the form of an alternative doctrine for the masses, whereas the anti-Platonist doctrine is reserved for the connoisseur, or ‘the happy few’ ” (177). More precisely, the eternal recurrence is both a new, anti-Christian doctrine for the masses (where the *circular* conception of time ousts the *linear* one – the Creation of the world and its subsequent development until the end of the world on the Judgement Day) and a new, anti-Platonist teaching for the wise and happy few (where the *temporal* conception of time replaces the *timeless* and eternal one).

As is evident, Rosen’s reading of Nietzsche’s doctrine of eternal recurrence in anti-Christian and anti-Platonic terms implies the presence of the cosmological circle in his temporal conception of time. It is suggested, in addition, that the following consideration of the latter – representing the cosmological and the existential version – as two sides of the same coin still does not disprove that the eternal recurrence is neither a circular nor a linear conception of the world. One rather needs to look away from cosmology towards the question of the meaning of human existence.

## 6. Seung's Reconciliation of Cosmology and Existence

In *Nietzsche's Epic of the Soul: Thus Spoke Zarathustra* (2005), T. K. Seung attempts to reconcile the cosmological with the attitudinal interpretation of the eternal recurrence by appealing to just two scenes in *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*. He takes the *gateway* scene and the *shepherd* scene to be the paradigm for the cosmological and attitudinal versions of the doctrine, respectively, in the chapter entitled "On the Vision and the Riddle".

If one has a truly affirmative attitude toward the thought of eternal recurrence, Magnus says, he has indeed become a superman. The shepherd writhing with a snake in his mouth may stand for the negative response to existence, but the same shepherd may stand for the positive response when he bites off the snake's head and becomes radiant. Hence the attitudinal interpretation appears to fit the shepherd scene, while the cosmological interpretation fits the gateway scene. But the normative interpretation cannot be applied to either scene (Seung 126).

To be more precise, according to Seung, the eternal recurrence has two dimensions rather than versions – *cosmological*, objective, represented by the gateway scene with the dwarf; and *existential*, subjective, represented by the shepherd scene with the snake.

The dwarf and the snake have come from the abyss [the chthonic forces, the animal self, the drives and instincts, the groundless ground] to elucidate two dimensions of the eternal recurrence. In the gateway scene, the dwarf portrays its cosmological dimension. In the shepherd scene, the dwarf becomes the snake [according to Loeb] and demonstrates its existential dimension. They are not two versions of the eternal recurrence, but its two dimensions. The existential dimension is subjective; the cosmological dimension is objective. One experiences the devastating impact of eternal recurrence only when one faces it as an existential subject. One does not experience such an impact as long as one considers the eternal recurrence only as an objective fact. These two dimensions of eternal recurrence are given as a vision and riddle to Zarathustra. He is not the author of the vision and the riddle, but only a humble recipient. As far as he is concerned, the eternal recurrence is the most abysmal (blackest and heaviest) thought that strikes him with nothing but horror. For this reason, he had felt that he was not worthy of pronouncing it on his own and had to wait for the worthier one [in "The stillest Hour"] (Seung 131).

Seung's interpretation implies that the cosmological dimension of the eternal recurrence, which, according to him, must be experienced existentially, is circular in character. The young shepherd,

Zarathustra, must and does kill the snake, a circular image for the eternal recurrence as cosmology. One either affirms, like Zarathustra, or negates the circle of recurrent existence. At bottom, Seung's interpretation borders on the cosmological and the existential version. If Jaspers, for example, remains undecided as to how to reconcile the two, unless it be through *amor fati*, Seung has Zarathustra affirm the circle of recurrence, whereas on Magnus' reading, Zarathustra would affirm the repetition and not the circle.

In summary, the *existential* circle in Jaspers' interpretation of the eternal recurrence as active submission to fate is heavily steeped paradoxically in its *cosmological* implications. Soll's imaginary circle with normative implications within the eternal recurrence as a *possibility* replaces the various versions, including Jaspers', of the cosmological circle of the eternal recurrence as a scientific hypothesis. The emphasis of Deleuze's futuristic circle on willing the eternal return of actions in the open future slightly shifts Soll's perspective from the determined past to *future possibilities*, which removes the imaginative aspect of his circle but not the circle itself. Magnus' *attitudinal* circle – when the truth value of the eternal recurrence is not in question any more – eliminates both Soll's and Deleuze's circles altogether while viewing the eternal recurrence as a rational *test*. Finally, Hatab's view of the eternal recurrence as the irrational desire to relive one's life an infinite number of times spontaneously collapses Magnus' attitudinal, cautionary circle into a desired circle of mere *repetition*, where the circle is used figuratively for the first time, for there is no discussion of the circle as such but the desire for repetition in this interpretation. To conclude, Hatab's argument against the eternal recurrence as an ideal and, instead, for the irrational desire to live one's life again coupled with Deleuze's reading the doctrine as the return of differences allowing for an infinite number of possibilities, with Rosen's view of Nietzsche as having anti-Christian and anti-Platonic intentions now being

shadowed by Seung's attempt at a reconciliation of the cosmological and existential versions as dimensions of the eternal recurrence, establishes that the doctrine is still neither a circle nor a line but, rather, that it should be further considered in life-evaluative terms.

Generally, the imputed circle in the various cosmologico-analytical, metaphysical, ethical, and aesthetic implications of the eternal recurrence considered in the preceding section was gradually supplanted by what came to be known as the same circle of repeated diversity through a careful analysis of the existential implications examined in the present section, which attests to the fact that the eternal recurrence cannot be conceived of as a circle, be it cosmological, metaphysical or even existential. The next chapter is devoted to the study of the existential implication of the eternal recurrence in light of repeated diversity within the eternal flow of time as presented in the second section of "On the Vision and the Riddle" in *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* with a view first to disproving the cosmological deductive implications of the doctrine and then arguing that the eternal recurrence of the moment allows for sameness and difference in existence.

## **Chapter 2: Analysis of the Eternal Return in “On the Vision and the Riddle”**

In order to grasp the meaning of the eternal recurrence in terms of life evaluation, one needs, I believe, to consider the doctrine in relation to time and eternity, where Hatab’s question of literal existentialness will rule out the metaphoric implication in Stambaugh’s reading while further inviting, though unsuccessfully, Loeb’s cosmological critique, which, like other cosmologico-analytical readings, will find its reflection in what will be constructed as a deductive argument in “On the Vision and the Riddle” 2. Hatab’s literal interpretation, however, will invoke the question of sameness and return to be thought through in terms of Ansell-Pearson’s temporal argument (aided by Alan White’s anthropological reading) for the eternal recurrence and the three types of the doctrine that I develop from it. Thus, this chapter argues that the eternal recurrence as the return of the moment is three-dimensional in character, which has an existential function consisting in affirmation of life.

### **1. ER as Metaphor (Stambaugh) vs. Literal Existentialness (Hatab)**

“ ‘Eternity’ is the only traditional concept of metaphysics which Nietzsche did not attack or reject” (Stambaugh 1). Why? “If there is no God or Spirit or One or Being to be eternally, what is it that is eternal? The only answer is that Nietzsche had a new and very problematic concept of eternity” (3). Preoccupied with Nietzsche’s view of time as a phenomenon in *Untersuchungen zum Problem der Zeit bei Nietzsche (An Investigation of the Problem of Time with Nietzsche, 1959)* and in *Nietzsche’s Thought of Eternal Return (1972, 1988)*, Joan Stambaugh argued that, for Nietzsche, there is no distinction between time and eternity – that, as Diethelme put it, “eternity could never be ‘in time.’ Return is the movement of time into eternity, constituting the same in the sense that there is *ultimately* no discrepancy between time and

eternity” (Diethe 84). “What was eternal for [Nietzsche] was the return of the Same” (Stambaugh 3). His concept of eternity, therefore, overrides the four basic traditional meanings of eternity:

- (1) linear endless time, or endless duration (prolongation);
- (2) eternal present or *nunc stans* (overcoming);
- (3) simultaneity of all the disparate, disrupted, successive, passing moments or parts of time (gathering together);
- (4) timelessness, or atemporal eternity (negation) (*ibid.*).<sup>24</sup>

To have outlined the meanings of eternity that Nietzsche rejects does not immediately tell one what time his doctrine of eternal recurrence advocates. What is clear at this point, however, is that Nietzsche does not accept the ordinary view of time – that time irrevocably flows from the future to the past while creating a sense of progress – nor does he reject the view of there being no time at all, something that Nietzsche’s idea of eternal recurrence is trying to capture (more on this below in this chapter). What Stambaugh means by Nietzsche’s doctrine rejecting the traditional meanings of time, Hatab explains, is that she

wants to think eternal recurrence not in the sense of occurring cycles of time, but as the occurrence of time itself<sup>25</sup>... Stambaugh wants to eliminate the idea of ‘stretches’ of time, time as a duration, either linearly or the cyclic return of duration. If so, recurrence would have to be seen as taking place in an instant, every instant.<sup>26</sup> Recurrence does not therefore suggest a series of repetitions but it rather becomes a *metaphor* for the unfolding of occurrences. She calls eternity sheer occurrence; recurrence ‘occurs’ only in the moment, never as durational cycles. All this is done to counter mechanistic and durational senses of time” (Hatab 1978: 112, italics mine).

Stambaugh’s interpretation, however, rules out the experience of “*this event*” (113). The eternal recurrence is not monotonous because “there is no recollection of past occurrences; each is identical; recollection would be an ‘addition’ ” (*ibid.*, footnote 184, 145). One simply enjoys the

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<sup>24</sup> For a detailed discussion of the time perspectives that Nietzsche rejects, see “5. Time Models” of this chapter (63 – 70, esp. 66 – 70), below.

<sup>25</sup> See Stambaugh 1972, 1988: 103.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.* 105.

same moment again and again. “Nietzsche sees repetition as the *only* expression of the (experienced) perfection of the moment...” (114). Simply put, in the joy of the *moment*, or in the moment of *joy*, the whole world is forgotten.

As is clear, Hatab critiques Stambaugh for turning the eternal recurrence into a metaphor. In fact, the eternal recurrence cannot be a metaphor (unless in the sense of always referring to a phenomenon, e.g., the ‘eternal recurrence’ stands for ‘repetition’) because it is quite direct in its meaning, hiding nothing behind it: “[t]he formulation is offered flatly, using no symbolic language whatsoever... [It is] not a metaphorical image employed solely for effect, or to mask some *other* thought or image” (Hatab 1978: 112).

In *Nietzsche’s Life Sentence: Coming to Terms with Eternal Recurrence* (2005), Hatab argues that the eternal recurrence is neither “[non]literal claim about the world”, nor “a metaphorical or symbolic expression of some insight or philosophical position that has nothing to do with literal repetition”, nor “an ethical imperative that can guide action” (Hatab 2005: 9). He stresses that “eternal recurrence should be seen as the only authentic expression of a Nietzschean life affirmation *by force of its literal meaning*” (*ibid.*). Existential life affirmation and repetition are not mutually exclusive. Hatab believes that “for Nietzsche, affirmation is a *response* to the idea of repetition that is in some way *given*, indeed [one] that Nietzsche claims came to him as an ‘inspired’ thought (which would be structurally consistent with an *übermenschlich* experience)” (*ibid.*).

Hatab, therefore, argues for the “existential literalness” of eternal recurrence (Hatab 1978: 90). The existential force of eternal recurrence is based on the belief in its literal repetition (91). Assumptions of the literal approach are that there is a “tendency to conflate the ‘literal’ and the factual”, that “[a] clear and substantive division between the literal and the metaphorical

cannot be sustained” and that it is not true “that *everything* in a text is hiding something” (92). Nietzsche is very clear, “sincere, straightforward, and committed to the idea of eternal recurrence *as written*” (*ibid.*). Both ‘literal’ and ‘factual’ are metaphoric, hence there is no distinction between the two. But Hatab wants “to understand the literal in a functional and performative sense rather than a descriptive sense. [He] begin[s] by calling the literal *as written* in place of the descriptive *as is*” (93).

...Nietzsche wanted us to take eternal recurrence *as written* and *as read* in an immediate sense, because if it were taken as symbolic of something other than repetition, or even as a hypothetical as-if, it would lack the existential force to draw out a concrete response to the issue of life affirmation. In other words, if the ‘virtual reality’ of eternal recurrence were to be recast as a reducible metaphor, a gesturing away from its direct sense, then its *power* to evoke meaning *by virtue of* its repetition scheme would be lost or weakened (99).

In this regard, Zarathustra is not “engaged in ‘a philosophical analysis’ of eternal recurrence; he [is] responding to its world-disclosive impact directly in terms of his own life and experience of meaning” (100). Reading the eternal recurrence *as if* it were true does not do justice to it because an immediacy during the experience of reading is lost; one is supposed to be immersed in it. One must read it as literally true (*ibid.*). In this sense the eternal recurrence is an externalising, not an internalising process. For Pierre Klossowski, too, the eternal recurrence is “not a representation” but “a *lived fact*” and “a *sudden* thought,” a necessary thought, Hatab adds (Klossowski 72, 73; Hatab 1978: 104).

Hatab thus calls for a ‘literal’ reading, which should combine three elements: “(1) the sense of eternal recurrence *as written*, (2) the effect of recurrence *as read* (which requires a momentary mimetic identification of reader and text), and (3) a background existential capacity (or incapacity) to ‘hear’ the life-affirming force of eternal recurrence” (106). In light of the above three points, Nietzsche requires both nonreflective (*how*) and reflective (*what*) reading. “The



existential element of Nietzsche's thought has long been recognized. Less evident has been the existential force of *reading* Nietzsche in a certain way, which means much more than simply responsive readers; Nietzsche's texts are *charged* by his life and are charged with the power to open up the reader's life" (*ibid.*). Allison stresses that as well in his *Reading the New Nietzsche*.

Thus, literal (factual, objective), (merely) symbolic, and (externally) ethical approaches are ruled out. Different interpretations of the literal and ethical approaches are suggested by Hatab. The sudden revelation of and the belief in literal recurrence takes the place of both metaphorical and ethical approaches, for metaphor, if upheld, rules out literal meaning (on which it is, contradictorily, in the long run based, for there is always literal meaning behind every metaphor) and ethics cannot be imposed on the individual, i.e., the internalisation of eternal recurrence suggested by Soll (recurrence as a mere possibility) is ruled out as well. The externalisation of eternal recurrence, on the other hand, allows for "a man-world (man-fate) unity" (Hatab 1978: 102, 116). For Hatab, "the ecstatic element of mimetic identification (man-world unity) has more of an *externalizing* immediacy in moments of sheer disclosiveness, which in a way *gives* the self a *world*" (101).

Taking mimetic identification as a guide, Hatab has "cited the 'myth-as-story' style of *Zarathustra* to argue for Nietzsche's interest in eternal recurrence as a conceptual myth (2005: 99). But he has no additional textual evidence for this claim" (Loeb 664), Loeb correctly notes, "other than Nietzsche's early remarks about the ancient Greek interest in myth and mimetic psychology (2005: 9–10, 95–101)" (*ibid.*). In this vein, "Hatab has argued that Nietzsche intended us to experience a theatrical, mimetic reception of eternal recurrence that requires a suspension of disbelief (2005: 99)" (Loeb 665). But Loeb, again, points out to Hatab that "he has no additional support for this claim besides the theatrical aspects of *Zarathustra*, Nietzsche's

tenuous association of theatre and eternal recurrence in *BGE* 56, and Nietzsche's early discussion of Greek tragedy" (*ibid.*). Although Loeb critiques Hatab's mythological interpretation of the eternal recurrence for lack or absence of evidence, he cannot for that reason disagree with the existential force of the symbolic representation of Zarathustra's doctrine.

In conclusion, Stambaugh believes that the eternal recurrence is a metaphor for the return of eternity, whereas Hatab insists that the doctrine is not a metaphor but a literal, mimetic experience, a myth. This is no argument for Loeb, who finds no evidence regarding the eternal recurrence as a myth, arguing instead for the cosmological version of the doctrine (outlined earlier, p. 28). Loeb's cosmological interpretation may be consistent with what seems to be a deductive argument for the eternal return provided by Zarathustra to the dwarf in "On the Vision and the Riddle" 2 (below), but it definitely rules out, as do the cosmological and analytical readings discussed above, Zarathustra's will, choice, and decision from his existential experience of time as what Keith Ansell-Pearson calls the eternal return of the moment (with anthropological implications, as according to Alan White), of which I believe there are three interrelated types. What, however, the two arguments have in common is the interconnectedness of all moments within the bounds of time, which is crucial for the role of the eternal recurrence in the evaluation of life. Consideration of both arguments will establish that the eternal return in and of itself is neither a line nor a circle. Additionally, before considering the newly proposed perspective of time and how it is related to life affirmation, it may first be worth outlining what time perspectives Nietzsche rejects. Let us proceed, therefore, by looking at the perspectival textual pre-setting of the eternal recurrence and the seemingly deductive mode of the doctrine's presentation before confronting it on existential temporal terms.

## 2. Zarathustra's Image

In *Nietzsche's Philosophy* (1960, tr. 2003), Eugen Fink is mistaken when he says that Nietzsche's cosmic conception of eternal return is "ambiguous", that it "lacks a clear conceptual definition and form [and that] [i]t rather resembles a somber prophecy or an oracular and mystical revelation than a rational conception. Zarathustra is the teacher of the 'eternal return'; however, he does not teach it, he merely indicates it" (Fink 80). First, Zarathustra does teach his doctrine; second, he does not merely indicate but argues for it; third, he teaches it by struggling with the very thought of eternal return and its expression. What follows below is a clear conception of the cosmological/rational argument for the eternal return as presented by Nietzsche in *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*. However, it is worth looking first at the image Zarathustra assumes before relating the doctrine of eternal recurrence as it sets the tone for an existential interpretation of his otherwise seemingly deductive argument.

In "On the Vision and the Riddle", before he relates his doctrine of eternal recurrence to the sailors, Zarathustra notably adopts the Odyssean image. In "Odysseus in the Mirror of F. Nietzsche's Experimental Philosophy" (2013), Aleksei Zhavoronkov points out that "...the introduction to one of the most famous and philosophically important passages, namely, Zarathustra's story of his dream-vision where he converses with the dwarf about the eternal recurrence, appears to be a peculiar address to Odysseus" (A. Zhavoronkov 283).<sup>27</sup> He further notes that "Nietzsche transforms Odysseus into the symbol of perspectival philosophy, for its principles are much in line with the Homeric hero's qualities: he does not claim to possess the single truth, but his behaviour reminds of a 'free spirit', constantly active and, like an artist, creating for himself ever new perspectives" (A. Zhavoronkov 284). In this connection, the image

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<sup>27</sup> Aleksei Gennad'yevich Zhavoronkov. See "4. Odysseus and the Way of the Philosopher" (283 – 288). Translations from the Russian of the title and quotes are mine.

of sea-waves infinitely forming on the surface of the sea symbolises the creation of a multiplicity of perspectives. Furthermore, the sea image symbolises infinite danger and infinite possibilities, while the Odyssean image represents infinite courage and infinite exploration as a response to the sea image. Likewise, Zarathustra is to summon explorative courage to respond to the infinitely dangerous *moment* open to infinite possibilities, while challenging the dwarf's weak, dreadful rational response to the severe question of elemental existence.

The Odyssean image of Zarathustra as one who is full of the experience of dangerous yet exciting adventures and sea voyages only adds to the vision of the loneliest one: the eternal recurrence of the same is his confession of his most abysmal thought which came as if from the depth of the *sea* – from his soul. The eternal adventurousness of the human soul and the groundlessness of the sea of the cosmos find their unitary reflection in the mirror of the loneliest one's sincere revelation of a new perspective of the self and the world: the eternal recurrence of the same.

Thus, the Odyssean image of Zarathustra anticipates the existential version of the eternal recurrence. Although Zarathustra's doctrine can be read in two ways – as a deductive argument consistent with the eternal return as cosmology and as the eternal recurrence of the moment, where both readings prove that time is neither a line nor a circle, only the existential version is supported by the Odyssean image.

In what follows it is shown that the eternal recurrence is the return of the moment through an act of will – that it is neither a circle nor a line as suggested by Zarathustra's two lanes of eternity or the dwarf's conception of time as a circle (at which Zarathustra gets angry) but, rather, that one always lives in the *moment*. For this purpose, it is necessary to understand what the doctrine means and how it is presented.

### 3. The Deductive Argument

In this section it is argued that Nietzsche provides an enthymematic deductive argument (an argument with a missing premise) for the eternal recurrence in “On the Vision and the Riddle” 2 – that as such it is neither a circle nor a line. The additional required premise (Premise 2 below) is given by him later on in the chapter entitled “On the Three Evils”. The argument is as follows:

Premise 1. Time is infinite (“On the Vision and the Riddle” 2)

Premise 2. Force is finite – enthymeme (“On the Three Evils” 1: 299)

Premise 3. All things are knotted together (“On the Vision and the Riddle” 2 and  
“The Drunken Song” 10)

Premise 4. Everything changes (“All is in flux”: “On Redemption” and  
“On Old and New Tablets” 8)

Conclusion: Everything returns (“On the Vision and the Riddle” 2)

The following elaboration on the premises and conclusion of the deductive argument will help to provide a clearer understanding of Zarathustra’s doctrine. For now, it is sufficient to show the elegance of the argument as presented in and constructed out of the text. The argument will be further subjected to a rigorous analysis in the section to come.

Premise 1.

In “On the Vision and the Riddle” 2, as already mentioned, Zarathustra presents an enthymematic argument for the eternal recurrence of the same. He compares time to two infinite lanes stretching in opposite directions and contradicting at the gateway called “Moment”.

„Siehe diesen Thorweg! Zwerg! sprach ich weiter: der hat zwei Gesichter. Zwei Wege kommen hier zusammen: die gieng noch Niemand zu Ende. Diese lange Gasse zurück: die währte eine Ewigkeit. Und jene lange Gasse hinaus — das ist eine andre Ewigkeit.

Sie widersprechen sich, diese Wege; sie stossen sich gerade vor den Kopf: — und hier, an diesem Thorwege, ist es, wo sie zusammen kommen. Der Name des Thorwegs steht oben geschrieben: „Augenblick“ (III „Von Gesicht und Räthsel“ 2, *KGW* VI 1, 195: 25 – 30; 196: 1 – 3),

or:

“Behold this gateway, dwarf!” I continued. “It has two faces. Two paths meet here; no one has yet followed either to its end. This long lane stretches back for an eternity. And the long lane out there, that is another eternity. They contradict each other, these paths; they offend each other face to face; and it is here at this gateway that they come together. The name of the gateway is inscribed above: ‘Moment’ ” (III “On the Vision and the Riddle” 2: 269, 270).

He then asks the dwarf whether the lanes will contradict each other eternally.<sup>28</sup> The dwarf responds that time is a *circle*: „ ‚Alles Gerade lügt, murmelte verächtlich der Zwerg. Alle Wahrheit ist krumm, die Zeit selber ist ein Kreis’ “ (III „Von Gesicht und Räthsel“ 2, *KGW* VI 1, 196: 7, 8), or: “ ‘All that is straight lies,’ the dwarf murmured contemptuously. ‘All truth is crooked; time itself is a circle’ ” (III “On the Vision and the Riddle” 2: 270). Zarathustra gets angry at the dwarf’s answer: „ ‚Du Geist der Schwere! sprach ich zürnend, mache dir es nicht zu leicht! Oder ich lasse dich hocken, wo du hockst, Lahmfuss, —und ich trug dich *hoch!*’ “ (III „Von Gesicht und Räthsel“ 2, *KGW* VI 1, 196: 9 – 11), or: “ ‘You spirit of gravity,’ I said angrily, ‘do not make things too easy for yourself! Or I shall let you crouch where you are crouching, lamefoot; and it was I that carried you to this *height*’ ” (III “On the Vision and the Riddle” 2: 270); and continues to say that infinite time means that everything has already been and will yet be an infinite number of times.

Premise 2.

What Zarathustra’s argument misses, however, is an additional required premise found in the chapter entitled “On the Three Evils” 1. In order for the argument to work, the infinity of

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<sup>28</sup> Lat. *contrādīcere* to gainsay, literally, ‘to speak against each other’ (Germ. *widersprechen* ‘to speak against’). The contradiction of two lanes of eternity is understood as a conflict between the old and the new as a result of on-going change, in particular a change of values, within time.

time requires the finitude of force in the world (so the world runs out to begin all over again). Upon waking one morning Zarathustra says that he has weighed the world and found it finite and complete. His wide-awake wisdom speaks as follows: „wo Kraft ist, wird auch die *Zahl* Meisterin: die hat mehr Kraft’ “ (III „Von den drei Bösen“ 1, *KGW* VI 1, 231: 18, 19), or: “‘Wherever there is force, *number* will become mistress: she has more force’ ” (III “On the Three Evils” 1: 299).<sup>29</sup>

### Premise 3.

In order for all things to interact and influence one another, there is need of interconnectedness between them. In “On the Vision and the Riddle” 2, Zarathustra also says that all things are knotted together: „Und sind nicht solchermaassen fest alle Dinge verknotet, dass dieser Augenblick *alle* kommenden Dinge nach sich zieht? Also — — sich selber noch?’ “ (III „Von Gesicht und Räthsel“ 2, *KGW* VI 1, 196: 22 – 24), or: “‘And are not all things knotted together so firmly that this moment draws after it *all* that is to come? Therefore—itsself too?’ ” (III “On the Vision and the Riddle” 2: 270). He confirms the importance of this premise by repeating it in “The Drunken Song” 10 as well: “Alle Dinge sind verkettet, verfädelt, verliebt, — — wolltet ihr jemals Ein Mal Zwei Mal, spracht ihr jemals ‘du gefällst mir, Glück! Husch! Augenblick!’<sup>30</sup> so wolltet ihr *Alles* zurück!” (IV „Das Nachtwandler-Lied“ 10, *KGW* VI 1, 398: 20 – 24), or: “All things are entangled, ensnared, enamored; if ever you wanted one thing twice, if ever you said, ‘You please me, happiness! Abide, moment!’ then you wanted *all* back” (IV “The Drunken Song” 10: 435).

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<sup>29</sup> Earlier in Part III, Nietzsche himself undermines the possibility of rationality, on which this anthropomorphic premise rests. See “Before Sunrise” 278 and my symbolic discussion of this in Chapter 6 (227 – 230) and Chapter 7 (311 – 313, 327, 328).

<sup>30</sup> Nietzsche’s real experience of the *Augenblick* in concrete existence, the *Augenblick* that Goethe, whom Nietzsche admired, wants to arrest in his *Faust*, has an anti-Romantic connotation, i.e., it opposes the sense of a beyond.

Premise 4.

Since the interrelation of all things operates by virtue of becoming, Zarathustra's necessary premise has to be that everything changes. He mentions this Heraclitean motto twice, first in relation to flight from becoming existence – from “the flux of things” – as eternal punishment: „,Oh wo ist die Erlösung vom Fluss der Dinge und der Strafe „Dasein“?“ Also predigte der Wahnsinn“ (II „Von der Erlösung“, *KGW* VI 1, 177: 1 – 3), or: “ ‘Alas, where is redemption from the flux of things and from the punishment called existence?’ Thus preached madness” (II “On Redemption” 252), then, extensively, in opposition to the “winter doctrine” – that „Alles ist im Fluss“ (III „Von alten und neuen Tafeln“ 8, *KGW* VI 1, 248: 4), or: “[e]verything is in flux” (III “On Old and New Tablets” 8: 313).

Conclusion.

Given the above premises, Zarathustra in “On the Vision and the Riddle” 2 draws the conclusion that everything, including this very moment, necessarily returns.

„Muss nicht, was laufen *kann* von allen Dingen, schon einmal diese Gasse gelaufen sein? Muss nicht, was geschehn *kann* von allen Dingen, schon einmal geschehn, gethan, vorübergelaufen sein?... Muss auch dieser Thorweg nicht schon — dagewesen sein?... müssen wir nicht Alle schon dagewesen sein?... müssen wir nicht ewig wiederkommen? —“ (III „Von Gesicht und Räthsel“ 2, *KGW* VI 1, 196: 15 – 18, 20, 21, 29, 30, 32, 33),

or: “Must not whatever *can* walk have walked on this lane before? Must not whatever *can* happen have happened, have been done, have passed by before?... Must not this gateway too have been there before?... must not all of us have been there before... must we not eternally return?” (III “On the Vision and the Riddle” 2: 270).

As has become evident, the deductive argument, as presented in “On the Vision and the Riddle” 2, is enthymematic in character as it misses the necessary Premise 2, which the fully constructed deductive argument borrows from “On the Three Evils” 1 for the deduction to take



place. As such, the argument for the eternal recurrence of the same does not make it look like either a line or a circle as it is a purely logical exercise, which requires further elaboration and critique.

It seems that the structure of Zarathustra's argument, as presented, pretty much resembles Nietzsche's argument for the eternal recurrence as cosmology in WP 1066 and, on this reading, the recurring world and its recurring time can be justly understood as a cycle symbolically represented by a *circle*. It seems, nevertheless, that from Nietzsche's exposition of the eternal return as the great year of Being there follows still a *linear* conception of time: the infinite cycles of being or time produce a chain of cycles which is not cyclical in itself, but *infinitely linear* in infinite time. As such, the infinitely linear time-chain of temporal cycles can be said paradoxically to eradicate the notion of time altogether. In other words, there is no distinction between time being linearly infinite and eternal and time being nonexistent as such. That is, *time stops* in the Cosmic Moment. Or *continues* infinitely, which is the same. But it stops only because it continues infinitely, not vice versa, for the temporal, the bodily, the changeable is primary or mysterious (natural, animal), while the timelessly eternal or the metaphysically transcendent is secondary or conceptual (metanatural, human). It seems that... It only *seems* that it is so! In fact, the circular conception of time is eradicated by the linear one which is in turn eradicated by its own conventional character. Deeper analysis of the eternal recurrence as cosmology – the ultimate circularity of the world – in terms of qualitative identity and numerical difference will shed more light on time being neither linear nor circular.

If the beginning and end of this universe is one sequential moment, then the beginning and end of another universe after the end of this universe is another sequential moment, and so on and so forth till the end of the chain of moment-universes gives birth again to this present

universe, locking it into a ring. The cycle will begin again in the same order and sequence and there will be as many cycles as there are variations. When one cycle of moment-universes reaches its end, another qualitatively same cycle begins, and so on and so forth *ad infinitum*. There happens to be a numerical chain of qualitatively same cycles of qualitatively same moment-universes. Does it lock into a ring? No, because the links of the chain of cycles of moment-universes are *numerical* or conceptual. It follows that the numerical *linearity* of cosmic time gains the *straight* upper hand over its *crooked* qualitative *circularity*. Yet the latter cannot be imagined without the former. Nevertheless, it should be remembered that the image of the linearity, much like the circularity, of the eternal recurrence is merely conventional and cannot therefore be used to understand the eternal recurrence: hence it is disproved.

It should be kept in mind that time is neither linear nor circular. Although Zarathustra himself presents time as two lanes abutting each other, he does not mean time to be linear in a literal sense. The linearity of time stands for the conventional perception of time as passing and never coming back, as according to the soothsayer's pessimistic prophecy: „,Alles ist leer, Alles ist gleich, Alles war!'... Umsonst war alle Arbeit“ (II „Der Wahrsager“, *KGW* VI 1, 168: 4, 5, 11), or: “ ‘All is empty, all is the same, all has been!'... In vain was all our work” (II “The Soothsayer” 245), because time is passing away, as if it were linear and irrevocable. What is the same for the soothsayer is the emptiness and futility of time.

As for the dwarf, he is quickly seduced to react to the *representation* of time, not to its content as Zarathustra envisions it. The dwarf inverts Zarathustra's conventionally linear representation of time into a circular one, as any *human* would do: to invert or pervert is human. The dwarf's logic is that if time is not linear as he thinks Zarathustra intends it to be, then automatically it is circular – a very *easy* (*leicht*) solution (cf. „Du Geist der Schwere! sprach ich

zürnend, mache dir es nicht zu leicht! Oder ich lasse dich hocken, wo du hockst, Lahmfuss, — und ich trug dich *hoch!*“), a rash decision, made by the dwarf, the spirit of gravity, the heavy (*schwer*) spirit, when he was brought *above* by Zarathustra, on account of the concept of time. Zarathustra resentfully chides the dwarf for making things too easy for himself. His anger is directed towards the spirit of gravity, the dwarf, taking things *lightly*, thinking lightly. In this connection, both the linearity and circularity of time are further shown to be disproved along with the deductive argument.

#### 4. An Objection to the Deductive Argument

In *Nietzsche's Teaching: an Interpretation of Thus Spoke Zarathustra* (1986), Laurence Lampert draws attention to two heroic deeds performed by Zarathustra, the teacher of eternal return: the slayings of the spirit of gravity (Socratic rationalism) in the dwarf scene and of the heavy black snake (willing the eternal return of the small human) in the young shepherd scene in “On the Vision and the Riddle” (Lampert 161, 162). He notes that Zarathustra’s vision is presented to courageous adventurers, sailors, who like to *guess* rather than *deduce* (III “On the Vision and the Riddle” 1: 267, 268; Nietzsche’s emphasis). Commenting on Zarathustra’s conversation with the dwarf, he writes:

From the perspective of the present moment, the paths to past and future appear contradictory, each leading further away from the other; concentration on the present with its alternative directions thus makes time appear to be *linear*.... His [the dwarf’s] conclusion about time [that time itself is a circle] is grounded in his view of truth, for he is the *rational* spirit that now knows all truth to be crooked, to be hidden by appearance that makes truth elusive. Consequently, he knows that the linearity of time apparent from concentration on the present moment is illusory, that time is a *circle* (Lampert 164, 165).... But Zarathustra uses the gateway to trap the Dwarf into refuting the apparent linearity of time. The dwarf is crushed not by stepping into the gateway, but by the thought of its return (Lampert 165: footnote 17, 337, all italics mine).

It seems that Zarathustra's being angry with the dwarf's view of time as a circle is associated with the fact that Nietzsche intended deduction to be the business of dwarfs, rational individuals.

In this regard, Zarathustra's anger, which remains unaccounted for on Lampert's part, must be honestly addressed. For Zarathustra is intent on trapping the dwarf into refuting not only the linearity, as according to Lampert, but also the circularity of time.<sup>31</sup> The dwarf, the symbol of Socratic rationalism and of pessimism engendered by the latter (as a consequence of the fact that life cannot be known), does not see the implications of his view of time as cyclical and infinite. His rational response that time itself is a circle is made in opposition to the eternal contradiction at the gateway Moment within the linear perspective of time. Zarathustra picks up the dwarf's response, developing it into what seems to be a rational, deductive argument for the eternal recurrence of the same, whose cyclical time is supposed to devour the dwarf itself. Zarathustra's enthymematic deductive argument is a *reductio ad absurdum*, specifically, a *reductio ad destructiorem*, i.e., it is directed at the dwarf's self-destruction: if the dwarf's position is that time itself is a circle and Zarathustra's inference, therefore, is that everything returns, then the dwarf himself must also return – die and be born again. This the dwarf cannot bear to endure and thus disappears.

What happens is that Zarathustra's intention to explain the meaning of the moment is, as is customary in sleep or dream-like visions, interrupted by the dwarf's unexpected comment about time, that it is a circle, and Zarathustra, now being angry, decides at this point to take the dialogue in what seems to be a different direction – in order to prove that the dwarf's own rationalism leads to self-destruction. While the dwarf struggles with himself and cannot bear his own return, Zarathustra, further on in the shepherd scene, fights and proves capable of conquering the necessary return of the small human (without whom existence cannot be

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<sup>31</sup> It is Zarathustra who is doing the refuting, but he does so through the dwarf's own hands.

complete) represented by the heavy black snake that has bitten itself fast in his throat by biting off the head off that snake – that is, by incorporating into his will the return of the small human as a necessary constituent of existence.

In reality, however, there is no need for a deductive argument for the eternal recurrence of the same if it reflects one's disposition towards oneself and life. It is sufficient to ask whether one would want to relive one's life, and an infinite number of times. It is possible, therefore, that Zarathustra had intended just that question when he asked whether the two lines would contradict each other eternally, before he encountered the dwarf's rational response, but had to transform his question into a seemingly deductive argument whose ultimate end is, simply, to question life affirmation, thereby showing the failure of the dwarf facing the meaninglessness of existence, the failure of rationalism as a flight from inconceivable becoming, and, therefore, the failure implicit in the deductive argument itself, at bottom an anthropomorphic argument. The latter discovers only itself through a re-arrangement of premises and conclusion – the concepts of finite force, infinite time, change, and interrelatedness, i.e., the characteristics of a cyclically finite yet infinitely linear rational circle – as is the case with any syllogism. The deductive argument, to conclude, is intended for rational dwarfs, whereas the question of choice, whether one would want to relive one's life an infinite number of times, is reserved for all other individuals, but primarily for oneself – for Zarathustra himself.

To return to Zarathustra's question of whether the two lines of time eternally contradict each other at the gateway called "Moment," his answer is possibly No. If time is viewed from the perspective of the present moment, so that there is a past, a present, and a future, then the contradiction is eternal. If, however, time is viewed from the perspective of the whole of eternity, where there is no longer any past, present, or future but one infinitely extending moment, then

there is no contradiction as such. The event at which all three conventional time spheres merge, as if in a circle, is Zarathustra's *moment* of eternal recurrence of the same.<sup>32</sup> It is of paramount importance now to distinguish between the dwarf's circle and Zarathustra's circle. The former's is rational whereas the latter's is symbolic. Zarathustra's circle, then, is the symbol for the eternal recurrence of the same as the eternal return of the same moment, such as is incorporated into his will: his will willing itself by willing all time, all moments. Besides being presented as a deductive argument, the eternal recurrence can be interpreted as the eternal recurrence of the moment. In order to define the meaning of the latter, it is necessary first to consider what time perspectives Nietzsche rejects.

## 5. Time Models

In this section it is demonstrated that Hatab's *default* argument for the eternal recurrence of literally the same existentially, which includes the discussion of Nietzsche's rejection of various time models, proves that the eternal recurrence is neither a circle nor a line, as one must come to terms with the repetition of literally the same on existential grounds. In particular, Hatab's argument, which considers various time models, will be shown to rule out both circular and linear representations of time, leaving one face to face with the repetition of literally the same existentially, or, to reverse it, it is on existential grounds that the time models are rejected.

In *Nietzsche and Eternal Recurrence: The Redemption of Time and Becoming* (1978) and *Nietzsche's Life Sentence: Coming to Terms with Eternal Recurrence* (2005), Hatab explores, among other things, the various approaches to time that Nietzsche, he argues, attempted to oppose by means of the eternal recurrence. Hatab correctly suggests that Nietzsche actually identifies the vector of the devaluation of time. "The terror of time can be compensated for in

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<sup>32</sup> See my discussion of Ansell-Pearson's interpretation of the eternal recurrence as the event of the moment, as well as Alan White's similar reading, in section 6 of this chapter (70 – 75).

one of two ways: time is either a circle or a line; there can either be a transcendental meaning *behind* events, thus restoring becoming, or one *outside* events (a future state) putting an end to temporal states and becoming. Here the issue of the devaluation of the world (and time) begins” (Hatab 1978: 122). Nietzsche, for his part, attempts to redeem the value of time through the eternal recurrence. In considering what time perspectives Nietzsche rejects, Hatab suggests that Nietzsche introduced a new conception of time.<sup>33</sup> “Perhaps Nietzsche’s experience of time is a ‘synthesis’ of linear and cyclic time, or more properly, a going-beyond the two” (96). Nietzsche’s conception of the moment, which Hatab understands as an event, is the foundation for the eternal recurrence. As Hatab further put it,

Nietzsche’s eternally valuable moment is transparent to Becoming, and in this way represents a ‘synthesis,’ or the overcoming of the opposition between linear time [attention to the moment per se, as exemplified by Christianity] and cyclic time [the moment as transparent to a transcendental archetype, as exemplified by ancient Greece]. The transcendental ground is no longer a mythical past, and the moment is no longer solidified out of the whole (127).

This is to say that both linear and cyclic time have to be disproved. Nietzsche’s conception of time – the eternally valuable *moment*, moment repeating itself *as if* in a *circle* – rules out both the Greek circle and the Christian line (to be considered below). Time, in reality, is neither linear nor circular: there is no return to the identical past, for example, and there is no past, present or future as such either. Nietzsche’s doctrine of eternal return, in this regard, implies a new conception of time and eternity. There is no difference between time and eternity now. Time is eternal. The eternal recurrence is a union of time and eternity, moment and sequence, transitory and permanent. The eternal recurrence is beyond the traditional notions of time as opposed to eternity (99). A brief review of the history of time perspectives will prepare the ground for

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<sup>33</sup> For a similar discussion of Nietzsche’s concept of time engaged in relation to the question whether the doctrine is literal or figural in character, see my discussion of Stambaugh’s metaphorical interpretation of the doctrine of eternal recurrence and Hatab’s critique thereof in section 1 of Chapter 2 (46 – 48), above.

considering the time models that Nietzsche rejects as according to Hatab's default argument for the eternal recurrence of the same.

The existence of meaning for Nietzsche would “*rise or fall* with eternal recurrence” (Hatab 2005: 58). Meaning and time, therefore, are intimately related. There has never been an agreement on the meaning of time, however. The ancient Greeks had a tragic view of time and the world, as passing and changing. For Sophocles, time drifted from darkness into light (*Ajax* 645 – 647). For Anaximander, time is a “fateful necessity” characterised by construction and destruction.<sup>34</sup> For Heraclitus, all is in flux; the *logos* is an exchange between opposite, changeable conditions. In Plato's *Timaeus*, time is a “moving image of eternity” (37d – 38c); reality consists of corrupt temporal states as images of eternal Forms. The existential problem, therefore, is how one lives in the temporal world. Aristotle's time is related to motion: now-points are distributed throughout the past, present, and future, to which Augustine adds memory, attention, and anticipation, while the Stoics viewed the world as a determined, eternal, cyclical repetition. The Judeo-Christian tradition introduced a linear concept of time, “history.” Time takes its inception from the creation of the world and goes through the fall of humanity to its salvation at the end of time. The “now” is outside of time – God, eternal. “Modern philosophy was launched as a departure from ancient and medieval thought in the light of the new mechanistic science of nature” (Hatab 2005: 60). Cause and effect, subject and object, *how* things move, not *why*, are given priority under Newtonian time. For Kant, time is an *a priori* construct. For Hegel, the realism of time is productive of the dialectic development of the Spirit culminating in the integration of the whole: reason and social justice; the history ends, but time continues (60, 61). For Schopenhauer, however, time and meaning are linked by the blind and

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<sup>34</sup> For the plays see David Grene and Richmond Lattimore, eds. *The Complete Greek Tragedies*.



aimless, eternal unified (irrational) Will; hence, one finds there no (rational) teleology as in Hegel. Generally,

...after the Greeks time was primarily understood in linear and/or teleological terms, either in the sense of scientific analysis of causal relations or in aims toward completed states. The Greek idea of temporal circularity was eclipsed. Yet the Greek introduction of a timeless eternity continued to play a role in Western intellectual movements, especially in the predilection for absolute, fixed warrants at the heart of knowledge. It is only in *early* Greek thought that we find the absence of an utterly time-surpassing eternity (one reason for Nietzsche's interest in that period) (Hatab 2005: 61).

In connection with the above outline of different time perspectives, Hatab's argument for the eternal recurrence of literally the same existentially seems very interesting. He believes that "Nietzsche's avowal of eternal recurrence can be said to harbor something of a default argument, in that eternal repetition, with respect to a concrete life affirmation, was in his view the only effective alternative to other conceivable approaches to the problem of time..." (7). He considers "six conceivable alternative models of time and meaning" that Nietzsche repudiates: "*positivistic, salvational, teleological, cyclical, pessimistic, and novelistic*" (86), arguing that "[e]ach of these possibilities can be diagnosed as projects of 'evasive diversion,' of overt or subliminal recoilings from saying Yes to the concrete conditions of life *as actually lived*" (7). Let us briefly explain them, beginning with the ancient Greek view (cyclical), moving on to the Christian vision (salvational and teleological) and concluding with the modern perspectives (positivistic, pessimistic, and novelistic).

The *cyclical model* exhibits rational necessity and "the consolation of an eternal realm beyond the temporal world (Plato and Aristotle)," as in the Stoics' view and Asian reincarnations, e.g. Hinduism (Hatab 2005: 7, 86). This pattern presupposes that there is no escape from the cycle of determinism in nature.

In the Greek view of time, exemplified by Plato in the *Timaeus*, time and its foundation, the permanent eternal archetypes are not separated. In view of this, time cannot be

conceived of as irreversibly changing; there must be the idea of recurrence, of repeating (perpetuating) the foundation. Time is a circle, an unchangeable changeableness (the *moving* image of eternity). Since time and its foundation are not separated, time must be repetitive to *preserve* the foundation; change must be repetitive to preserve the unchangeable; here change and the unchangeable are one reality (Hatab 1978: 125).

The Greeks had no history: for them, there is no beginning, middle or end (cf. Aristotle: everything is moving in the universe except for the “unmoved Mover”) in the cycle of existence, whereas the Christians had a linear history with a beginning and an end (*ibid.*), which led to a salvational view of time.

The *salvational* model is the product of the Christian creation of an absolute beginning and end, “a unique creation and ending of time, with a transformation into eternal salvation (Christian theology)” (Hatab 2005: 7), the “picturing [of] an end to temporal movement” (86). Perfection is reached outside of time. Psychologically considered, it is subterraneously based on a kind of existential, traumatic encounter with, yet recoil from, the temporal. Salvation is closely related to teleology.

The *teleological* model savours temporal movement toward completion, a sense of progress, possessed by utopian ideas (e.g. socialism) inside time (Hatab 2005: 86), providing thereby “a worldly progressive resolution of the fractured alienation of temporal negativity (Hegel and Marx)” (7). In Christianity, for example, time is linear and teleological. Every moment is defined by the end of all moments. Every moment is unique and, when past, is irreversible (Hatab 1978: 121). There can be two types of telos: a telos as an end in itself (akin to the salvational model above) and an open-ended telos (infinite novelty akin to the novelistic model below). Nietzsche rejects both types of telos. For him, affirmation of time is found within time and change, in the same eternal recurrence of (same) differences. “Nietzsche opposes all forms of global teleology, where the linear course of time is directed toward a resolution of

tragic negativity, either in terms of religious deliverance or worldly forms of progress” (Hatab 2005: 61). Thus, since Nietzsche’s purpose is to give meaning to the whole of *your* existence, not to all of life (62), for “the value of life cannot be estimated” (TI 2, 2), or “the total value (*Gesamtwert*) of the world cannot be estimated” (WP 708), he rules out the (objectively) linear representation of time in (all) human existence. This finds its reflection in Zarathustra’s Prologue. The representation of the human being as a rope stretched over an abyss and as easy to vanish – a rope between animal and Overhuman – symbolises the linear version of time. In terms of signifying the linearity of time, there is no distinction between the rope and the trip over the rope that the human makes from the beast to the Overhuman, the rope being a metaphor for the human being stretched across the abyss and the trip being a metaphor for the self-overcoming of the individual. Nothing makes the rope or the trip irreversible: danger is lurking behind every moment, e.g., a planet-wide nuclear explosion may obliterate life from the surface of the earth at any given instant. The rope stretched between two towers on which the tightrope-dancer walks also symbolises the linear version of time, the straight path to salvation. If the ropedancer reaches the other end, he will be safe and saved, but he does not. The way from the human to the Overhuman is therefore not linear, as there can be no linear, teleological passage from the human to the Overhuman. Those humans who follow the straight narrow line to reach their goal fall off it, go *under* and perish. Those who choose roundabout ways to themselves survive. Zarathustra realises his error in teaching the Overhuman to the herd of the marketplace by means of a linear representation of time, which the latter takes for granted. Time in *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* is thus not linear or teleological, but neither is it by any means cyclical (see section 4 of Chapter 2).

The *positivistic* model is concerned with objectivity, cause and effect, principles in science, the three time spheres – present, past and future, and existence inside such conventional

time (Hatab 2005: 86). Infinite scientific development with a rational perspective on existence is the basis of positivism. The problem with this model is that it “refus[es] to engage time as an existential problem” (7), but it may, if unsuccessful, fall into despair and pessimism.

The *pessimistic* model is characterised by the realisation of finitude and a complete pessimistic approach to it (87). Nietzsche admired Schopenhauer’s honesty about pessimism. Schopenhauer admits that when the person embraces the enjoyments of life, he “does not know that, by this very act of his will, he seizes and hugs all the pains and miseries of life, at the sight of which he shudders” (Schopenhauer I, 352). Schopenhauer answers negatively to eternal recurrence that he anticipates in the correlation of joy and woe: “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” (*ibid.* I, 352, 324). Nietzsche apparently differentiated between tragic wisdom (both creative and destructive) and pessimism (destructive) (WP 1029). Was he, then, out of his wits to embrace the eternal recurrence of his life?

The *novelistic* model – why did Nietzsche not choose this for endless creativity? (Hatab 2005: 87) He believes that novelty, “the idea of eternal novelty (which Nietzsche took to be the cosmological restoration of the old idea of divine freedom)”, with freedom implicit in it, is the old habit of teleological thinking – that novelty implies intention (7). According to this perspective, “[t]he world... is supposed to possess not only the intention but the *means* of every one of its movements at every moment so as to escape goals, final states, repetitions...” (WP 1062). In reality, however, “the world, as force, may not be thought of as unlimited, for it cannot be so thought of; we forbid ourselves the concept of an infinite force as incompatible with the concept ‘force’. Thus – the world also lacks the capacity for eternal novelty” (WP 1062). In this

regard, Hatab fathoms the psychological implications of this approach to the question of freedom and creativity as follows: “In rejecting repetition, the novelistic model betrays a dissatisfaction with life as it is, masked by its apparent celebration that the world *will* always be different (better?)”, not the same as proposed by repetition (Hatab 2005: 88, 89).

The task, however, is to face literally the *same*. Hatab concludes his default argument for the eternal recurrence of literally the same existentially by saying that “[g]iven the question of life affirmation, eternal recurrence comes forth as the only conceivable cosmic model that does not fall prey to a fugitive gaze *away* from life as lived” (89). Thus, all the above models of time (whether linear or cyclical) are rejected by the eternal recurrence on *existential* grounds. Nevertheless, Hatab’s existential interpretation, which implies the belief in the repetition of the same as personally experienced, does not in itself explain the meaning of the same.

But what is the ‘same’ for Nietzsche? In order to answer this question – in order to understand the meaning of the eternal recurrence – one must consider the ‘same’ in conjunction with the ‘moment’. Let us turn, then, to Alan White’s *anthropological* account of the doctrine and Keith Ansell-Pearson’s interpretation of the eternal return as the return of the *moment*, the character of which, I believe, must also be further considered in light of content or absence thereof.

## **6. The Temporal Argument**

In what follows it is shown that the anthropological account of Nietzsche’s doctrine (White) lays the ground for the eternal recurrence to be considered as the return of singular moments (Ansell-Pearson) inaugurated by the will willing itself through the moment of joy and thus redeeming itself from the affliction of past time while laying in its present moment the foundation for its future. As such, the eternal recurrence is proven to be conceived of as neither a

line nor a circle but to be of three types – the eternal return of meaninglessness, different meaning, and same meaning – and have the following life-evaluative function: affirmation of all life through the affirmation of one single moment.

In *Within Nietzsche's Labyrinth* (1990), Alan White interprets eternal recurrence *anthropologically* (meaning the doctrine serves to affirm one's own human existence) and *phenomenologically* (i.e., the doctrine is not an argument, but it *reveals* a human type that affirms life – the Overhuman), not cosmologically, but as “the resurrection of the Nietzschean soul, a resurrection not elsewhere or elsewhen or once and for all – not a single, decisive event in some hinterworld or distant future – but rather here and now and repeatedly, a re-creation of the soul and by the soul, on an earth that has regained the ‘innocence of becoming’ ” (White 73) – a resurrection or re-creation at every *moment* within the span of this his life, his only life, his *eternal* life, from the labyrinth of which there is no escape: the religious nihilist is convinced “that there must be a way out” (an afterlife) and the radical nihilist (one who denies truth) vilifies existence “from which there is no exit” (14). In this regard, one makes what one *wills* of one's soul on the basis of the material available from the past in the present (104). “In this my eternal life, I always return, and the structure of the moment (the present moment of two contradicting lanes – past and future) always returns, with its unknowable but singular future, as well as its inescapable past. To will the eternal return is to will this life” (101). What return(s), therefore, are/is the self and/in the moment, and the return of the moment as such is neither circular nor linear in character. In this vein, Ansell-Pearson, I believe, goes on to elaborate on the structure of the moment, the return of which White connects with the resurrection of the soul, i.e., eternal life, and finds that what returns is the *character* of the moment. To this we now turn.

In his article entitled “The Eternal Return of the Overhuman: The Weightiest Knowledge and the Abyss of Light” (2005), Ansell-Pearson claims that “[i]n *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* Nietzsche presents the eternal return in terms of the event of the moment” (Ansell-Pearson 14). On his reading, the doctrine – the eternal recurrence of the same – that Zarathustra presents to the dwarf in “On the Vision and the Riddle” 2, means the eternal return of “the character of the moment” (*ibid.*). He writes that “...the innocence of becoming, of time as such, is to be restored.... where time *qua* transience is conceived as the *moment* that both gathers and splits up the past and future. This curious ‘moment’ (*Augenblick*) is the event” (13, italics mine). When the moment splits up the past and future, change, becoming, suffering, and death set in. When the moment gathers the past and future, time disappears, happiness is enjoyed, and immortality is achieved through the eternal return of the same moment, the *same innocent character* of the moment which desires itself, its own return (15). The moment “inaugurates itself”, it begins itself every moment (*ibid.*). The innocence of each *singular* moment keeps coming back with every moment, hence no past, no present, no future. Eternity is one big same innocent moment now. Thus its will is liberated from the pastness of time. Zarathustra’s short sleep in “At Noon” becomes the symbol for timeless time gathered into one single moment, the moment of affirmation – so the whole world seems asleep. Such a sleepy state of consciousness allows for the redemption from the ordinary understanding of time as *linear*, as *affliction* (GS 314). Time is innocent, full of chance, exists without any purpose, and is eternal – time is eternity (Ansell-Pearson 16) through the affirmation of the whole.

In this regard, Ansell-Pearson rightly notes that the dwarf, in responding that time itself is a circle, misunderstands Zarathustra’s doctrine because

he [the dwarf] does not experience the *weight* of the thought that concerns the eternal return of the moment as the same. It does not matter how far one goes along the two lanes

[of eternity], whether the lane that lies behind or the lane that lies ahead, the *character* of the moment will always be encountered as the same (14, italics mine).

The evidence Ansell-Pearson offers in support of his argument, citing a section of the text to which we have already referred, is that “Zarathustra provides the decisive insight when he declares: ‘Are not all things bound fast together in such a way that this moment draws after it all future things? *Therefore*—draws itself too? [...] all things that *can* run *must* also run once again forward along this lane’ ” (*ibid.*). What Ansell-Pearson means by the “character of the moment” is its singularity. “[T]he eternal return of the moment as a singularity” serves to dissolve the eternal contradiction between the past and the future (*ibid.*). Reading the eternal recurrence as the eternal recurrence of the character of the moment disproves both linear and circular conceptions of time. “The image of the circle of time posited by the spirit of gravity is unable to grasp the deep well and abyss of time. Only this image can give us the moment as one of ‘eternity’, the duration of which is not to be thought in terms of our ordinary linear conception of time (as chronological succession, for example)” (15). Indeed, only “a moment that inaugurates itself and that, as such, desires itself and to the point of desiring its eternal return” can do justice to the interpretation of the doctrine (*ibid.*). “For Zarathustra it even has the appearance of the *disappearance* of time” (*ibid.*):

Still! Still! Ward die Welt nicht eben vollkommen? Was geschieht mir doch?  
Wie ein zierlicher Wind, ungesehn, auf getäfeltem Meere tanzt, leicht, federleicht: so —  
tanzt der Schlaf auf mir... — Was geschah mir: Horch! Flog die Zeit wohl davon? Falle  
ich nicht? Fiel ich nicht — horch! in den Brunnen der Ewigkeit?... „— wann, Brunnen  
der Ewigkeit! du heiterer schauerlicher Mittags-Abgrund! wann trinkst du meine Seele in  
dich zurück?“ (IV „Mittags“, *KGW* VI 1, 338: 23, 24; 339: 1, 2; 340: 7 – 9; 341: 5, 6),

or:

Still! Still! Did not the world become perfect just now? What is happening to me? As a delicate wind dances unseen on an inlaid sea, light, feather-light, thus sleep dances on me.... What happened to me? Listen! Did time perhaps fly away? Do I not fall? Did I not fall – listen! – into the well of eternity?... “When, well of eternity? Cheerful, dreadful



abyss of noon! When will you drink my soul back into yourself?” (IV “At Noon” 388 – 390).

In “The Drunken Song”, after his experience of timeless time, Zarathustra asks where it has fled and whether he has fallen into deep wells of sleep and forgetfulness. “Only when he experiences this silent time of death can he say that the hour approaches...” (Ansell-Pearson 15):

Wehe mir! Wo ist die Zeit hin? Sank ich nicht in tiefe Brunnen? Die Welt schläft — Ach! Ach! Der Hund heult, der Mond scheint. Lieber will ich sterben, sterben, als euch sagen, was mein Mitternachts-Herz eben denkt. Nun starb ich schon. Es ist dahin. Spinne, was spinnst du um mich? Willst du Blut? Ach! Ach! der Thau fällt, die Stunde kommt — — die Stunde, wo mich fröstelt und friert, die fragt und fragt und fragt: “wer hat Herz genug dazu? — wer soll der Erde Herr sein? Wer will sagen: *so* sollt ihr laufen, ihr grossen und kleinen Ströme!” — die Stunde naht: oh Mensch, du höherer Mensch, gieb Acht! diese Rede ist für feine Ohren, für deine Ohren — *was spricht die tiefe Mitternacht?* (IV „Das Nachtwandler-Lied“ 4, *KGW* VI 1, 394: 17 – 29; 395: 1, 2),

or:

Woe unto me! Where is time gone? Have I not sunk into deep wells? The world sleeps. Alas! Alas! The dog howls, the moon shines. Sooner would I die, die rather than tell you what my midnight heart thinks now. Now I have died. It is gone. Spider, what do you spin around me? Do you want blood? Alas! Alas! The dew falls, the hour approaches – the hour when I shiver and freeze, which asks and asks and asks, “Who has heart enough for it? Who shall be the lord of the earth? Who will say: thus shall you run, you big and little rivers! The hour approaches: O man, you higher man, take care! This speech is for delicate ears, for your ears: *What does the deep midnight declare?*” (IV “The Drunken Song” 4: 432).

To wit, the revelation and proclamation of the eternal return takes place at midnight, symbolic of dead time: “Although nothing happens here, or at this moment, everything changes” (Ansell-Pearson 15). Concluding his thoughts on Zarathustra’s conversation with the dwarf, Ansell-Pearson writes:

Where the dwarf goes wrong is in fixing his gaze on the circle and losing sight of the singularity of the moment that makes the circle appear. The moment calls the future into being and redeems the past, and it is this moment that heralds the eternal return of the same. The dwarf does not experience the urgency of this insight. The eternal circulation of all things is marked by a set of *singular* becomings and events, including our overhuman becoming and event. The eternal recurrence of the same entails the return of

singularities, including the singularity that is to prove so decisive for the future of the human (19).

The singularity of the moment, however, does not “[make] the circle appear” (*ibid.*), for time cannot be imagined as a circle. Perhaps Ansell-Pearson uses the term ‘circle’ figuratively, as if the eternal *return* of singularities were in a *circle*.

Furthermore, as previously mentioned, the character of the moment is the same (18); yet the content of the moment may be different. What is implicit, therefore, in Ansell-Pearson’s reading of Zarathustra’s doctrine is that the eternal return of the character of the moment as a singularity presupposes the return of sameness (the empty, meaningless character of the moment open to an infinite number of meaningful possibilities) and difference (different meaning that can be given to every empty, meaningless moment), and the eternal return of the moment that is given the *same* meaning.

In this regard, what Nietzsche or Zarathustra calls us to do, I believe, is to give the same and/or different meaning to every meaningless moment of existence.<sup>35</sup> Existence, unless given meaning, is characterised by meaninglessness. If the meaninglessness of the moment can always be the same while its meaning can be both different (as compared to its other meanings preceding or following it) and the same, then the following three types of sameness can be established in the eternal recurrence of the same:<sup>36</sup>

- (1) the same character of meaninglessness (possibility) in every empty moment;
- (2) the same character of different meaning given to every empty moment;
- (3) the same character of the same meaning given to every empty moment.

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<sup>35</sup> The content of the moment, of the meaning given to the moment, pertains to the three creative manifestations of human existence – science, philosophy and art – or, in the case of the overhuman, to a synthesis of all three.

<sup>36</sup> The *des Gleichen* in ‘*der ewige Wiederkehr des Gleichen*’ (the eternal recurrence of the same) means same and not identical, which is what allows for similarity and difference in existence. The *des Selben* does not include difference but must be identical.

From this there follows three types of eternal recurrence:

- (1) the ER of same meaningless moments;
- (2) the ER of same different meaningful moments;
- (3) the ER of same same meaningful moments, or the ER of the Moment  
that has the same meaning.

The first type of recurrence would correspond to the demon's recurrence as presented in section 341 of *The Gay Science* (and the dwarf's representation of it as a meaningless circle in *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*). Only the second and third contain meaning. The second allows for differences in the eternal recurrence (and redeems time as becoming, or resurrects the soul, in White's terminology). But only in the third case, when every same empty moment is filled with the same meaning, does it happen that the moment eternalises itself and the whole of time to the point that time disappears altogether (including the meaninglessness of all time) – that one is redeemed from time as becoming. This is Zarathustra's Moment, one into which he lapses ("At Noon") and through which he is married or ringed to eternity ("The Seven Seals" and "The Drunken Song"). It is a moment of inspiration and joy, a moment of bliss and forgetfulness, where all past, present, and future merge together into one whole. It is a rare moment, and Zarathustra does not remain engrossed in it for a long time so as not to lose touch with the real world.<sup>37</sup>

In conclusion, while White's anthropological account of eternal recurrence lays the ground for Ansell-Pearson's temporal argument, the latter helps to develop the three types of eternal return, two of which (2 and 3) are the responses to the return of meaningless existence

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<sup>37</sup> Karl Schlechta reads Zarathustra's short dream in „Mittags“ (“At Noon”) as a secularized heaven. Yet the eternal recurrence affects even the *großer Mittag* – the Great Middyay, „als Stunde einer rein menschlichen Entscheidung“ (Schlechta 60), or “as the moment of a purely human decision” (translation mine), which Zarathustra experiences as a very short moment of rest. See Karl Schlechta, *Nietzsches großer Mittag [Nietzsche's Great Noontide]* (57, 66, 70 – 72).

(1). What follows is a consideration of the relation of Zarathustra's response to existence to the demonic representation of existence in GS 341 on the basis of these three types of eternal return.

### **7. ER as Life Affirmation**

Zarathustra's praise of the Moment and Eternity in "At Noon" and "The Seven Seals (Or: the Yes and Amen Song)", respectively, could be read as a response to the question raised by the prophetic voice in GS 341: How well-disposed would you have to become towards yourself, your life, and the world in order to crave the eternal recurrence of existence? The first type of recurrence, as outlined above, is commensurate with the demon's meaningless existence as presented in GS 341. Both the second and third reflect one's (Zarathustra's) response to the meaningless existence represented by the first type of recurrence.

The demonic parable is addressed to the loneliest human being. The loneliest loneliness stands for the meaninglessness and emptiness in existence: the world is stripped of all meaning, it is alone and naked, after all gods have died. The demon itself is not merely the spokesperson for, but the very incarnation of, those characteristics of the world. Not only is this meaninglessness present in one particular moment but it is also eternalised by the demon for all time: the eternal recurrence of meaningless, empty moments.

The question posed at the end of the section is, if paraphrased: How does one respond to one's meaningless, empty existence? Would one be absorbed into its vacuum (demon) and become dissolved (death)? Or would one fill its infinite void (god) with infinite meaning (life)? This question is intended to compel one to act in a freely chosen way: one either succumbs to one's own emptiness, remaining unproductive forever or fills it with content, thereby sealing creativity. The demon's eternal recurrence of empty moments is a divine necessity and the *only*

possibility for the god's eternal recurrence of full/filled moments. Everything else depends on you – that is, you have the freedom to choose the demon or the god in the demon.<sup>38</sup>

Speaking of the eternal recurrence symbolically, the empty circle of the demon's eternal recurrence (the dwarf's view of time as abstractly and literally circular) is overcome by the full/filled circle of the god's eternal recurrence (Zarathustra's view of time as meaningfully and metaphorically circular, i.e., as whole or complete).<sup>39</sup> By choosing Zarathustra's circle, one consumes the dwarf's circle.

In other words, in GS 341 Nietzsche discloses the meaninglessness of existence in such a way that one may now be pressed to respond to it. One's response determines what one is. Now respond and become who you are! The demon or the god? The dwarf or Zarathustra (cf. "Dwarf! It is you or I!" or "It is I or you!" says Zarathustra in III "On the Vision and the Riddle" 1, 2: 269)? The Last Man or the Overhuman?<sup>40</sup>

It is possible that if the question of attitude towards life is what is intended by Nietzsche in GS 341 and he means, as in "The Drunken Song" of *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* (IV, 10: 435), that affirmation of a single moment necessarily entails the affirmation and return of all existence, the dreadful parable of the demon – that one is to relive one's life and all of its unfavourable moments an infinite number of times – is presented to the loneliest one (cf. Zarathustra's doctrine is called "the vision of the loneliest", i.e., Zarathustra's vision, p. 268) from the implicit perspective that one must have already affirmed at least one single moment of one's existence miserable in all or some of its other moments. GS 341 could be read as an implicit appeal to life

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<sup>38</sup> To choose the demon in the god in the demon would be to render one's existence meaningless.

<sup>39</sup> I use symbol and metaphor interchangeably throughout the text. However, there is a difference between the two. For the metaphoricity of symbol and the difference between symbol and metaphor, see footnote 81 in Chapter 5, section I, p. 150.

<sup>40</sup> These are not binaries, not opposites for Nietzsche. The Overhuman includes the Last Man, whereas the Last Man does not necessarily become the Overhuman.

affirmation through the joyful moment that has already occurred in one's life. This appeal, however, is concealed from one's view. What is made known to the reader is the consequence of a single affirmation – to live through all suffering again.

How does the affirmation of all life, of all time, happen through the affirmation of one single moment? The eternal recurrence can be understood in terms of life affirmation through the affirmation of one single moment through joy, using the following logical explanation:

1. All moments are knotted together in the sequence of eternal time.
2. To affirm one moment means to affirm all other moments, past, present, and future.
3. To affirm something means to desire to *relive* or *return* it.
4. Therefore, to affirm one moment is to desire to relive or return this and all other moments.
5. Therefore, if at least one moment is affirmed by the human will, then all other moments are affirmed or desired to be relived or returned.
6. If one desires to relive or return all moments, does one necessarily relive or return them? (Let us keep this question in mind.)
7. Furthermore, one's life is but a moment within the sequence of eternal time.
8. If one affirms at least one moment in one's life, one thereby affirms all eternity.
9. If one thus affirms all eternity, one desires its return.
10. If one thus wills the return of eternity, one wills the return of one's own existence.
11. If one thus desires to return or relive one's own existence, does it necessarily mean that one returns or relives one's own existence? (Let us keep this question in mind.)
12. If desire means lack of something, then the will has no access to the object of desire.
13. If desire means possession of the object of desire, then the will has access to it.
14. To have access to the object of desire is tantamount to reliving or returning it.

15. If the will has access to one moment, then it reaches to all other moments.
16. To possess or have access to all time, therefore, is tantamount to reliving or returning it.
17. To relive or return all eternity is to reach immortality.
18. Therefore, if one ever affirms just one single moment in one's life, then one immortalises oneself: "Your life is eternal!" says Nietzsche.

Perhaps in his seminal note: „Meine Lehre sagt: so leben, daß du *wünschen* mußt, wieder zu leben ist die Aufgabe – du wirst es *jedenfalls!*... Es gilt *die Ewigkeit!*“ (KGW 9: 11 [163], 505), or: “My doctrine says: the task to live in such a way that you must wish to live again – you will anyway!<sup>41</sup> ... That is *eternity!*<sup>42</sup>” (KGW 9: 11 [163]), Nietzsche means to ask for just one joyful moment to eternalise existence. He adds “you will anyway” not because of the cosmological necessity, but because he believes that it is impossible that the human being has never experienced a tiny bit of joy, which would automatically compel him or her at once to affirm all of his or her existence.

In conclusion, the above discussion exhibits a certain relation between what seems to be a deductive argument for the eternal recurrence (outlined at the beginning of this chapter) and the argument for life affirmation. Whereas the former seems logical while the latter is merely attitudinal, Nietzsche's emphasis on the interconnectedness of all moments in both arguments, as has been shown, harbours the key to the link between the two. Indeed, the determinism within the sequence of moments or events as according to the deductive argument is similar to that within the sequence of moments as according to the argument for life affirmation: Zarathustra's implication that an occurrence of one particular event necessarily entails the occurrence of another through the relation of finite force (III “On the Three Evils” 1: 299) and infinite time (III

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<sup>41</sup> Cited in Loeb 2013: 662.

<sup>42</sup> Translation from the German mine.

“On the Vision and the Riddle” 2: 270) is similar to his overt statement that by affirming one joyful moment one necessarily affirms all other moments, past, present, and future, since all things are knotted together (IV “The Drunken Song” 10: 435), which is presented as the return of the moment (III “On the Vision and the Riddle” 2: 270). It has therefore been additionally established that what seems to be a deductive argument for the eternal recurrence in “On the Vision and the Riddle” 2 coupled with “On the Three Evils” 1 should be incorporated into the will in “The Drunken Song” 10.

In summary, neither the cosmologico-analytical versions of the eternal recurrence that require mere abstract objective thinking detached from concrete existence (section I) nor various existential versions that bear the stamp of various degrees of cosmology (section II), suggest that the doctrine may be conceived of as either a circle or even a line (Chapter 1). In terms of life evaluation, the eternal recurrence of the moment allows for the eternal return of meaningless existence to be countered by the creative joys of meaningful existence through the mere *repetition* of the character of the moment (Chapter 2). As such, the eternal recurrence does not suggest either a circle or a line. Spatial, geometrical, and physical considerations of time (e.g., a linear or circular trajectory of an object moving in space and time) have nothing to do with the metaphysical evaluation of existence, something that, to wit, René Descartes explored generally in chapters 1 and 2 of his *Meditations on First Philosophy* in 1641, when he found that he could doubt (deny) the existence of the physical world but that he could not, on that account, doubt (deny) his own existence, the existence of the one who doubted or thus *thought*, as the opposite would result in a contradiction in thinking.



Despite the fact that Nietzsche's doctrine cannot be conceived of as either a circle or a line, he still uses the image of the circle to speak poetically about the eternal recurrence in both *The Gay Science* and, especially, *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*. The following chapters will look at his symbolic language and discuss various aesthetic interpretations of his doctrine, generally, and the circular images of the eternal recurrence of the same, in particular. Obviously, Nietzsche had to draw on some language in order to express his idea of eternal recurrence. I suggest that he employed various circular symbols to communicate his abysmal thought. In support of this claim, the following three main questions will have to be addressed: Why did Nietzsche utilise symbolic images to philosophise, what is the relation between the eternal recurrence and symbol, and how does a particular circular symbol specifically function in the text? It will be shown that Nietzsche employs symbols to affirm existence, that the relation between the doctrine and symbol is that of a creative analogy and association, and that the diurnal symbols, in particular, constitute a cyclical system within *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, thereby suggesting the doctrine of eternal recurrence.

### Chapter 3: Introduction to Nietzsche's Symbolic Language

Nietzsche's doctrine, as has been shown in Chapter 2, serves to affirm existence. But he also has an original, and effective, way of presenting his doctrine. Some commentators have responded quite negatively to his language; others have been more sympathetic. In this chapter it is proposed to look at these diametrically opposed approaches in more detail, before discussing the circular and cyclical expression of Nietzsche's doctrine of eternal recurrence.

Some philosophically minded scholars, accustomed to argumentation and explanations, find it difficult to appreciate the literary form of *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*. In *Nietzsche's Zarathustra* (1987, 2010), Kathleen Marie Higgins draws attention to a number of authors whose passionate responses to Nietzsche's work "are far from universally favorable" (Higgins xv). For example, "[i]n his 1941 book *Nietzsche*, Crane Brinton, acknowledging *Zarathustra's* capacity to move at least its 'half-educated' readers, suggests that the work virtually invited the Nazis to exploit it for propagandistic purposes" (Higgins xvi).<sup>43</sup> He stresses "[t]he vagueness, the dithyrambic energy, the maniac arts, the tortured rhetoric of Nietzsche – Zarathustra seems able to move men in a way no concrete proposals at the level of mere laws or arrangements ever can move them" (Brinton 61, 220, 221). In his *Nietzsche* lectures (1930s), Martin Heidegger, though more sympathetic to *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* than the other philosophers that have been or will be mentioned, sees *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* "as a philosophical oddity" (Higgins xvi).<sup>44</sup>

What is difficult to grasp about this work is not only its "content," if it has such, but also its very character as a work. Of course, we are quick to propose a ready-made explanation: here philosophical thoughts are presented poetically. Yet what we are now to call *thinking* and *poetizing* dare not consist of the usual notions, inasmuch as the work defines both of these anew, or rather, simply announces them. And when we say that this work constitutes the center of Nietzsche's philosophy, it remains nonetheless true that the work stands outside the center, is "eccentric" to it (Heidegger *Nietzsche* 2: 35, 36).

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<sup>43</sup> See further Brinton 61, 220, 221.

<sup>44</sup> See further Heidegger, *Nietzsche* II.35, 36.

While Heidegger is “eccentric”, “[p]hilosopher Brand Blanchard, for instance, is vehement” (Higgins xv) in his book *On Philosophical Style* (1954).

I must confess that often, when I have tried to read the most popularly effective of German philosophical writers, Nietzsche, I have felt like throwing the book across the room. He is a boiling pot of enthusiasm and animosities, which he pours out volubly, skillfully, and eloquently.... But he obviously takes them [these outpourings] as philosophy instead of what they largely are, pseudo-Isaian prophesyings, incoherent and unreasoned Sibylline oracles (Blanchard 14, 15).

In *Nietzsche as Philosopher: An Original Study* (1965), “Arthur Danto describes... *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* as exhibiting an almost random argumentative sequence” (Higgins xviii), observing that the book “acquires a certain external structure by having each segment pose as a homiletic uttered by Zarathustra”, that in it there is “[neither] an ordered development... [nor] a direction of argument or presentation. They may be uttered at any point” (Danto 19, 20). The chaos lies on the surface, however; behind it there is a well-thought system of circular symbols that holds the work together (as will be shown). R.J. Hollingdale in his *Nietzsche* (1973), while acknowledging the powerful effect it can make on its readers, insists that *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* is not Nietzsche’s “best book” (Hollingdale 73). Writing on the imagistic character of *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, even F.D. Luke in his article with a title promising quite a favourable response, “Nietzsche and the Imagery of Height” (1978), “contends that the book is a reflection of ‘a manic-depressive temperament’<sup>45</sup>” (Higgins xvi). In *A Study of Nietzsche* (1979), J.P. Stern ascribes to *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* a “style of decadence” (Stern 157), “in which the component parts are not drawn into a cohesive whole” (Higgins xvi). In “Das Drama Zarathustras” (1983), Hans-Georg Gadamer’s attempt to discuss the work sympathetically gives way to negative personal preferences: “The style of this text is not for everyone’s taste, at any rate not for my taste or the taste of my generation” (Gadamer 341). In his *Nietzsche* (1983), Richard Schacht

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<sup>45</sup> Cited in Luke 109.

dismisses *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* as unimportant, for “there is little of a philosophical nature in it that Nietzsche does not elsewhere work out in a more straightforward (or prosaically) philosophical manner” (Schacht xiii - xiv). He calls this work in “to give evidence only on occasion” (*ibid.*).

As is clear, “Nietzsche scholarship has generally approached Nietzsche’s works as philosophical texts, where philosophical is understood in a relatively narrow sense as a term of categorization” (Higgins xvii). The above authors’ approaches, therefore, “[tend] to focus on the arguments and propositions that can be abstracted from the text, and [they tend] to underplay any significance that might inhere in the work’s literary form” (*ibid.*). Another reason for those scholars reacting negatively to the form of *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* lies in the originality of Nietzsche’s symbolic language that escaped those who eschewed it.

A number of mostly contemporary commentators, however, have not ignored Nietzsche’s peculiar use of symbolic language and this work is indebted to their contribution to Nietzsche studies. Among them are Rogério Miranda de Almeida (language originality) (2006), Werner Stegmaier (language renewal) (2011), and Vanessa Lemm (pictorial language) (2009), whose theoretical insights I propose to discuss in more detail so as to prepare the ground for consideration of those scholars who came to practical grips with Nietzsche’s symbols.

Nietzsche’s language in general is aimed at surprising and making his reader think. It is designed to bring across the message of affirmation in a most striking fashion. In *Nietzsche and Paradox (Nietzsche et le paradoxe)* (2006), Rogério Miranda de Almeida underlines the importance of style and originality consisting in the form of expression, with content being the same: “...the *same* ideas are *reread* and *reinterpreted* at each instant, in repetition and

difference, in a continual renewal and a continual *re-creation*. What is important is not what one says, but *how* one says it. In this sense, we will only be able to create when we know how to name what everyone *sees* and knows already” (Almeida 73). From this he infers that “there are no original individuals” (*ibid.*), for, as Nietzsche himself questions his own genius: ‘What is originality? To *see* something that has no name as yet and hence cannot be mentioned although it stares us all in the face. The way men usually are, it takes a name to make something visible for them. – Those with originality have for the most part also assigned names” (GS 261). The way to confront one’s own habitual language and thinking is to re-write one’s own names, for “...these same names, once spun out and written, become a picture filled with truths that quickly freeze. This is why thoughts must be constantly *retold*, rewritten, *re-read*, and reinvented; otherwise they will lose their morning freshness” (Almeida 74), something Nietzsche managed to avoid in *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* and his other writings.

Having studied Nietzsche’s passages on language in *The Gay Science*, such as 354 on the presence of an element of herd-like consciousness in our individual speech and 355 on fear being the root of science based on taking the unfamiliar as familiar, Werner Stegmaier in his article entitled “Fearless Findings. *Instinct and Language in Book V of The Gay Science*” (2011) rightly points out that Nietzsche shows Zarathustra as striving to summon courage to harness his fear (and need, wants and wishes, out of which language has arisen while doing violence to diverse instincts, where thought and experience have become conventionalised) by taking the familiar as unfamiliar (distance), i.e., by aiming to *rethink language*, and that, having a taste for nuance and surprise, he thus selects his audience with the “subtler inner laws” (dance) of his language (GS 371 and 381), while risking being misunderstood. In particular, Nietzsche presents the idea of life affirmation in a most original way – through the doctrine of eternal recurrence, which means

the desire to relive and thus affirm one's life an infinite number of times. Moreover, the form of the expression of the eternal recurrence is highly poetically original in nature. Nietzsche's novel use of language – in particular, circular images including diurnal symbolic cycles suggesting the eternal recurrence – has not as yet been made explicit in Nietzsche scholarship, which is, as Nietzsche himself would have it, the task of an original thinker.

The language of *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* is notable for the symbolic imagery it employs systematically. The purpose of the latter, however, is to induce pictorial thinking on the reader's part so as to stimulate their creative imagination. In *Nietzsche's Animal Philosophy: Culture, Politics, and the Animality of the Human Being* (2009), Vanessa Lemm explores the relation between conceptual and imagerial thinking in terms of two types of metaphors Nietzsche differentiates between intuited (intuitive) metaphors (*Anschauungsmetapher*) employed in pictorial thinking (*Bilderdenken*), expressing the silent truth – the voice of animals – and conceptual metaphors (*Metapher*) used in conceptual thinking (attained by way of meaning displacement), expressing voiced lies – the logos of humans (Lemm 2009: 8, 111 – 151; Nietzsche "On Truth and Lies in an Extra-Moral Sense" (TL)). In this sense, when Nietzsche manipulates various natural and cultural symbols – concrete material objects or phenomena accessible to the five (animal) senses – he creates sensual, visionary pictures of the world, thereby activating and cultivating pictorial thinking, the ground for oversimplified, trite metaphors – concepts. In this regard, his system of symbols comprises silent, visionary, sensual – intuitive – metaphors intended to invoke feeling rather than appeal to reason; that is, they work affectively rather than rationally. Thus Nietzsche wants his reader to experience the world and the self in a most affective personal manner, to establish an individual relationship with the

world and the self – the relationship, I believe, is that of a doting *mother* who has given birth to and now cares for her child – her *work of art* – her life.

Nietzsche's originality in regard to language, consisting in the use of vivid symbolic images, has been approached in different ways. Andrei Bely, for example, viewed Nietzsche's Overman in light of *teleological* symbolism (1903), laying the ground for the study of other symbols in Nietzsche's text. Karl Jaspers emphasised Nietzsche's use of *natural* language (language of nature) (1936), drawing on various landscape images, while Allen S. Weiss focused on the symbolism of the *earth*. Two other scholars explored the fluidity of Nietzsche's symbolic language: Francis Nesbitt Opper turned attention to the *feminine* aspect of symbols (2005), while Paul Bishop concerned himself with the symbols of *alchemical* transformation (2011) – pregnancy and rebirth, respectively. Of Nietzsche's natural language, the two *animal* symbols – eagle and serpent, the Overhuman's attributes, were quite thoroughly explored by David S. Thatcher (1977); and the serpent symbol, in particular, by Nickolas Pappas (2004). Although some (e.g., Thatcher and Pappas) do relate their studies of Nietzsche's symbols to his doctrine of eternal recurrence, they are still unclear about the very nature of that relation. It is proposed to look at these investigations in more detail so as to elicit a lack in the study of Nietzsche's circular and, especially, diurnal symbols.

Taking a religious-metaphysical approach to the study of Nietzsche's *Übermensch* in "Symbolism as a World-View" (1903), the Russian symbolist-poet and literary critic Andrei Bely responded to the language of *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* "as a system of *symbols* that fascinates the inexpressible depth of our souls".<sup>46</sup> In addressing what he called "the

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<sup>46</sup> The article was written in 1903 and first published in 1904; also published in Bely's collection entitled «Арабески» [*Arabeski*] ("Arabesques") in 1911. For the English translation see Bely, *Selected Essays of Andrei*

methodological foundation of these symbols in a given system of knowledge”, Bely viewed Nietzsche’s Overman in terms of “teleological symbolism,” saying that “Nietzsche’s teaching about the individual is neither a theory nor a psychology, less an esthetics or even a science. Rather it is a morality, understandable in the light of a theory of values, theory of symbolism”. According to Bely, the Overhuman is an individual only in a symbolic sense. It is a literary image of the goal – a new kind of humankind – that, to the extent that it cannot be defined by consciousness, is envisioned and achieved by the unconscious will turning this goal into the creative instinct of self-preservation of the species through self-realisation. To this it may be added that the Overman espouses a new morality that, on the one hand, is without any (teleological) religion and, on the other hand, is combined with intellectual probity directed at the self, at the individual. This leads to self-interpretation in light of a chaotic kaleidoscope of feelings and emotions that are inexpressible through grey concepts – through mere signs, mirror-signs of signs – but that are felt and experienced through the self-realisation of emotive symbolic images in the self-realisation of the creative human being. As an artist, Nietzsche employs literary symbolism, Bely correctly notes, as “the method of communication of experiences in images..., but by means of symbols he preaches a goal-setting selection of experiences: his images are related as a number of devices leading to the goal dictated by his life’s instinct: this is why Nietzsche’s method of exposition has the form of teleological symbolism.” In this regard, it will be shown that Nietzsche’s circular symbols tend to constitute a life-affirmative system in

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*Bely*, ed. Steven Cassedy. For the Russian original see Андрей Белый, «Символизм как миропонимание». *Смысл искусства*. Серия мыслители XX века. Москва: Политиздат, 1994. [Andrei Bely, “Simvolizm kak miroponimanie.” *Smysl iskusstva*. Seria mysliteli XX veka. Moskva: Politizdat, 1994.] (Andrei Bely, “Symbolism as a World-View.” *The Meaning of Art*. The 20<sup>th</sup> Century Thinkers Series. Moscow: Politizdat, 1994.) See also Yu.V. Sineokaya’s commentary on Bely’s view of Nietzsche in “The Intersection of the Centuries: The Russian Fate of Nietzsche’s Overman.” (Ю. В. Синеокая, «Рубеж веков: русская судьба Сверхчеловека Ницше».) [Yu.V. Sineokaya, “Rubezh vekov: russkaya sud’ba Sverkhcheloveka Nitshe.”] Translations from the Russian of the titles and quotes are mine. The paragraph on Bely is a combination of slightly modified and/or expanded excerpts from my MA major research paper (2009).



*Thus Spoke Zarathustra* symbolising the eternal recurrence of the same, of which only the Overman is capable – an all-encompassing literary symbolic image of a new kind of humankind dictated by the creative will of a day-dreaming human being, who realises him- or herself through sufferance and creativity expressed in literary symbols. Thus, symbolism as a worldview is a vision of the self and self-interpretation. Bely's high praise of Nietzsche's symbolic style lays the ground for the study of other symbols in *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* that reflect the human creativity that the Overman represents.

One of the earliest researchers of Nietzsche's figurative language was German philosopher Karl Jaspers, who in his *Nietzsche: An Introduction to the Understanding of His Philosophical Activity* (*Nietzsche: Einführung in das Verständnis seines Philosophierens*, 1936) wrote a very good and concise introduction to Nietzsche's literary world, especially with regard to *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*. Although Jaspers admires Nietzsche's use of "an abundance of symbols" that creates "the dynamic presence of landscape and weather, of nature and life, and of the entire infra-human world" in *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, he views these symbols as "represent[ing] a less formal language and, in their intention and effect, never anything more" (Jaspers 371) and warns against believing in them beyond what they are – "lifeless masks" that Nietzsche "seems to lay hold upon" after losing "solid ground" in existence (442).

Yet, it is possible to say that Nietzsche avails himself of a self-supporting literary technique in order to sustain his own being: he creates and holds onto a language of nature, at once unique and understandable to the mass audience, as a desirable self-sufficient foundation for his own existential becoming. Nietzsche's frequent staying in close contact with nature, his consequent resort to natural language, and, finally, giving his language a solid structure (by way

of symbols), provide some firm, though imaginary, ground and background so that he feels united with nature.

Jaspers is right in saying that “a universally understood language”, such as that of nature and landscape imagery, “furnishes the background for Nietzsche’s thinking”, that through the force of his figurative language Nietzsche reveals “nature and the elements... as a type of reality that speaks for itself directly... [so that] it is as though nature and man’s fate, sensual corporeality and true being, become fused.... Not only does he experience an intensified expression of the visible world, but he hears the language of being through nature” (Jaspers 371, 372). Thus, being often in close contact with nature (hiking, climbing the mountains, lying in the grass, beholding the lake, listening to the birds, etc.), Nietzsche develops, as previously mentioned, a language of his own – natural language. He feels affinity with nature in the sense that both are silent and lonely. Yet, in feeling himself at one with nature, he is not alone but has its presence with him: when he begins to speak of nature, nature begins to speak to him. Praising “[t]he beauty of nature, like all other beauty”, Nietzsche invests it with jealousy sufficient “to demand that one serve her exclusively” and with “the signs with which to speak to souls” (Nietzsche, cited in Jaspers 372).

Through symbolic locutions Nietzsche, however, wants to go beyond the boundaries of mere nature and mere human: “Our intention must be to permeate nature with the essence of man.... We want to take what we need from her in order to dream our way beyond man. Something that is more grandiose than storm and mountain and ocean is yet to arise –” (Nietzsche, cited in Jaspers 373), and this well may be the Overhuman, who is capable of bringing all things together into one whole by willing the eternal recurrence of the same – the *sequence* symbolised by the new hopeful morning, the perfect attained noon, the old frustrated

evening, and the dead broken midnight, as justified by Nietzsche's tacit sensitivity to the times of the day, and the *moment* of noon "symboliz[ing] to Nietzsche the world-historical moment that signifies the begetting of the thought" (Jaspers 358): "Throughout every ring of human existence, there is always an hour when the mightiest thought, that of eternal recurrence of all things, occurs first to one, then to many, and then to all" (Nietzsche, cited in Jaspers, *ibid.*). This moment, at which noon and eternity are one through the eradication of time (Jaspers 358), gathers itself together, through the moment and sequence (endlessness) of eternal recurrence and is an injunction for humankind to realise its unique decisive condition described by Nietzsche in his notes for *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* in solar, diurnal temporal symbols of nature: "The sun of knowledge again is at *noon*: and the serpent of eternity lies coiled in its light; it is *your* time, you brothers of noontide!" (Nietzsche, *ibid.*). Thus, noon becomes the symbolic climax at which humanity, having once reached a crucial point in existence, is now in a self-sustained position to estimate its existential historicity.

Nietzsche's extraordinary "sensitivity to climate and weather allows him to feel, painfully or refreshingly, and down to the very depth of his own essential mood and energy, every nuance of the locality and of the time of the day and the year" (Jaspers 372). Although Jaspers believes that it is "impossible to arrange the data (on nature and landscape) systematically" (373), he points to the fact that Nietzsche, among other things, is attracted to the times of the day, which, upon careful analysis, may turn out to be already well-arranged in the text (as will be shown). Indeed, among what of the mythical aspect of nature – the elements (e.g., the sky before sunrise, "the sun in the morning and in the evening", Jaspers: p. 373; the thawing wind, fire); types of landscape (e.g., mountains, snow, sea, river), and "[n]umerous *single scenes of nature*" (*ibid.*) (e.g., the fig-tree, meadows, a butterfly, "a rowboat on the lake and the golden oar in the evening

sun”, *ibid.*) – appeals to Nietzsche, Jaspers notes, is “[t]he *times of the day*<sup>47</sup> almost to the nuances of the hour. Noon, for example, becomes the moment in which time is eliminated, eternity is experienced, and perfection is attained. Midnight, akin to midday, is the time of the ‘drunken song’; the depth of being, eternity is revealed” (*ibid.*). This leads to the further study of Nietzsche’s diurnal symbolism to claim that, on the contrary, the diurnal symbols – symbols of nature employed to represent eternal return – circulating throughout *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* may be said to have already been systematically arranged by the author to reflect the well-thought structure of the text – Nietzsche’s attempt to create for himself that “solid ground” (Jaspers 442) he once lost.<sup>48</sup>

Perhaps because of his desire to have Nietzsche stand on firm ground, though it may only seem so, Allen S. Weiss saw Nietzsche’s originality in his use of earth symbolism.<sup>49</sup> In “The Symbolism and Celebration of the Earth in Nietzsche’s *Zarathustra*” (1979), Weiss explores Nietzsche’s symbolic language from the viewpoint of deconstruction. He argues that Nietzsche consistently utilises the symbols of the onto-theo-logical tradition – in particular, the symbol of *earth* – to deconstruct that tradition (Weiss 39), that is, “the hierarchical metaphysical systematization which dominated Western thought since Plato” (40). Humankind creates sacred space with an absolute fixed centre, in relation to which one can orient oneself. Sacred space is cosmos, whereas secular space is chaos. “[The] construction of a holy place as the center of the world... achieves the connection between underworld, earth, and heaven.” (39) As a result, “the earth is an all-encompassing symbol. It sustains all relationships, from the chaotic to the

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<sup>47</sup> Italics mine.

<sup>48</sup> Nietzsche was five years old when his father died (in 1849) and around forty when he wrote in *The Gay Science* (e.g., V, 108) and in *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* (e.g., “Zarathustra’s Prologue” 2) that God had died.

<sup>49</sup> For a broader account of the rhetorical role of the earth as the *ground* of human existence – as well as the centre of human gravity incorporating the idea of the eternal recurrence of the same, which is “designed to intensify our exploration of space, *earthly space*” (Del Caro 254), – see also Adrian Del Caro’s *Grounding the Nietzsche Rhetoric of Earth* (esp. 244 – 254).

structured, from the sacred to the profane, from the all-giving, fruitful womb, the ripe, nourishing Earth-Mother, to the evil, destructive Terrible One, bringing decay, famine, and plague” (*ibid.*).

Nietzsche, however, does not privilege chaos over harmony, or vice versa; he accepts the world as a whole. By using the symbol of earth “Nietzsche accomplishes the valorization of all space, such that neither the valueless, nihilistic space of the chaos, nor the hierarchized, privileged space of the religious hierophany, any longer holds absolute sway over human thought” (Weiss 40). In particular, Zarathustra’s mountain and cave – his residential place and earth symbols – are symbols of the unity of earth and heaven,

a conglomeration of the highest and the lowest... [where] the valorization of place is not privileged, the highest and the lowest are joined in ambiguity, and the earth symbolism supports all of these aspects of existence... Thus, the mountain and the cave, both earthworks, become all too human, and indicate neither God nor Devil, but the future of man (45).

At the end of his article, Weiss leaves open the question of the relation of Nietzsche’s other elemental symbols, such as air, fire, and water to earth symbolism (*ibid.*). “Or, consider the following – mountain : eagle = cave : serpent – what of the role of animal symbolism and iconography?” (*ibid.*) Indeed, further deconstruction of the onto-theo-logical tradition occurs by way of Nietzsche’s original use of the four symbolic elements, animal and plant symbols. The unity of the high with the low is shown by the following examples of earth symbolism, the earth being the source for fire, water and air, animals and plants and bringing respective symbols into being.

*Fire.* Zarathustra left his valley and carried his ashes (body) to the mountain (the heavenly height) and, coming down the mountain, now carries the fire (spirit) back to the valley (the earthly below, ground) (I “Zarathustra’s Prologue” 2: 122). The lightning – the symbol of the Overman – is about to strike the earth from up above down below (i.e., to be glad and

elevated, lofty wisdom must succumb to suffering and down-to-earth experience). (I “Zarathustra’s Prologue” 3: 126)

*Water.* “[T]he dark cloud that hangs over men”, Zarathustra calling himself “a heavy drop from the cloud” coming down back to the earth (I “Zarathustra’s Prologue” 4: 128); the lake, the river/stream, the sea, the ocean: “Let the river of my love plunge where there is no way! How could a river fail to find its way to the sea? Indeed, a lake is within me, solitary and self-sufficient; but the river of my love carries it along, down to the sea” (II “The Child with the Mirror” 196) – all symbolise the flux of becoming within the unity of the high and the low.

*Air.* The north wind: “I am a north wind to ripe figs” (II “Upon the Blessed Isles” 197); the south wind: Zarathustra “also cross[es] warm seas, like longing, heavy, hot south winds” (III “Upon the Mount of Olives” 286); the storm: he declares “*that man be delivered from revenge, that is for me the bridge to the highest hope, and a rainbow after long storms*” (II “On the Tarantulas” 211) – all bring a change to the values symbolised by the winds having the figs fall and the ice and snow melt and fall to the earth, the result being an enlightenment after the human being’s long stormy struggles in existence.

*Earth.* As discussed above, the unity of the mountain (height) and cave (womb, depth) – the cave in the mountain, Zarathustra’s sacred abode – represents the merger of the heavenly and the earthly. Pertaining to earth are *animal* and *plant* symbols. The eagle, reaching the height of the mountain, nesting on it and soaring above it, represents the height and pride. The serpent, a creature that crawls on the earth and lives in the cave, represents the low, depth, and wisdom. So the unity of the circling eagle with the serpent wound around the eagle’s neck (I “Zarathustra’s Prologue” 10: 137) represents the merger of the high and low, the heavenly and the earthly, pride and wisdom. Also, the serpent is the symbol of eternal recurrence, and as such, represents the

eternally recurrent unity of the high with the low. The tree growing high into the heavens, good, with its roots shooting deep into the ground, evil (I “On the Tree on the Mountainside” 154), symbolises the merger of opposites, the good and evil distinction. The grapevine wound around the tree (IV “At Noon” 387) represents the harmony of flexibility and hardness, of chaos and order, of the Dionysian and the Apollonian, of the low and the high.

The language of earth symbolism as the mother of elemental and animal and plant symbols bringing the world into unity shares a trait in common with various *feminine* symbols. In this respect, a surprising and thought-provoking element of Nietzsche’s language is its feminine character. It is no coincidence that, in *Nietzsche on Gender: Beyond Man and Woman* (2005), Francis Nesbitt Opper views the language of *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* as feminine, claiming that Nietzsche reverses the reversal from father heaven (symbol of constancy) to mother earth (symbol of transitoriness and perishableness) (Opper 158).<sup>50</sup> In this manner Nietzsche wants to emphasise the feminine trait of his doctrine: “[t]he ‘eternal feminine’ in *Zarathustra* is the ‘eternal return’ ” of the transitory (163). Indeed, Nietzsche utilises birth metaphors, pregnancy being the most important image for him (159). Other examples of Nietzsche’s feminine language are eternity (*die Ewigkeit*), wisdom (*die Weisheit*), life (*das Leben*) (which he likens to a maiden), happiness (*das Glück*) (which he associates with woman) – many of these nouns being of feminine gender in German. To this list we may add the symbols of eternal recurrence, such as the astral symbol – the sun (*die Sonne*), the solar animal symbol – the serpent (*die Schlange*), and the diurnal cyclical symbols – night (*die Nacht*) and dawn (*die Morgenröte*). If the eternal recurrence is feminine in character, then the symbols of eternal recurrence, by extension, must be also feminine, i.e., changeable and continuous. The feminine

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<sup>50</sup> Socrates and Plato regarded constancy higher than transitoriness as opposed to pre-Socratic philosophers (e.g., Heraclitus) and therefore put reason on a high pedestal while casting feeling down to the ground.

character of the eternal recurrence is reflected in the changeability, continuity, and self-metamorphosis of diurnal symbols, for example, even though some of them are not feminine nouns: father Noon (*der Mittag*) gives birth to son Evening (*der Abend*), who bears daughter Night (*die Nacht*) and Midnight (*die Mitternacht*); mother Night gives birth to son Morning (*der Morgen*) and daughter Dawn (*die Morgenröte*), who bear sons Day (*der Tag*) and Noon (*der Mittag*), where every single symbol – every moment of life – is as valuable and necessary as it can be. Nietzsche’s presentation of the doctrine of eternal recurrence – the doctrine of the ultimate affirmation of existence – in feminine language betrays the maternal instinct of a responsible artist. At times he gives birth to himself through alchemical symbols of transformation – symbols of rebirth, which will be considered next.

In “The Superman as Salamander: Symbols of Transformation or Transformational symbols?” (2011), Paul Bishop discusses the symbols of alchemical transformation in *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*. He “argues that, in alchemical terms, the Superman becomes the salamander – while suggesting, in the hidden and unspoken part of its title, that the Superman does not just become a salamander, he becomes the philosophers’ stone” (Bishop 4). For this purpose he reviews Carl Gustav Jung’s seminar notes, Richard Perkins’ observations, and Parkes’ argument concerning the alchemical symbolic transformation in Nietzsche’s *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*. “In his seminars, Jung makes frequent comparisons between Nietzsche’s Zarathustra and the transformative processes of alchemy” (Bishop 9). “ ‘When Nietzsche declares that God is dead, instantly he begins to transform’, Jung tells us, ‘he immediately gets into the process of th[e] archetype of rebirth, because those vital powers in us which we call “God” are powers of self-renewal, powers of eternal change’ ” (Jung cited in Bishop 5).<sup>51</sup> “ ‘Beginning in 1882,’ Richard Perkins has observed, ‘Nietzsche frequently and fairly insistently poses an inner alchemist,

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<sup>51</sup> See Jung, *Nietzsche’s Zarathustra: Notes of the Seminar Given in 1934 – 1939* 1.54.



privately in euphoric notebook entries, confidentially in frantic letters to Franz Overbeck, and publicly in *Also sprach Zarathustra*' ” (Perkins cited in Bishop 10).<sup>52</sup> Perking describes Nietzsche's work as “ ‘a frankly chrysopoetic work culminating in a golden nature won through transmutation’ ” (*ibid.*). Similarly, Parkes has argued in *Composing the Soul: Reaches of Nietzsche's Psychology* that *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* is “a text that contains dozens of images that figure importantly in alchemy – and especially in alchemy understood as a symbol system for psychological transformation”, images such as “chaos; the stone, fire, sun, and moon; the dragon, eagle, lion, serpent, and ouroboros; the child; and of course, lead and gold” (Parkes 1994: 166).

Reading *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* “as an alchemical text,... a text about transformation” (Bishop 11), Bishop examines the theme of symbolic transformation that lies “at the heart of the extraordinarily complex work that is *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*. [...His] point is that these texts are not just ‘symbols of transformation’, but are, rather, ‘transformational symbols’; for symbols themselves are precisely the means whereby transformation is wrought” (10). For examples of symbolic transmutations Bishop draws on “On Joys and Passions”, where “Zarathustra exhorts us to transform our passions into virtues, our devils into angels, the fierce dogs in our cellar into birds and sweet singers; we should transmute poison into balsam, and from the cow of affliction we should drink sweet milk from its udder...” and “On the Way of the Creator”, where “Zarathustra urges us: ‘Create yourself a god from your seven devils’; and he invites us to become just like the phoenix – or perhaps the alchemical salamander? – as we burn in our own flames: ‘You must be ready to burn yourself in your own flame: how could you become new, if you had not first become ashes?’ ” (Nietzsche cited in Bishop 11).

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<sup>52</sup> See Perkins, “Nietzsche's *Opus Alchymicum*” 216.

The transformational symbol of the Overhuman sleeping in the stone (“On the Blessed Isles”), however, encompasses all of those transformational symbols in one single image of transformation.

...Zarathustra’s alchemical image of shattering the stone to release the image within is... an explicitly aesthetic image. Like a sculptor, Zarathustra – here an exponent, in the phrase that constitutes the subtitle of *Twilight of the Idols*, of “how one philosophizes with the hammer” (Nietzsche, 1976, p. 463) – engages in the necessary destructive work of hammering, chipping, working at the stone, in order to realize, not just the Superman, but the beauty of the Superman (*des Übermenschen Schönheit*); a beauty that comes to Zarathustra “like a shadow”, just as, in the words of his discourse “On the Virtuous”, we are told that “the voice of beauty speaks softly: it steals into only the most awakened souls” (Nietzsche, 1969, p. 117). (Bishop 13)

In other words, “[o]ne must, as Nietzsche puts it, ‘become master of the chaos one is’ and ‘compel one’s chaos to become form’ ” (Bishop 14). For there is nothing more fundamental than self-realisation “(echoing Pindar’s dictum, taken up by Nietzsche, ‘become who you are’) (Jung, 1946, para. 400).<sup>53</sup> Thus is revealed, out of what is (or was) a diversity, an essential unity, i.e., out of the ego there emerges the self” (Bishop 14). Nietzsche’s concern here, as is clear, is to turn one’s evil impulses into good works of art. “Writing to Franz Overbeck on 25 December 1882 (at the end of a bad year for Nietzsche, not least because of atrociously poor health, and the collapse of his relationship with Lou von Salomé), Nietzsche” (Bishop 10), while set on penetrating the mystery of self-transformation, says worriedly: “If I cannot discover the alchemist’s trick of turning this mud [or: this shit] into gold, then I am lost (*Wenn ich nicht das Alchemisten-Kunststück erfinde, aus diesem – Kote Gold zu machen, so bin ich verloren*)”, thereby confirming the importance of making the best of a bad situation, also as “in his letter to Georg Brandes of 23 May 1888: ‘Basically the gold maker is the most useful kind of human being there is: I mean someone who, out of something of little worth, something despised,

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<sup>53</sup> See Jung, *The Psychology of the Transference*. *Collected Works* XVI.163 – 323.

creates something of value, or even gold.<sup>54</sup> Such a person creates wealth, all the others merely convert currency' ” (Nietzsche cited in Bishop 16).<sup>55</sup>

It is clear that Nietzsche seeks to transform himself creatively, making order out of the chaos he is, and what, if not a system of literary images, can help him to achieve the desired goal and what, if not the alchemical symbols, to express his desire to metamorphose? Diurnal symbols will be shown to share those transformative characteristics in Chapter 5. In fact, they will establish how Zarathustra is altered, and with him, certainly, Nietzsche. The ability to transform himself belongs only with the Overhuman, the symbol of a human being who is capable of overcoming him- or herself by willing the eternal return – by bringing every will-less fragment and accident into a wilful whole (“On Redemption”). The Overhuman’s essence is expressed most brilliantly through the serpent and eagle imagery. The union of eagle and serpent in *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* is a pictorial representation of the *Übermensch*, “Nietzsche’s prime symbol of individuation” (Thatcher 260), bearing the motto: „Nur wer sich wandelt, bleibt mit mir verwandt“, or: “One has to change to stay akin to me” (*Jenseits von Gut und Böse*, BGE 242, 243).

The serpent and eagle symbols have been given due attention in Nietzsche scholarship, though the question remains how exactly they are related to the doctrine of eternal recurrence. In “Eagle and Serpent in *Zarathustra*” (1977), David S. Thatcher notes that Nietzsche gives special status to the eagle and serpent in *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* by emphasising the animals’ unity and relation to the sun (Thatcher 241). He shows that the unity of Zarathustra’s serpent and eagle, also as solar symbols, represents the eternal return. Indeed, eternity and solar symbolism are related through the eagle and serpent imagery.

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<sup>54</sup> See Nietzsche, *Sämtliche Briefe: Kritische Studienausgabe* VI.312.

<sup>55</sup> *Ibid.* XIII.318.

Traditionally, the eagle is a solar symbol and a symbol of eternity. In fact, it derives its immortality or eternity from the energy of the sun. “From the *Physiologus* we learn that the eagle, in old age, has the power to renew himself by flying up toward the circle of the sun, burning his wings in its scorching rays, and then plunging three times into a fountain, from which he emerges with fresh plumage and sharpened vision” (Thatcher 254).<sup>56</sup> Also, “[t]he eagle is the bird of apotheosis and resurrection. As Jupiter is carried aloft by the eagle (towards the sun) so the soul of the deified emperor is carried by him to heaven (eternity)” (Wittkower 311, cited in Thatcher 254).

The solar characteristics of the eagle find their reflection in the solar references made to the eagle in *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* itself. Zarathustra’s eagle is portrayed as a solar symbol: “Mein Adler ist wach und ehrt gleich mir die Sonne. Mit Adlers-Klauen greift er nach dem neuen Lichte” (IV „Das Zeichen“, *KGW* VI 1, 402: 3, 4 ), or: “My eagle is awake and honors the sun as I do. With eagle talons he grasps for the new light” (IV “The Sign” 437). Just as an eagle brought nectar to Zeus – the god of sky and thunder in Greek mythology – when he was hiding from Chronos, so Zarathustra’s eagle is shown fetching him food (III “The Convalescent” 2: 328). “In another passage the symbolic attributes of nobility, aspiration, *sun-worship* and service [in short, solar attributes] are fused in a quivering vision of longing and expectancy” (Thatcher 245, italics mine). The high individuals will build nests on the tree of Future near the eagle, near the sun – the eagle’s territory: „Auf dem Baume Zukunft bauen wir unser Nest; Adler sollen uns Einsamen Speise bringen in ihren Schnäbeln!... Und wie starke Winde wollen wir über ihnen [Unsaubere] leben, Nachbarn den *Adlern*, Nachbarn dem Schnee, Nachbarn der *Sonne*: also leben starke Winde“ (II „Vom Gesindel“, *KGW* VI 1, 122: 19, 20, 27 – 29), or: “On the tree,

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<sup>56</sup> The *Physiologus* is a didactic text written in Greek by an unknown author, in Alexandria, dated 2<sup>nd</sup> century AD, providing (moral) descriptions of animals, birds, and phantastic creatures, stones and plants.

Future, we build our nest; and in our solitude eagles shall bring us nourishment in their beaks... And we want to live over them [the unclean] like strong winds, neighbors of the *eagles*, neighbors of the snow, neighbors of the *sun*: thus live strong winds” (II “On the Rabble” 210, 211, all italics mine).

As for the serpent, from Nietzsche’s notes for *Also sprach Zarathustra* it is evident that it was intended as a symbol of *eternity* and that it would be engaged in diurnal symbolism through the *noon* symbol: „,Die Sonne der Erkenntniss steht wider einmal im Mittag: und geringelt liegt die Schlange der Ewigkeit in ihrem Lichte’ (GA XII, p. 425)“ (cited in Thatcher 255), or: “The sun of knowledge stands again at noon: and the serpent of eternity lies coiled in its light.”<sup>57</sup> Since “midnight too is noon” (IV “The Drunken Song” 10: 435), then the serpent as a solar symbol of eternity also refers to midnight. Both eagle and serpent, therefore, may be said to have been attributed *solar* symbolic properties. However, the eagle is associated with *day* and *noon* (also height, heaven, seeing, thinking, reason, good, and hunting), whereas the serpent invokes closer association with *night* and *midnight* (also the below, earth, sensing, feeling, senses, evil, and prey). “The eagle is the creature of daytime and light, the serpent of night and darkness... The eagle is solar..., the serpent lunar...” (Thatcher 253)

Despite the animals’ solar differences, in “Zarathustra’s Prologue” (10: 137), we find the eagle (pride) flying around in wide circles, with the serpent (wisdom) coiled around its neck, like a friend, at the hour of noon. The eagle and serpent, however, are known to have been portrayed as enemies in ancient culture. “Fights between eagles and snakes have been actually observed, and it is easy to understand that the sight of such a struggle must have made an indelible impression on human imagination in its infancy...The greatness of the combat gave the event an almost cosmic significance” (Wittkower 293, cited in Thatcher 241). For example, “St. John’s

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<sup>57</sup> Translation from the German mine.

eagle was an enemy of serpents, but Zarathustra's eagle and serpent are at peace with each other" (Thatcher 243).<sup>58</sup> Thatcher rightly believes that Nietzsche wants thereby to demonstrate a reversal of traditional ideas. "From his reading of such authorities as Georg Friedrich Creuzer, Nietzsche had learnt that Zoroastrianism is based on the conflict between the divine source of light and goodness, Ormuzd the eagle, and the Satanic source of darkness and evil, Ahriman the dragon" and sought to overcome it through the unity of the eagle and serpent (*ibid.*).<sup>59</sup>

Indeed, both creatures are solitary by nature, yet in *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* they always appear together, as friends. They are as if inseparable from each other. The modality of necessity keeps them together, like thinking and existence in the Cartesian *cogito, ergo sum*, whereby the eagle may symbolise self-conscious thinking – the furthering and deepening of *day* – while the serpent may represent unconscious, creative existence – the furthering and deepening of *night*. If ever my wisdom leaves me, says Zarathustra in confirmation of the animals' inseparability, let my pride fly away with it too! ("Zarathustra's Prologue" 10: 137) For without wisdom pride is a folly and without pride wisdom is not elevated. Given that the eagle and serpent are Zarathustra's "loyal and constant companions", the union of eagle and serpent symbols as archetypal projections of contradictions symbolises the union of opposites (Thatcher 242, 258). Furthermore, the merger of the two solar symbols, as the merger of pride and wisdom, constitutes a self-conscious creative existence. Finally, the union of the eagle and serpent as solar symbols invokes the *day* and *night* unity in "At Noon" and "The Drunken Song" through Zarathustra's lapse into the *moment* of the eternal recurrence of the same. To conclude, through the symbolic matrix of Zarathustra's animals, eagle and serpent, the following solar antitheses –

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<sup>58</sup> See Thatcher 241 – 243 for more examples.

<sup>59</sup> See Creuzer, *Symbolik und Mythologie der alten Völker, besonders der Griechen* (1837 – 1841), I.221, 223. "The identification of Ahriman with a dragon or snake is made by Schopenhauer, *Parerga und Paralipomena* (Leipzig, 1891), II, pp. 322, 395, 405, and by Nietzsche's colleague at Basel, Jacob Mähler, *Die Schlange in Mythos und Cultus der klassischen Völker* (Basel, 1867), pp. 23, 25." (Thatcher's footnote on p. 243).

the symbols of day and night, light and dark – among others, are united (Thatcher 252), which unity symbolises the moment of eternal recurrence. Indeed, the eagle and serpent, in this sense, become diurnal symbols. However, Thatcher does not explain the relation of the diurnal symbols to the eternal recurrence, which involves the question of temporal analogy discussed in Chapter 5.

Another symbolic aspect of the serpent is that this animal suggests the image of a circle and, as such, also represents the eternal recurrence. In “The Eternal-Serpentine” (2004), Nickolas Pappas concerns himself with the study of the serpent symbol in Nietzsche’s works. He identifies several types of Nietzschean snake: the snake of rebirth or rejuvenation or emergence of something newer and larger: “the snake in me” with cracking skin and the snake eating dirt and living on soil in GS “Jokes, Cunning, Revenge” 8 (Pappas 75); the anti-moralistic or anti-Christian snake (*die Natter*) in “On the Adder’s Bite” (71 – 73); the snakes as drives: a “bunch of wild snakes” in “On the Pale Criminal” (75); most important for our case, the serpent as *knowledge* and *eternity* in “Zarathustra’s Prologue”, “On the Gift-Giving Virtue”, and “On the Vision and the Riddle” (76); the serpent as Life in “On the Other Dancing Song” (*ibid.*); the snake as knowledge or “the snake beyond good and evil” in BGE 152, 202 (74); and others (e.g., the unconscious, the concealing, the tempting snake).

Pappas makes clear that there are three scenes in *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* featuring the serpent as symbolic of the eternal recurrence: “Zarathustra’s Prologue” 10 (plus variations), “On the Gift-Giving Virtue”, and “On the Vision and the Riddle” 2. Zarathustra’s own serpent, “homier and unaggressive” (Pappas 80), coiled around the neck of the eagle flying in circles through the sky (“Zarathustra’s Prologue” 10) is the first overt emblematic representation of eternal return. Contrary to Pappas’ reading of the serpent as representing “in spite of *die*

*Schlange's* grammatical femininity a desexualized male comradeship" (Pappas 80), it is suggested that the serpent should be read as eternally feminine; the eagle, as eternally masculine; and the entire serpent and eagle scene, as an eternal unity of arbitrary opposites symbolised by the animals' gender unity within the eternal recurrence of same. Both the eagle (*der Adler*) and the pride (*der Stolz, der Hochmut*) he symbolises are masculine. Both the serpent (*die Schlange*) and the wisdom (*die Weisheit, die Klugheit*) – as well as the (cyclical) eternity (*die Ewigkeit*) – she symbolises are feminine. The hard, staunch pride (being) must be wisely flexible and changeable, just as the fickle, undermining, evasive and also unconscious, wisdom (becoming) must hold hard proudly. The peaceful merger of the two is symbolic of the harmony between man and woman, being and becoming, reason and feeling – all demonstrate Nietzsche's advocacy of fertility and procreation, creation and affirmation of existence, in short, of eternal life as the eternal recurrence of the same.

In "On the Gift-Giving Virtue", the eternal recurrence is presented as a welcoming teaching, as Pappas points out: Zarathustra's acceptance of his disciples' gift – a staff topped with a serpent wrapped around a sun – reflects his anticipatory acceptance of the eternal recurrence (Pappas 76). Further on, in "On the Vision and the Riddle", the eternal recurrence is presented as an unwelcoming teaching (*ibid.*) that must at all costs be accepted: the young shepherd (Zarathustra) choking on a snake that has bitten fast into his throat bites the head off the snake, thereby conquering the eternal recurrence of the small human – the meaninglessness of existence – that the snake represents.

Pappas further observes that general consensus among commentators holds that by biting off the snake's head Zarathustra overcomes his nausea that the small human will recur and that Loeb's interpretation is different in this sense: Zarathustra also kills the snake itself ("On the



Vision and the Riddle” 2; Pappas 77). According to Loeb, despite the fact that he is reading the idea of eternal recurrence in cosmological terms, the snake denotes “the eternally recurring human” and its head represents the present “while the ‘tail’ symbolizes the past that has transpired up to the present moment” (Loeb 2002: 99, 104).<sup>60</sup> “Because the gateway-dwarf (that disappears) is a symbol for presentday humankind, Nietzsche thus implies that present-day humankind could not survive the thought of its own eternal recurrence. As Nietzsche writes more explicitly in his unpublished notes, the thought of eternal recurrence would cause humankind to select itself out of existence” (Loeb 2002: 106).<sup>61</sup> Humanity, in other words, is unable to withstand the thought of eternal recurrence; only the Overhuman is. Therefore, humanity will perish, whereas the Overhuman will survive.

On the traditional analysis, Zarathustra’s loss of courage stems from his realization that he is destined to *fail* in his quest to completely eradicate small humankind. Even if he succeeds in destroying the present small human, eternal recurrence guarantees that the small human will return. Hence, the analysis goes, Zarathustra must learn to affirm even the small human that he had previously wanted to eradicate.

Against this analysis, however, we have already seen that there is no necessity for the small human to exist in the future, and that Zarathustra rejoices at the prospect of a future devoid of the small human. (Loeb 2002: 107)

Thus, according to Loeb, by beheading the snake, Zarathustra destroys humanity as it exists at present, as a kind of wish fulfilment. But, I add, Zarathustra does not thereby eliminate the meaninglessness of existence that the small human represents. On the contrary, paradoxically, he sanctifies and affirms it by willing the whole of existence to recur, including the existence of the small human. He wants eternal meaninglessness so as to give meaning to it. Although both Pappas and Loeb refer to the serpent as the symbol of eternal recurrence, they never explore the

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<sup>60</sup> See Loeb, “The Dwarf, the Dragon, and the Ring of Eternal Recurrence: A Wagnerian Key to the Riddle of Nietzsche’s *Zarathustra*.”

<sup>61</sup> See Loeb 2002, footnote 43, p. 106: “Cf. Nachlass 1883 KSA 10, 21[6]; Nachlass 1887 KSA 12, 5 [71]; WP 55. Although commentators (such as Deleuze: *Nietzsche and Philosophy*, loc. cit., pp. 68-71) have written about Nietzsche’s articulation of this view in his unpublished notes, no one has yet shown how Nietzsche incorporated this view into the text of *Zarathustra* itself.”

nature of that reference or symbolisation. This will require that the question of analogy or association between circular images and eternal recurrence be addressed in its proper place (Chapter 5).

With major symbolic language perspectives considered, several inferences can be drawn about Nietzsche as an artist: 1) he is original in his use of language; 2) he employs symbolic novelties to produce an emotional effect on his reader; and 3) he thereby demands an interpretation of the self and the world. In terms of the approaches taken, they leave room for a more express explanation of the relation of Nietzsche's symbolic language to his idea of eternal recurrence. However, Jaspers' discussion of the natural language employed in *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, especially his having pointed out Nietzsche's sensitivity to the times of the day, will become significant in the research of diurnal symbolism, while Bishop's study of alchemical symbols – symbols of transformation will be crucial in drawing a transformational analogy between the diurnal symbols and the eternal recurrence. In the meantime let us turn to those approaches which do consider Nietzsche's figural language in connection with the eternal recurrence.

#### Chapter 4: Aesthetic Interpretations of Eternal Recurrence

Had those who reacted negatively to Nietzsche's figurative language given more strenuous attention to the form and had those, like Jaspers and Weiss, who showed interest in it, related their study to his work as a whole and its main idea, they would have noted perhaps that *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* harbours a certain system of symbols, and these are employed by Nietzsche to structure the representation of the fundamental conception of the book – the eternal recurrence.

Scholarly interest in the form of *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* has increased over the last three decades, while the doctrine has been subjected to a number of aesthetic interpretations which dwell upon various literary means of its representation or communication:

- 1) mythological (Bertram 1918);<sup>62</sup>
- 2) musical (Higgins 1987);
- 3) repetitive (Hatab 2005);
- 4) mobility-based (Parkes 1990);
- 5) poetic (Jappinen 1981);
- 6) psychological with metaphorical implications (Parkes 1983);
- 7) seasonal (Puszczalowski 2007);
- 8) astral (Ryan 2012);
- 9) dramatic (Alderman 1977);
- 10) diurnal 1 (Nitske 2013);
- 11) diurnal 2 (Solomon and Higgins 2000); and

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<sup>62</sup> I include Bertram's *Nietzsche: Attempt at a Mythology* (2009) in this class despite the fact that his *Nietzsche: Versuch einer Mythologie* was originally published in 1918, so that he will receive appreciation within the contemporary context of literary interpretations of the eternal recurrence.

12) literary (Nehamas 1985)

Bertram's mythological reading of eternal recurrence as the return of all things within oneself, as an inner *revelation*, may serve as the background for those other aesthetic interpretations, which may be divided into *acoustic* and *visual* (solar) ones, and, as such, should be considered first; the last (neither acoustic nor visual, in itself, but, if I may, textual) interpretation (Nehamas) closely related to the ninth one (Alderman) and redolent of the literary (poetic) traits of the first one (Bertram). One may then discover that Nietzsche wanted to represent this kind of return through music (Higgins) and repetition (Hatab) – music as revealed in text, I add, as according to the acoustically minded scholars; and dance (Parkes) as a quasi-acoustic, rather visual, phenomenon (an intermediary between the acoustic and visual devices of representation); through the sun as a static symbol (Jappinen) and the sun as a dynamic symbol (Parkes) and the seasons generated by the sun and the earth (Puszczalowski); through the rise and fall of Zarathustra's star (Ryan); as a drama (Alderman) – the drama, I add, of Zarathustra's following the cycle path of the sun to which Alderman draws attention in the same book where he provides a dramatic account of the doctrine<sup>63</sup>; through the return of sunset and sunrise (Nitske); and through the midnight symbol (Solomon and Higgins), as according to the visually minded ones; and, finally, as a literary narrative (Nehamas) – as a diurnal narrative structure, I add, which is closely related to the dramatic and diurnal cases. The latter, *visual*, group leads one to discover that the eternal recurrence is represented precisely by means of the recurrence of circular and cyclical diurnal symbols in *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*. It is proposed to consider these interpretations beginning with the acoustic ones – those that focus on voice and sound – and ending with the visual ones – those that are based on sight and silence, where the latter will be shown to supersede the former

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<sup>63</sup> Alderman's drama should be understood in the context of Zarathustra's experience of the alternation of day and night as solar symbols. Generally, the aesthetic interpretations are structured in such a way that a solar pattern emerges towards the end of the chapter.

on the ground of the eternal recurrence being an unspeakable thought, hence communicable only through (pictorial) symbols, so as to prepare the ground for a new symbolic interpretation of the eternal recurrence. Although all of these commentators pay special attention to Nietzsche's language and expression of eternal recurrence, they overlook the recurrence of the diurnal cyclical symbols in the text. Drawing on their approaches, I appreciate Ryan attending to the dynamics of Zarathustra's star in connection to the eternal recurrence, Alderman observing that Zarathustra follows the cyclical path of the sun, Nitske suggesting relations among the symbols of sunset and sunrise and the eternal return, and Solomon's and Higgins' glossarial description of midnight as a naturalistic symbol of the doctrine and attempt to develop their views further.

### **1. Bertram: *Mythological Reading***

One of the earliest aesthetic interpretations is by Ernst Bertram (1884 – 1957), professor of German literature (the Universities of Bonn and Cologne, 1922 – 1946). In *Nietzsche: Versuch einer Mythologie* (1918) (*Nietzsche: Attempt at a Mythology*) (2009), Bertram provides a *mythological* interpretation of eternal recurrence. To Bertram, "Nietzsche was preeminently 'a poet and psychologist' (Bertram 217)" (Norton xxvi). In "Translator's Introduction: Attempt at a Demythologization," Robert E. Norton writes that many of Nietzsche's ideas, including the idea of eternal recurrence, "are either never mentioned or airily dismissed" in Bertram's book (Norton xxvi). I think the reason why Norton believes that Bertram seems to bypass the idea of eternal recurrence is that Bertram does not offer a strictly philosophical but a literary – mythological – account of eternal recurrence – the eternal return of all things as a *poetically inspired* phenomenon, something rarely appealing to a philosopher's interest. In fact, Bertram's interpretation serves to help to discover the return of diurnal symbols in *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*.

Viewing Nietzsche as “legend”, as “not something written, but something that is always to be *read* anew, that comes into existence only through a constantly renewed rereading”<sup>64</sup>

(Bertram 5) – through, I add, poetic inspiration – Bertram calls Nietzsche’s doctrine a

pseudo-revelation... [a] deceptively teasing delusional mystery... the symbolization of the shudder, of the vertigo one feels when faced by the inexorably closing ring, the return to the haven to oneself. The more one learns, the more one knows, the more one sees: round and round it all goes.... The eternal return of all things within himself, the intellectual circumnavigator’s pedagogical secret, which constantly threatens to erupt in festively extravagant ecstasy, the triumphantly conscious curse of having to return to the eternally same port of origin, this seems to be only the metaphysical form, the demonic formula, of the deep ancestral feeling that from the beginning throbs in Nietzsche’s blood and mind (Bertram 12).

At first glance, Bertram reads the eternal recurrence as a mysterious inner experience of the return of all things within oneself, of having to return to one’s own beginning. He goes on to describe various aspects of the eternal recurrence, considering it on one occasion “an extreme form of self-martyrdom”: to be able to say “No” to nothingness and the “ultimate Dionysian ‘Yes’ ” to life (111): “Was *that* life? Well then! Once more!” (TSZ III “On the Vision and the Riddle” 1: 269) – “this exclamation at Nietzsche’s end is truly not an outburst of jubilation, but rather a decision, a sacrifice, an eternal self-crucifixion” (Bertram 111); on another, an extreme opposite: “the idea of the Eternal Return is merely the most extreme pseudo-metaphysical exorcism of a simple ‘yes’ to life (as opposed to the theoretical ‘no’ of Schopenhauer’s pessimism)” (235); on yet another, a “great pedagogical [lie] in the mask of ‘absolute truths’ ” (151), where behind the mask-truth there is yet the truth that Nietzsche wanted something *taught* as absolute truth – affirmation of existence; on yet another still, a transformative power, as attested to throughout *Ecce Homo*:

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<sup>64</sup> Translator’s endnote 7: “Bertram is alluding to the etymology of ‘legend’, which comes from medieval Latin ‘legenda,’ derived from Latin ‘legendus,’ gerundive of ‘legere,’ ‘to gather, select, read’; akin to Greek ‘legein,’ ‘to collect, gather, choose, speak,’ from which is derived ‘logos,’ or ‘word, reason, speech’ ” (Norton 313).

...the relationship to Schopenhauer, Wagner, his friends; *Zarathustra*, the conception of the Recurrence, the Will to Power – every one a testament to an unbridled will, an intense fervor to create a life-sustaining, life-enhancing cult, a new mythos and a millennium given an Eleusian rejuvenation; and simultaneously a demystifying logic, a demonically secularizing skepticism, a delight in playing with the sacrilegious word, which if spoken ushers in chaos (Bertram 294).

What is common to all of the above aspects of eternal recurrence is the theme of life affirmation. Hence, finally, Bertram's *mythological* reading of the doctrine, as a mysterious poetic inspiration, views the latter as "the epitome and glorification of a highest moment: [Nietzsche's] 'eternity' is the cult of the mystical moment, of such a moment as he experienced next to the pile of stone at Surlei, on the lake of Silvaplana in August 1881", an eternity as experienced "*only* in the form of the Dionysian moment [where it is affirmed] only in the Yes of the justifying instant, to the fateful Faustian moment of the 'Tarry awhile!<sup>65</sup>'" (Bertram 202). That is, by affirming one single moment, one affirms all eternity, for all things are intertwined. In this sense, Bertram's mythological reading of eternal recurrence may serve as the background to all other existential interpretations of the doctrine with literary implications. If one takes Bertram's reading seriously, one may go on to investigate whether Nietzsche indeed attempted to communicate the unspeakable return of all things within himself – whether he attempted to employ any literary device to communicate his experience. One may then discover a number of them. Higgins, for example, tentatively discovers music.

## **2. Higgins: *Musical Interpretation***

In *Nietzsche's Zarathustra* (1987, 2010), Higgins' approach to *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* is neither philosophical nor strictly literary (Higgins xix) but, rather, interdisciplinary (*ibid.*). She

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<sup>65</sup> "The German 'Verweile doch!' is an allusion to Goethe's *Faust*. It refers to the wager Faust makes with Mephistopheles: if Faust ever utters this phrase – 'Tarry awhile, Thou art so fair!' – indicating that he has found satisfaction in a particular moment, situation, or experience, he will surrender his soul to the devil. *Faust*, line 1700, HA 3, 57" (Norton: footnote 31, p. 344).

believes that “*Thus Spoke Zarathustra* deserves to be taken far more seriously than the mainstream of Nietzsche scholarship has acknowledged” (*ibid.*). She focuses on Part IV, reading it as allusive to Apuleius’ *Golden Ass*, “a work that richly satirizes pretense at wisdom” (*ibid.*). According to Higgins, then, “part IV is making a strong statement about the shortcomings of Zarathustra’s own quest” (Higgins xx). But what is remarkable and applicable to our concern is her *musical* interpretation of Zarathustra’s doctrine of eternal recurrence, to which we now turn.

To provide an alternative to the teleological apprehension of the present, Higgins offers to pursue “Nietzsche’s clue that the whole of *Zarathustra* might be reckoned as music and explore the analogy between the present-centeredness of musical experience and the present orientation implicit in the doctrine of eternal recurrence” (Higgins 116). By drawing on Viktor Zuckerkandl’s discussion of the temporal structure of music in *Sound and Symbol: Music and the External World* (1956), Higgins suggests an analogy between the structure of music and the eternal recurrence, namely, between the moment of the musical tone extended into a whole endless melody and the moment of eternal recurrence extended into a whole infinite eternity. She observes “several features of the temporality of music that are reminiscent of the theory of time expressed by the doctrine of eternal recurrence” (Higgins 116). Most generally, she believes, “the temporality of music resembles that described by Nietzsche’s doctrine in being present-oriented and in seeing past and future in terms of their contribution to the immediate experience of the present” (*ibid.*). Specifically, Higgins speaks of the all-encompassing nature of both the present moment and the musical tone, in terms of their relation to the past and the future.

The past and the future are both connected with the awareness of the present tone, but not as specific past and future events. The past is preserved in forces that shape the present moment, and the future is present as a sense of direction. Particularity is to be experienced only in the present. A simultaneous awareness of past and future is part of what is experienced in the present; but correctly viewed, this awareness is only a sense of a whole in which the present moment is the immediately experienced part (Higgins 117).



In other words, while the force of the past is *preserved* the force of the future is *anticipated* in the present moment – this creates “a sense of a whole” within the present moment or musical tone. As is clear, both music and eternal recurrence place a great emphasis on the significance of both past and future but focus “on the vitality of the present moment as the central element in our experience of temporality” (Higgins 118). In particular, “[t]hough related to the temporal totality of the musical work, the musical tone is nevertheless experienced as an immediately present *moment* in which the reflection of the temporal whole is contained. In this respect, it is like the present moment as described by the doctrine of eternal recurrence” (*ibid.*).

The present-centredness of the moment is not without a goal, however, as all moments are interconnected. This is true in relation to both the doctrine and music with which it is compared. “With his doctrine of eternal recurrence, Nietzsche is urging us to approach our experiences with an attitudinal perspective that resembles our attitude in musical listening” (*ibid.*). Namely, this perspective is present-centred, but its present-centredness involves the awareness of future goals, which prevents us from drowning ourselves in the present. Such a “perspective conceives of our goals as something like dynamic forces operative in the present. This is the same kind of goal-orientation as that evident in Zarathustra’s early admonitions that we should be ‘arrows of longing for the overman’ ” (*ibid.*). However, Higgins reminds us, “[t]hese are not exhortations to see the present merely as a means to a future end. Instead, they represent a call for us to recognize that a sense of future ends is part of what constitutes a meaningful sense of the present” (*ibid.*).

But one sets a goal only if one enjoys the present moment, just as one longs for continuous melody when one enjoys the present musical tone. In this regard, the passionate present moment, in which one takes pleasure, unfolds itself as a goal for the future, while

drawing all of future, past, and present time into itself. Both music and eternal recurrence, therefore, promote *delight* in the present moment that gathers eternity into a whole. “The attitude of highest affirmation is not mere acceptance, but positive delight in whatever is (hence was and will be) before one” (*ibid.*), which is succinctly expressed by Nietzsche’s doctrine of *love of fate*: “My formula for greatness in a human being is *amor fati*: that one wants nothing to be different, not forward, not backward, not in all eternity. Not merely bear what is necessary, still less conceal it... but love it” (EH “Why I am so Clever” 258). Thus, loving all of life, like the whole of melody, in every moment (*amor fati*) and treating every present moment, like every present musical tone, as valuable (*eternal recurrence as music*) are two sides of one and the same coin – Nietzsche’s ideal for living.

It has been seen that Higgins focuses on the present-centeredness inherent in both the musical tone and the moment of eternal recurrence, with their past and future implications. She further uses this to argue that Nietzsche’s doctrine of eternal recurrence (a conception of the valuable present moment as involving both past and future, the musical tone being an analogue) provides a critique of Christianity’s linear conception of time in *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* (Higgins 119). Despite the brilliant comparison she is making between eternal recurrence and music, *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, though it may be structured as music (according to Graham Parkes, Part I is written in *sonata-allegro* form; Part II, in *adante* or *adagio*; Part III, in the tempo of a *minuet* (or *minuet* or *scherzo* and *trio*) – or *minuet* and *trio* in ternary form, if Part IV is included to reflect the classical symphony in four movements – or in *allegro* or *presto*; and Part IV would be dance-like in *rondo*), is not music but *text* and cannot be *played* as it is but has to be *read*.<sup>66</sup> Furthermore, even if the text is imagined to be music capable of being played and

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<sup>66</sup> “The world of *Zarathustra* scholarship divides into those who think the work properly ends at the conclusion of Part III (which Nietzsche certainly thought was the end at the time he finished it) and those who think it includes

*heard*, as when *one sings the text, thereby making music*, this would require Higgins to locate music within Nietzsche's text and relate it to the doctrine of eternal recurrence as unfolded therein, by providing an analysis of word-, phrase-, and structure-repetitions, of refrains, alliterations and assonances, all of which, I presume, create a sense of music and musical overtones throughout *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, something that is outside the scope of this project, which is confined to the study of circular symbols representing the idea of eternal recurrence. Thus, Higgins' musical interpretation of eternal recurrence, as it currently stands, has not been literally supported by Nietzsche's text. Yet, Higgins may be suggesting that the eternal recurrence is revealed through the music in/of *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, which may be created by the stylistic device of *repetition*.

### **3. Hatab: *Repetition* as ER**

Stylistically considered, the recurrence of circular symbols is a variation of repetition.<sup>67</sup> Nietzsche employs the stylistic device of *repetition* to invoke the eternal recurrence on semantic, sentential and textual levels. Thus one finds in the text 1) repetitions of words and phrases; 2) repetitions of sentences; 3) repetitions of Zarathustra's descent and ascent of the mountain; and 4) repetitions of the appearance of the sun and the serpent and the eagle. In *Nietzsche's Life Sentence: Coming to Terms with Eternal Recurrence* (2005), Hatab gives in passing a *stylistic* interpretation of the eternal return by referencing repetition as a stylistic device Nietzsche

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fourth part, which he wrote around a year later but chose not to publish. If one is of the three-part persuasion, the book's structure would reflect the pre-classical symphony in three movements: a first movement in *sonata-allegro* form; a second, slow movement (*adante* or *adagio*) usually consisting of a theme and variations; and a third movement either 'in the tempo of a minuet' (sometimes minuet or scherzo and trio) or else in a faster dance-like tempo (*allegro* or *presto*). For those who include the fourth part, the form would be that of the later classical symphony in four movements, where the third would be a *minuet and trio* in ternary form, and the final movement dance-like in *rondo*." (Parkes 2008: 13) See Parkes, "The Symphonic Structure of *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*: A Preliminary Outline."

<sup>67</sup> Repetition could also be related to rhythm in Parkes' musical reading of Nietzsche's text, something that he or others may yet have to consider doing.

employs in the text for maximal creative effect. Paying attention to the relation between creativity and repetition, Hatab stresses the importance of there being “a connection between eternal recurrence and the human desire to experience artworks over and over again” (Hatab 2005: 137), something Nietzsche discussed in an early note (*KGW* 9, 505). Hatab further explains:

The enjoyment of repeat performances of the same text is surely different from exact repetition, but it points to some evidence for the attraction of repetition in human experience.<sup>68</sup> In addition, we should consider the poetic effects of repetition in rhythm, rhyme, and word/phrase reiteration. Such techniques are creative in relation to the normal absence of such patterns in ordinary language. These patterns are temporally structured recurrences that interrupt the familiar directional passage and ongoing business of speech by “re-calling” elements of the passage in different ways: metrics and rhymes infuse temporal passage with rhythmic and sonic attractions; repetition of words or phrases gives them unusual emphasis or retrieves them from temporal passage so as to spotlight something normally hidden by familiarity: their sheer happening *as such*. A poetic “refrain,” therefore, is anything but tedious repetition. The word “refrain” comes from the French *refraindre* (to resound) and the Latin *refringere* (to break up and to check). A poetic refrain refrains language in the following way: it is a formal temporal structure that restrains the ordinary material business of linguistic passage; and in doing so, a refrain creates a heightened accentuation of the sheer disclosive force of language. We should note Nietzsche’s extended use of refrain in Zarathustra’s speech in “The Seven Seals,” especially the repeated phrase “For I love you, O eternity!” In this regard, could eternal recurrence be heard as a global poetic refrain? (Hatab 2005: 137)

The answer is Yes. Indeed, the moment and sequence of eternal return exemplified by the repetition of words and phrases, rhymes and rhythm, alliteration and assonance allows for the refreshing of language, while the stylistic device, I add, becomes the vehicle for the eternal return as life affirmation through the desire to experience the joy of repeat performances of the text, especially of circular symbols. The repetition of circular symbols is redolent of the invocation of *sacred* time with a view to replacing *profane* time. In *Cosmos and History: The Myth of the Eternal Return* (1971), Mircea Eliade recognises the distinction between profane and

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<sup>68</sup> There is a story that, in response to the woman’s question what he wanted to say in his piece Goethe played the piece again. “In this act, there is an echo of Nietzsche’s satisfaction with the nontelic, noncausal, nonexplicable immediacy of events” (Hatab 2005: ch. 7, footnote 19, p. 179).

sacred time in primitive culture. Profane time is time as we ordinarily perceive it. Sacred time is time perceived by archaic humans as mysterious, as behind or beneath concrete, ordinary time. The former, as opposed to the latter, provided meaning for pre-modern humans. Acts or rites were seen as repetitions of a primordial act (Eliade 3, 4), sacred archetypes (5) posited by gods, heroes, or ancestors (22). “A rite (repetition) paradoxically *transforms* this moment into the mythical origin (the primordial ‘moment’); in other words, it transforms profane time (as durational, linear history) into sacred time (the circle of recurring origins)” (Hatab 1978: 120), thus giving every moment meaning derived from the past (Eliade 7). In other words, repetition transforms a mysterious occurrence into an all-the-more mysterious recurrence. Similarly, the repetition of circular symbols, especially cyclical diurnal symbols – temporal symbols – transforms one’s experience of time as figuratively *linear* into one’s experience of time as figuratively *circular*, while the reader experiences the mysterious repetition of circular symbols as reaching back to their primary occurrence, thus tying, as though retrospectively, the whole chain of cycles into one cyclical whole. Hatab, however, does not go on to explore the stylistic device of repetition in reference to the numerous symbols in the text. There is no mention on his part of the repetition of either circular or specifically diurnal symbols either, to which study this work confines itself.

Besides the eternal return being represented through the repetition (Hatab) or music (Higgins) of verbal language, there is room yet for it being manifested through the dance (Parkes) in *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*. While music or the music of repetition speaks through noise (sounds), dance speaks through silence (rhythmic movements and gestures). Discussion of the latter as still an acoustic (to a certain degree), yet heavily visual, phenomenon will lay the

foundation for the consideration of the most silent, visual (circular and solar) representation of eternal recurrence.

#### 4. Parkes: *Mobility-Based Interpretation*

Parkes traces the development of the structure of *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* through the mode of self-expression from writing through speaking and singing to dancing:

- 1) Zarathustra suggests that one should *write* not in ink but in blood (“On Reading and Writing”);
- 2) The title of the book “*Thus Spoke...*” implies not writing but *speaking* – “[d]oes not the very title of *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* privilege the spoken word over the written one?” (Koelb 13); also, Zarathustra makes a great deal of speeches in Part I (e.g., “Zarathustra’s Speeches”);
- 3) After he experienced the weight of his abysmal thought, when he invoked it, fell as if dead, and remained unconscious for seven days, Zarathustra’s animals tell him that he should not speak any more, but *sing* (“The Convalescent” 2);
- 4) Finally, all of Zarathustra’s companions *dance* in his mountain cave (“The Drunken Song” 1).

In so doing, “Parkes suggests that, for all the speechmaking that goes on in *Zarathustra*, there is also ‘a movement afoot away from the “speaking” alluded to in the book’s title’ that leads toward a recasting of the notion of writing as dancing” (Koelb 13). In this sense, in “The Dance from Mouth to Hand (Speaking Zarathustra’s Write Foot ForeWord)” (1990), Parkes provides, I believe, a *nimble, mobility-based* interpretation of eternal recurrence, calling it “the unspeakable thought”, which can only be realised through *dance* (Parkes 1990: 133). The spirit of gravity (heavy words that cannot express the fullness of life) is contrasted with the lightness of the

eternal recurrence (only singing and dancing can express the completeness of existence). What Nietzsche wants, Parkes believes, is to show one's light, jubilant, creative response to existence now that "*God is dead!*" (I "*Zarathustra's Prologue*" 2: 124). "After the Death of the One Christian God, the archetype of the spirit of gravity who represents all absolute values, there is no ground on which to take a firm stand: our feet are faced with the abyss. An appropriate response is then to dance, to cultivate a lightness of foot that will obviate becoming stuck in any single perspective" (Parkes 1990: 137). Thus, Parkes claims that the text's voice (speech, song, laughter) gradually yields to silent dance (the lightness of feet). "As the speaking voice begins to break, it splits into song and laughter, one branch losing verbal signification as the other assumes melody and then takes off into flight, before both settle down to the silent intermediation of the dance" (Parkes 1990: 128).

What is remarkable about Parkes' interpretation is that he notes the transition from sound (Zarathustra's numerous speeches and songs) to silence (his dance with the higher men in his mountain cave). However, if one pays closer attention to the text, one will discover that, besides dance being not as 'silent' as it is presumed to be in communicating the eternal recurrence (for the rhythmic movement of the feet or the appreciative clapping of the hands may still make sounds), there is yet a more silent intimation or revelation of it in the text – that produced by circular symbols. In this vein, it is possible to declare that the circular symbols are the most silent means of communication of the eternal recurrence of the same employed in the entire book (and they are also silently in motion).

The circular symbols in *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* are silent by nature. Yet they are visually sensuous and appeal to the senses of the reader, inducing silent, pictorial thinking pertaining to animals (Lemm 2009: 8, 111 – 151; TL). Nietzsche intends the circular symbols to

appeal to the primordial, human animal. It is because the circular symbols are most silent – and therefore the easiest to overlook – that, paradoxically, they speak the loudest to the reader “with delicate ears” (TSZ I “On the Gift-Giving Virtue” 2: 189), a reader who is capable of as highly a developed pictorial imagination as the author of *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*. Every circular symbol is a picture, a visual sense perception, and an aesthetic, as well as an ethical, experience, reflecting the mood or attitude of Zarathustra towards himself, the world, and life. In this regard, the reason why the circular (diurnal) symbols have been overlooked in *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* is that they are the most silent, stealthy means of communication of the eternal recurrence – to wit, the stillest words/symbols bring on the storm (TSZ II “The Stillest Hour” 258) – and therefore closer to truth. Nietzsche always wanted to conceal his ideas, for once a truth is spoken, it becomes a lie in the mouths of other people. Nietzsche’s silence, therefore, selects his audience, and that for educational purposes. Given both that the (loud) voice (music and repetition as music) yields to the (silent) dance and the latter to the most silent, sensuous, pictorial (circular and diurnal) symbols and that without the sun symbol there would naturally be no diurnal symbols, the sun image will be considered next.

### **5. Jappinen: Poetic Correspondence: Symbol and Narrative as ER**

The idea of the eternal recurrence was originally conceived in poetic form. Nietzsche planned for his work to have “a strong aesthetic component” (Jappinen 49). Having studied Nietzsche’s notes of August 1881, as well as those that follow, Ilona Jappinen in her PhD thesis entitled “The Poetic Representation of Friedrich Nietzsche’s Idea of Eternal Recurrence” (1981) demonstrated that “[Nietzsche] was planning to utilize a poetically coherent form of AZ’s [*Also sprach Zarathustra*’s] presentation of the ER [eternal recurrence] virtually at its inception” (Jappinen 84). She made the first attempt “...to show the correspondence of the numerous facets



of the idea of ER to its poetic form of expression” (Jappinen 2), “that the poetic form of AZ represents the many facets of the ER both purposefully and consistently” (19), thus arguing for a “clear interdependence of the idea [of eternal recurrence] and the poetic work” (47) and for the latter being “the prime vehicle for this idea, which Nietzsche often called his ‘*Grundgedanke*’ ” (384). Generally, Jappinen identifies the reason for the controversy over the form and content in Nietzsche’s work, differentiates between philosophical and artistic groups who interpreted the eternal return, and explores the blending of thought and image advocated by a subgroup of the latter.

It is likely that the philosophical and critical controversy over the ER stems largely from inattention to its poetic representation, and from over-reliance on the scant “philosophical” explanations in [Nietzsche’s] notebooks. The main currents of comment are exemplified by the philosophical views, as those of Karl Löwith, Karl Jaspers and Martin Heidegger. The artistic views are represented by Otto Olzien, Siegfried Vitens and Maria Bindschedler, among others. Both these groups tend to view the ER as either too simplistic, too complex or as self-contradictory. Those who regard it as a blend of philosophy and art, e.g., Bernd Magnus and Anke Bennholdt-Thomsen, however, not coincidentally find the idea internally consistent and a powerful force for a revised, affirmative approach to life. The latter group has identified the blending of rational thought and subjective perception in the ER as the key to its coherence. But this [Jappinen’s] study provide[d] the first attempt to examine the details and the mechanics of that blending in the poetic language of AZ (Jappinen 386).

Despite her brilliant analysis of the poetic form of Nietzsche’s doctrine – the reconciliation of the two time frames – moment and sequence – of eternal recurrence through symbols and narrative alongside Zarathustra’s maturation process, resulting in his communication of the eternal recurrence, Jappinen never addressed herself to the matter of cyclical symbols, in particular the circular, unfolding continuity of diurnal cyclical symbols, which can be viewed in conjunction with the eternal recurrence or Zarathustra’s ever-changing experience and maturation process. In other words, there is no cyclical continuity in her

treatment of recurrent symbols. In order to appreciate the difference between her approach and mine, it is worth looking at how she deals with the sun image.

In tracing the symbolism of the frequently re-appearing or otherwise engaged sun that successively changes its meaning by “appear[ing] first as splendor, then joy, then giving, then creativity, then the sense of renewal, and finally the eternally giving and regenerative power in the chapter ‘Mittags’ [‘At Noon’], where its ‘moment’ is, for [Zarathustra], the culmination of the ER” (Jappinen 159), Jappinen, while drawing on Bernard Pautrat, who should be given credit for seeing the sun imagery as a “*système circulaire*” (“circular system”) (Pautrat 266), observes that “[i]n the larger structure of AZ, the sun, like [Zarathustra], develops a rhythm of static (‘Augenblick’) and dynamic (sequence) motion that both frames and defines the dual time scheme of ER” (Jappinen 157). For her the sun as a symbol stands for the moment, while the narrative occurrence of solar images indicates the sequence of eternal recurrence: “The narrative line of presentation of the sun supports the sequential perception, while the symbolic appearances support the direct effect of the moment. The rising and falling of the sun, the reference to the time of day at all important junctures, carries on the narrative line” (*ibid.*). She gives the following examples: „eines Morgens stand er mit der Morgenröthe auf...“ (I „Zarathustra’s Vorrede“ 1, *KGW* VI 1, 5: 6), or “one morning he rose with the dawn” (I “Zarathustra’s Prologue” 1: 121), „nicht nur die Morgenröthe gieng über sein Antlitz“ (I „Zarathustra’s Vorrede“ 9, *KGW* VI 1, 19: 14, 15), or “not only dawn passed over his face” (I “Zarathustra’s Prologue” 9: 135), „als die Sonne im Mittag stand...“ (I „Zarathustra’s Vorrede“ 10, *KGW* VI 1, 21: 8, 9), or “when the sun stood high at noon” (I “Zarathustra’s Prologue” 10: 136), and others. Believing mistakenly in the distinction between the symbolic and narrative language Nietzsche employs to express the dual time-frame of eternal recurrence, where, on her

reading, “[t]he one kind of time, historical endlessness, is expressed best in the narrative, while the holistic time frame is best expressed by symbol, as it is one unified all-inclusive eternal moment” (Jappinen 147) – that is, in opposing symbol to polysemy, Jappinen does not note that the sun as a *symbol* (of the will to power) expresses not only the moment but also the sequence of eternal recurrence by generating a coherent sequence of symbolic diurnal cycles throughout the text – that the cyclical symbols in *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* manifest themselves both sequentially and momentarily (holistically). Overall, Jappinen treats Nietzsche’s recurrent, dynamic symbols (e.g., the sun) as static phenomena, as not returning to themselves, whereas I show that the sun returns to itself through the cyclical continuity of diurnal symbols, i.e., diurnal symbols return to themselves throughout the text. Her conception of symbol shows it as representing the eternal moment, with the symbol’s accrual of meanings in the narrative indicating the sequence of moments, whereas my conception of (circular) symbol shows it as representing both the moment (e.g., noon) and the sequence of moments (e.g., noon, evening, midnight, and morning) within the endless repetition of the character of the moment (noon) constituting eternity. Fortunately, Jappinen’s sun symbol receives dynamic properties in Parkes’ psychological discussion, which lays the ground for further consideration of the sun’s circularity in Nietzsche’s text.

## **6. Parkes: *Psychological Interpretation with Metaphorical Implications***

Graham Parkes is one of the few Nietzsche scholars who concern themselves with the study of Nietzsche’s figural language, though from a psychological perspective. In “The Overflowing Soul: Images of Transformation in Nietzsche’s *Zarathustra*” (1983), he discusses “the psychological dimension of the book” (Parkes 1983: 335) as revealed through elemental images – images of *water* (e.g., the soul is like a lake, stream, sea) (338 – 340), *earth* (the

Overhuman is “the sense of the earth”) (341), and *fire* (e.g., the sun as one of the Overhuman’s symbols; the Overhuman as lightning) (342, 343) and various *agricultural* and *botanical* (e.g., Zarathustra’s ripening) (343, 344), as well as *animal* (e.g., Zarathustra’s camel-lion-child metamorphosis) (343 – 347) metaphors, while focusing on the water and animal images. By *water* images he means the lake/river-like overflowing soul’s *self-conscious reunion* with the ocean of the world’s will to power. Using Nietzsche’s image of the overflowing soul (lake and river) in *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* and metaphorical description of the world as the undulating waves of the ocean in §1067 of *The Will to Power*, Parkes interprets the individual soul (the *lake*), the individual will to power, as participating in the world-soul, the collective will to power (the *ocean*), through their common image of *water*: both are abysmal, fluid, ever-changing, and self-contained (returning to itself) (338 – 340).

Basically, the soul’s relation to the world, if described in water images, is a transition from the calm, reasonable, reflective, silent *lake* – “the soul contained, the waters of *eros* enclosed”, through the troubled, emotional, wild, loquacious *river* – desire, or *libido*, to the ever-changing, senseless, unruly, verbose *sea*, “where the soul merges with the world as waves of will to power” (339). By *animal* images he means the transformation of the spirit into the image of the camel as an unreflective and collective creature, into the image of the lion as a detached, objectively observing, individualistic creature, and finally, into the image of the spontaneously innocent child as *reflectively participating* in the collective world.

Generally, Parkes shows that the will must remember “the detached stance of the lion while at the same time forgetting both the collective camel and the individualistic lion” in order for “the spontaneous innocence of the child” to emerge; “[t]he past of both the individual and the race is to be remembered and affirmed” by the Overman’s solar will; and the overflowing

soul's self-containment is to be "both remembered and forgotten as it merges with the ever-living ocean of will to power" (346, 347). Thus, by drawing mostly on *water* and *animal* images, Parkes views the soul as reflectively participating "in the cosmos of nature", "human society" and "the history of the race" (346). In this sense, since for Parkes Zarathustra's "*reflective participation... in the history of the race [is] achieved through the realization of the possibility of eternal recurrence and the interrelatedness of all things*" (*ibid.*) as the will's *self-conscious reunion* with the world, he may be said to provide a *psychological* interpretation of eternal recurrence with *metaphorical* implications.

Although Parkes, like most other Nietzsche scholars, does not consider the diurnal symbols in *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* with reference to the eternal recurrence, in the passage below on the *fire* image of the soul being related to the solar aspect of the Overhuman expressed through a lightning image, as he concludes on the distinction between Zarathustra's *moving* sun and Plato's *steady* sun, he makes an unconscious suggestion for their study (which he develops in *Composing the Soul: Reaches of Nietzsche's Psychology* a decade later, 1994). Let us follow it through, beginning first with his earlier, then continuing with his later work. In his article Parkes notes:

Later in the Prologue, the soul's affinity with *fire* is suggested by a striking image of the overman: "So where is the lightning to lick you with its tongue? Where is the madness with which you must be inoculated? See, I teach you the overman: he is this lightning, he is this madness!" (G 10, E 14) When the weather in the world of the spirit becomes ever heavier and more oppressive, the reduction of tension in "the dark cloud of man" is effected by thunder and lightning. The release that the lightning of the overman brings is *sudden* and violent, and the illumination he provides *intermittent* and temporary: the ways things are is *seen in a flash* (as of the lightning in Herakleitos, which steers the whole universe), rather than under the *steady shining* of a Platonic sun (Parkes 1983: 342, all italics mine except "*fire*").

In his book Parkes echoes the above passage: "In Zarathustra's Prologue the *Übermensch* is referred to as a bolt of lightning, which signifies both that the condition affords a kind of sudden

illumination (a Heraclitean *flash* in contrast to the *steady*, more global illumination of the Platonic sun), and also that it is potentially destructive” (Parkes 1994: 141, all italics mine). In pursuing the fire image, Parkes draws a distinction between Zarathustra’s sun as “an image for the will and wisdom of the overman” and the transcendent Platonic sun: “whereas for Sokrates the cave is a place of ignorance within the earth, for Zarathustra it is a place of enlightenment on the mountain-top; and while in Plato the Idea of the Good is absolutely transcendent to all life in the sensible realm, Nietzsche’s sun *needs* Zarathustra and his animals in order to be what it is” (Parkes 1983: 343). Thus, as Parkes shows, 1) Zarathustra’s sun is not fully transcendent, whereas the Platonic sun is; 2) Zarathustra’s cave has the light of wisdom while situated on the mountain-top, whereas Plato’s cave has the darkness and shadows of ignorance while located down below in the earth; and 3) Zarathustra’s sun needs Zarathustra and his animals, whereas the Platonic sun does not need Plato (*ibid.*). Overall, Zarathustra values the sensible world more than the world of reason, whereas Plato values the world of reason more than the sensible world. Most importantly for our case, while for Plato the sunshine must be steady and the sun stand at noon, for Zarathustra, by relating the momentary, temporary and intermittent solar aspect of the Overhuman expressed through the image of a fast, sudden lightning to the sun itself, the sun must rise and fall, producing day, evening, night, and morning, i.e., the diurnal cycle, which in turn suggests the eternal recurrence of the same.

In *Composing the Soul: Reaches of Nietzsche’s Psychology* (1994), Parkes continues his study of the sun imagery as revealed in Plato vs. Nietzsche before he links Zarathustra’s sun to the will to power.<sup>69</sup> “In Plato the sun stands for that which illuminates and sustains something even more fundamental than a worldview or a life – namely, the universe. The Idea of the Good is, as absolutely transcendent, one and the same for all, whereas Nietzsche is arguing that some

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<sup>69</sup> See Parkes 1994: “Land- and Seascape of the Interior,” ch. 4, “Suns and Vital Fiers,” sec., 136 – 143.

existence may be illuminated and sustained by their own particular sources” (Parkes 1994: 137). In *The Gay Science* Nietzsche says he wants to become self-sufficient: “I am not a seeker. I want to create my own sun for myself” (GS 320). However, “...the desire to create one’s own sun could [not] be fully realized: an individual would be capable at most of contributing to the conditions of the creation of his own sun” (*ibid.*). In this sense, Zarathustra does his best to create his own sun. To be more precise, he creates the conditions for his own sun: his sun (his “son”) rises and falls as opposed to the Platonic sun that *stands*. Parkes further states that in *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* “the image of the sun still stands for the power that sustains a worldview, while in some contexts it is an image of the will as will to power – and occasionally even of Zarathustra himself” (Parkes 1994: 137). If the sun, on Parkes’ reading, signifies the will to power, while the sun’s cyclical rising and falling, on my reading, represents the eternal recurrence as manifested through noon, evening, night, and morning, then the rising and falling of the sun must symbolise the eternal return of the will to power.<sup>70</sup>

Furthermore, reading the sun image psychologically, Parkes notes that there is a presence of the sun’s cyclical course in some chapters of *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*: “The cyclical course of the sun through the text signifies times at which crucial events take place – as in such chapter titles as ‘Before Sunrise,’ ‘Midday,’ [and] ‘The Nightwanderer-Song’ ”<sup>71</sup> (Parkes 1994: 137, 138). He also notes the fluidity inherent in the transition from noon to midnight: “Noon, as the time of the sun’s zenith and the greatest illumination, is also the point at which the forces of light begin to give way to the forces of darkness; and conversely with midnight, the darkest hour”

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<sup>70</sup> See Chapter 1, pp. 24 – 27 for Heidegger’s conception of will to power and eternal return as one and the same thought.

<sup>71</sup> From footnote 40, p. 412: Cf. *The Wanderer and his Shadow* (WS 308): aphorism “At Midday” in HH anticipates chapter “At Midday” in *Z*. Cf. Emerson: “Not the sun or the summer alone, but every hour and season” yields its tribute of delight; for every hour and change corresponds to and authorizes a different state of the mind, from breathless noon to grimmest midnight (‘Nature’).” (Perhaps from Emerson, Ralph Waldo. *Essays and Lectures*. New York, 1983.)

(*ibid.*). Finally, he goes on to describe the psychological states the two major times – noon and midnight – of a diurnal cycle express: “These times are times of the psyche also: hours of brightest consciousness and of deepest shadow, a procession of moments that enacts the constant cycling between psychological alertness and oblivion” (*ibid.*). In this sense, my claim is that the solar cyclical course is shown not only in the chapters outlined by Parkes but runs throughout the entire book, from beginning to end, and that, as such, it represents the idea of eternal recurrence.

Parkes further notes that when “Zarathustra likens himself to the sun by saying that, in order to give away some of his abundance, he will have to ‘descend to the depths’ like the sun when it ‘sets behind the sea and so brings light to the underworld’ ”, he inaugurates “[t]he interplay between the upper and the lower worlds” (Parkes 1994: 138). The interplay, Parkes goes on,

is continued by his calling the sun “you over-rich star”: *überreich* (“over-rich”) suggests *Über-Reich*, which would mean ‘over-realm’ in contrast to the under-realm of the *Unterwelt* (“underworld”). The parallels between Zarathustra and the sun thus form a chain of images linking the richness of solar overflow with the riches of the ruler of the sunless realm, the underworld, domain of Hades the invisible. The underworld as the realm of death – a psychological realm that we inhabit every moment of the day and night, rather than an eschatological realm reached only at the end of our days – enriches experience by rounding life out on the far side at every moment. This is the force of the refrain in Zarathustra’s famous roundelay: “The world is deep, / And deeper than the day had thought” (Z 3.15, 4.19) (Parkes 1994: 138).

That is what the midnight would say. The upperworld expressed by the ‘*über*’ is complemented by the underworld expressed by the ‘*unter*’ within the cyclical course of the sun. Every moment of the cycle should be regarded as equally valuable: without night there would be no day and without the transitory moments, evening and morning, there would be no cyclical course made by the sun, no life on earth either. While the cyclical course of the sun sustains life on earth, the eternal recurrence it represents is important for genuine human existence. Just as every hour of



the diurnal cycle is vital for biological life, so also every moment of human existence must become valuable for the life-enhancing human being enclosed within that diurnal cycle.

Parkes further observes in a footnote that Zarathustra is subject to the solar death and rebirth cycle when in the Prologue he says he wants to descend to people just as the sun does when it goes down behind the sea, thereby alluding to “the solar hero of several mythologies [e.g. the sun god Ra in Egyptian mythology] who courses across the heavens in a chariot during the day and goes down into the ocean at sunset, in order to make the subterranean ‘night-sea journey’ back to the orient, whence he will be reborn at dawn the next morning” (Parkes 1994: 138: footnote 46, 413). Zarathustra emphasises his similarity to the rising and dying solar hero in a later passage: „Denn noch Ein Mal will ich zu den Menschen: *unter* ihnen will ich untergehen, sterbend will ich ihnen meine reichste Gabe geben! Der Sonne lernte ich Das ab, wenn sie hinabgeht, die Überreiche: Gold schüttet sie da in’s Meer aus unerschöpflichem Reichthume, — — also, dass der ärmste Fischer noch mit *goldenem* Ruder rudert!“ (III „Von alten und neuen Tafeln“ 3, *KGW* VI 1, 245: 10 – 17), or: “For I want to go to men once more: under their eyes I want to go under; dying I want to give them my richest gift! From the sun I learned this: when he goes down, overrich; he pours gold into the sea out of inexhaustible riches, so that even the poorest fisherman still rows with golden oars” (III “On Old and New Tablets” 3: 310).

It is clear from the above passage that Zarathustra learnt his cyclical course from that of the sun. Although the moon also follows the cyclical course, it does not generate the day-evening-night-morning cycle so vital for Zarathustra’s transformation. In this sense, Nietzsche distinguishes between solar and lunar knowledge when he relates the great noon and the sun to knowledge as follows: „Und das ist der grosse Mittag, da der Mensch auf der Mitte seiner Bahn steht zwischen Thier und Übermensch und seinen Weg zum Abende als seine höchste Hoffnung

feiert: denn es ist der Weg zu einem neuen Morgen. Als da wird sich der Untergehende selber segnen, dass er ein Hinübergehender sei; und die Sonne seiner Erkenntnis wird ihm im Mittage stehn“ (I „Von der schenkenden Tugend“ 3, *KGW* VI 1, 98: 6 – 12), or: “And that is the great noon when man stands in the middle of his way between beast and overman and celebrates his way to the evening as his highest hope: for it is the way to a new morning. Then will he who goes under bless himself for being one who goes over and beyond; and the sun of his knowledge will stand at high noon for him (I “On the Gift-Giving Virtue” 3: 190, 191). “The idea of a sunlike knowledge is central to Nietzsche’s conception of how we understand the world and our selves” (Parkes 1994: 139). Parkes explains this in terms of generating vs. reflecting knowledge: “Unlike the moon, which is an inanimate reflector of cool light, the sun sustains and drives the life of what it illuminates.<sup>72</sup> Nietzsche dismisses the putatively disinterested, ‘lunar’ knowledge at which philosophy has traditionally aimed, in favor of an experience of things that is ‘solar’ and to that extent life-enhancing” (*ibid.*). Thus, Zarathustra has learnt the cyclical course from the sun in order to be able to generate or create solar knowledge rather than reflect what things are, for in reality there is no such thing as reflected knowledge (because all knowledge is anthropomorphic, hence created solely by the human) unless it be that created by some and used/reflected by many.

Thus, although Parkes does notice that Zarathustra follows the cyclical path of the sun, while linking his solar course to psychological states and the image of knowledge generation and distribution, he, however, never directly suggests that the diurnal cycle may represent the doctrine of eternal recurrence, to say nothing of him noting the fact that there is quite a number of diurnal cycles inherent in the book, which itself is structured as a diurnal cycle.

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<sup>72</sup> As in my earlier gendered reading of *die Sonne* bearing life as women do. See my discussion of Oppel on Nietzsche’s feminine language in Chapter 3, pp. 96, 97.

The case of the eternal recurrence being represented by the return of diurnal symbols is closely related, on a large scale, to that of the eternal recurrence being indicated by the return of seasonal symbols implicit in Nietzsche's text, the circularity of which has already been alluded to in connection with the study of the relation between the seasons and the three metamorphoses of the spirit and deserves attention prior to the consideration of the circularity of the diurnal symbols of eternal recurrence below.

### **7. Puszczalowski: ER of the *Seasons***

There has been an unaccomplished attempt to compare the cycle of the seasons of the year with the eternal return of the great year of Being. Philip Puszczalowski first hinted at but then gave up the idea of the cyclical return of seasonal symbols expressing the eternal recurrence. In his MA thesis entitled "The Seasons of Zarathustra and their Correspondence to the Metamorphoses of the Spirit" (2007), Puszczalowski "explores the connection between the metamorphoses of the spirit and the seasons in *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, with the camel spirit corresponding to autumn, the lion spirit with winter, the child spirit with spring, and finally the Overman with summer" (Puszczalowski, "Abstract"). Notwithstanding his original approach, there still are the following slight contradictions evident in his study. He links the animals (the camel and the lion) that live in hot or warm places, such as a desert, with the cool or cold seasons, such as autumn and winter. Also the tranquility of the child does not associate well with the tempestuous flowing of spring and spring floods. To top it off, there is no natural metamorphosis of the camel into the lion, and of the lion into the child, as is the case with the cycle of the seasons (autumn changes into winter, winter into spring, spring into summer, and summer into autumn and so on). A disregard for these minute inconsistencies will allow me here to consider the following suggestion he makes upon arguing further that "when the goal of the

Overman is achieved, the metamorphosis of the spirit cycles back on itself; the spirit transforms into the overcamel, followed by the overlion, the overchild, and then finally the over-Overman”, which basically “show[s] that the metamorphosis of the spirit is cyclical with the camel, lion, and child spirits endlessly repeating, much like the seasons” (Puszczalowski 100, “Abstract”).

It appears that the metamorphoses of the spirit progress in a linear fashion with a particular goal, the Overman, while the seasons are continuously circular. While it may be tempting to say that the seasons could be a representation of the eternal return, this would be an error. With each cycle of the seasons, there are many changes; some winters are colder than others, just as some summers are hotter than others. While the seasons are generally the same, they are not the same in their details. The same summer does not return year after year as would be required of the eternal return and therefore, to compare the two would be erroneous (Puszczalowski 99).

Puszczalowski’s erroneous assumption is that the eternal return must always be of exactly the same. If one of the types of eternal return – the eternal return of same difference – outlined in Chapter 2 is taken into consideration, then it is possible to say that the qualitative variability of the seasons may properly compare, in essence, with the variations inaugurated by the eternal return of same difference. As such, the cycle of the seasons (which, by the way, is neither linear nor circular in character, but could be figuratively represented by a circle, as in the case of diurnal symbols) may be viewed as the eternal return of seasonal symbols they constitute – one type, among others, of Nietzsche’s circular images symbolising the eternal recurrence of the same. Furthermore, the images of autumn, winter, spring, and summer, taken holistically, symbolise the moments of eternity (withering, death, rebirth, and growth/maturity, respectively), while their eternal gradual successive continuous transformation, one into another, represents the endless sequence (or cycle) of eternity – the great year of Being. Moreover, the image of the circle created by the cycle of the seasons and seasonal symbols becomes the symbol of the eternal recurrence generally. Nevertheless, Puszczalowski showed that the sun generates the return of the seasons in *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, while his negative reference to the return of the

seasons indicating the eternal recurrence proves valuable if his remark of the impossibility of this relation is turned, as it has been, into its opposite by taking a more poetic approach to the doctrine – by considering its communication in circular images.

Further consideration of the circularity of the sun in the text will elicit more of a diurnal return. The return of days and nights or diurnal symbols is a natural cyclical return, just as is the return of the seasons or seasonal symbols. The latter, however, refers to longer spans of time, which change less frequently and are more general, and perhaps, more abstract, while the former concern shorter periods, which change much more frequently and are more particular, and perhaps, more concrete. In this sense, much more immediate than a contemplation of life in general is an everyday, everyhour, everymoment experience of recurrent reality, one represented by the recurrence of diurnal symbols, to which we finally turn. But before we do so, it is proposed first to discuss a recent study of Nietzsche's term star, specifically, how the Sun star in particular – the cause of diurnal symbols –, functions in the text and what relation it has to the doctrine.

### **8. Ryan: *Astral Interpretation***

In "The Rise and Fall of Zarathustra's Star" (2012), Bartholomew Ryan traces Nietzsche's use of the word star (*Gestirn* and *Stern*) in his various works, mostly through and in *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*. He notes that, "Throughout the whole of *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, there is constant reference to dawn, dusk, midnight, and noon. These are all related to the great Sun star enabling everything to live on this planet, and the times of the day to the rising, setting, absence of, and moment when the Sun is highest in the sky" (271). In accordance with his pursuit of the star images in Nietzsche's texts, Ryan endows *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* with a very interesting name – a "special 'star book' " and then suggests that there is a relation between

Zarathustra's doctrine, his way of living, and the star images that contains a key to the understanding of the eternal return: "Through the difficult task of articulating the eternal recurrence through language, it is the actual performance, narrative and speeches of Zarathustra with constant reference to the stars that ambitiously attempt to reveal its secret" (272). Guided by the solar spirit, Ryan references the repetitive invocation of the star image and thereby underscores the interconnectedness of the four parts and the circularity of the book as a whole: "...returning to the beginning and end of Zarathustra with 'you great star' reveals the circularity of Zarathustra's narrative: the end is the beginning and the beginning is the end..." (*ibid.*). What comes up next in Ryan's discussion as he is preparing for the task of bringing up star images and their meaning in the "star book", is the association of Zarathustra with the wandering star, changeability, circularity, and eternity: "...the narrative and life of Zarathustra is intertwined and moves in circles, and like the stars, is constantly wandering, for change alone endures and yet the change brings us back to a transformed beginning" (273). These further find their reflection in Ryan's reading of Part III and his implicit interpretation of eternal recurrence begins to unfold: "By beginning Book Three with the 'The Wanderer' speech, the intention is made for the journey to be completed in the rise and fall of the star before beginning again in Book Four" (275). Here he speaks of Zarathustra's death wish – to go down like the sun giving away his riches (III "On Old and New Tablets" 3) – and in this connection defines his star as follows: "...Zarathustra's star – one that comes from within, one that is triumphant in defeat, one that is an exhilarating, cosmic repetition that keeps [one] sleepless and propelled to work and one that dances into nothingness" (Ryan 276). What happens next is that, presumably, Zarathustra dies. In Ryan's own words, "Zarathustra's will has become a self-declared 'solar will' in the climax of Book Three [i.e., "On Old and New Tablets", "The Convalescent", "The Other Dancing Song",

and “The Seven Seals (Or: the Yes and Amen Song)”] and a celebration of the dancing and collapsing star” (277). Finally, according to Ryan, the (cosmological) eternal recurrence, which Zarathustra’s animals expound to him, allows for Zarathustra to be born again in the first chapter of Part IV, “The Honey Sacrifice,” and to rise like a morning sun in its last chapter, “The Sign” (277, 278). To conclude his discussion of Zarathustra’s stars, Ryan confirms his earlier observation on the interconnectedness of the four parts of the book, now in due reference to what I would call *astral* interpretation of the eternal return: “...there is an ordering in the four books. In tune with circularity, repetition and eternal recurrence, the last speech of the whole book (‘The Sign’) starts with the same three words that began the Prologue (‘You great star’)” (277). What this means to him is that “*Thus Spoke Zarathustra* is indeed a *commodius vicus of recirculation* – coming back to itself with no real beginning or end, a vicious circle, a carnival and circus that goes to play and war with language with its puns and metaphors...” (*ibid.*). The above knot of ideas needs to be unraveled.

Judged from the passages and ideas that I have extracted from Ryan’s text and gathered together chronologically so that they make a more or less coherent overview of what he says of Zarathustra, the star, and the eternal recurrence, his imputed *astral* interpretation of the doctrine seems to emerge as follows: Zarathustra (and/or the star within him) is born, lives and dies and is born again just like a star within the recurrence of the universe. Although it is an aesthetically beautiful aesthetic interpretation of the eternal recurrence, the cosmological version, as has been shown in Chapters 1 and 2, tends to be undermined on existential grounds, or vice versa. Viewed poetically, however, the image of Zarathustra’s chaos giving birth to a dancing star, his solar life, death, and rebirth, much like the image of a star coming into existence from chaos to illumine the

world, is a spectacular, vivid, metaphorical vision of the eternal recurrence as incorporated into the solar will willing itself.<sup>73</sup>

Although Ryan has done a brilliant research on Nietzsche's astral image through Zarathustra's rise and collapse like a star – his name itself reads as 'the gold star' (Pers. *zar* + Gk. *ástr(on)*) –, while suggesting an ordering in the alternation of sunset and sunrise woven into the book's narrative, he never puts forward the possibility that the "ordering in the four books [parts]" (*ibid.*) has a much deeper foundation – the subterranean cyclicity of diurnal symbols engendered by that very star of Zarathustra, and, what is more, he never elaborates on the nature of the relation that this ordering bears on Nietzsche's doctrine, something that this work will concern itself with, though in life-evaluative terms. Generally, following the existential drama of Zarathustra's eternal recurrence, a diurnal approach to Nietzsche's text – one related to the astral interpretation above – will reveal a more comprehensible and, hopefully, more plausible account of the doctrine as our discussion unfolds.

### **9. Alderman: ER as a *Dramatic Re-Enactment***

Much in consonance with Ansell-Pearson's and White's temporal accounts of eternal recurrence (discussed in Chapter 2), Alderman's interpretation focuses on the dramatic unfolding of time within its framework. Time, he believes, is a product of human consciousness and experience. It comes into being through one's realisation of one's own experience. If consciousness generates time, it must also take responsibility for it, as the parent for his or her child. The creator must care for its creation or else it becomes the creator's destruction. "Time originates in human experience as that ordering system in terms of which we distinguish *within our experience* that which is past, present, and future. We are, as human beings, the keepers of

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<sup>73</sup> Here the star is a comparison-based *metaphor* for the eternal recurrence. However, by creating this metaphorical context, Nietzsche turns his star into a *symbol* of his doctrine.



time, and we either keep time reflectively and creatively, or we simply let it pass, thereby eschewing responsibility for it” (Alderman 90). If we repeatedly and continually create, we demonstrate responsibility for the time we allot to ourselves. “The teaching of eternal recurrence thus becomes the teaching which shows how to accept full responsibility for the temporal ordering of our experience. It shows how we must relate each passing moment of our lives to the whole sequence of moments within a life, so that each moment can be fully itself” (*ibid.*). Human beings are finite and they must learn to accept this fact creatively. “The teaching of eternal recurrence teaches us to embrace our finitude; it shows how the traditional antithesis of time and eternity can be overcome and how we can come to dwell in both the real moment and the real eternal” (90, 91) – how we can come to live this one single life here and now in this one and only eternal world that we are, for we are unaware when and how we come into or out of being. This is the only life that we have at our disposal to make either eternally meaningful or meaningless. When we choose to affirm every moment, we thereby condemn ourselves to the eternal drama of existence. In this sense, in “The Drama of Eternal Recurrence”, ch. 5, pp. 83 – 112, of *Nietzsche’s Gift* (1977), Alderman interprets the eternal recurrence as a *dramatic re-enactment* of temporal experiences within one single, eternal life. “Eternal recurrence initiates one into a divinely vicious circle in which one necessarily in each moment returns to oneself because one wants to return to oneself” (Alderman 103). This is not a cosmological circle, but rather a circle of repetition, namely, a dramatic repetition, a repetition of the self that is self-enforced dramatically and creatively. “Eternal recurrence is a kind of drama which a certain type of man who needs this drama must perpetually enact. This type of man is, of course, the man who wishes to make a perfect affirmation of himself and his experience: the Overman” (*ibid.*).

Alderman's earlier discussion of Zarathustra's solar cyclical path does not view it as a literary means for his dramatic experience of eternal recurrence. However, he speaks about symbolic oppositions on one occasion and the solar course on another. If the two are united by reading diurnal symbols not as oppositions but as a circle or cycle of continuity, then a symbolic cyclical solar continuity will come into being. In particular, instead of treating Nietzsche's symbology as conventional, Alderman suggests that "in reading *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* one should learn to look for oppositions between symbols – oppositions such as that of dawn and dusk, peak and abyss, noon and midnight, birth and death, Zarathustra and the last man, or Zarathustra and Zoroaster" (Alderman 16).<sup>74</sup> His suggestion assumes that "[s]uch opposing symbols complement and fulfill each other in their opposition, and they also display the fundamentally dialectical character of Nietzsche's thought" (*ibid.*). On the other hand, however, he notes that "...the prolog, which like the book itself ends at noon, follows the recurrent cycle of the sun. Zarathustra must himself move through some cycle which has its analog in the sun's rising and setting, a cycle which moves from promise to fulfillment to decay, and which then begins again" (Alderman 31). First, Alderman is the only one to note the theme of the recurrent cycle of the sun as it pertains to "Zarathustra's Prologue" – something that I discovered independently, including its applicability to the rest of the work. Second, he leaves out the fourth component of the cycle – the night or midnight, so it must be supplied. Third, the book does not end at noon but in the morning, thereby completing a twelve-day cycle, as will be shown. Fourth, what is implicit in Alderman's observation is that promise is associated with morning; fulfillment, with noon; decay, with evening; and, I add, death, with night or midnight, all of which require elaboration in each particular case for each particular cycle. Fifth, he leaves this

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<sup>74</sup> Conventional symbolism is a system of symbols informed by a certain culture as opposed to non-conventional symbolism, a system of novel (or redefined cultural) symbols peculiar to their author; see Charles Thomas Taylor, *Symbolism in Religion and Art* (43).

recurrent analogue undeveloped in terms of its application to the whole of the book, which will be attempted here. Sixth, he does not look at the analogue as an image for the eternal return – a perspective taken in Chapter 7. With Alderman’s approach slightly amended, my analysis of Nietzsche’s circular symbols proposes reading his symbolic language not as a system of oppositions (e.g., noon is opposed to midnight) but as a circle of continuity (e.g., noon changes into evening, evening into midnight, midnight into morning, and morning, finally, back into noon). In this way one may trace the continuity of diurnal symbols, as well as the analogy between (the continuity of) these cyclical symbols and (that of) the eternal recurrence, while establishing symbolic diurnal cycles within the text. In this connection, Zarathustra re-enacts the drama of diurnal cycles (diurnal symbols as moments within a symbolic diurnal cycle as a sequence of moments, and symbolic diurnal cycles as moments within a sequence of symbolic diurnal cycles as a sequence of moments that cycles back on itself, the book’s ending engaging its beginning) – the drama that he chooses to create and live through: he is reborn in the morning, thrives at noon, declines in the evening, and dies at midnight only to be reborn the next morning and start a new dramatic day cycle all over again. What is implicit in the drama of eternal recurrence coupled with Zarathustra following the cycle path of the sun receives an explicit character in the return of sunset and sunrise – the diurnal symbols indicating the eternal return.

#### **10. Nitske: (Undeveloped) *Diurnal Interpretation 1***

Diana Nitske is the only scholar to have suggested that the idea of eternal recurrence has a relation to the diurnal symbols in Nietzsche’s text. But she does not go on to specify the nature of that relation. In *The Language of Symbols and the Symbolism of Language in F. Nietzsche’s Works*, Nitske, continuing Alvin Toffler’s idea of ordering human development by waves with the first wave (agrarian revolution) represented by the *hoe*, the second wave (industrial

civilisation) symbolised by the *plant*, and the third wave (information age) represented by the *computer*, hypothesises that the next wave may come as *symbolic*.<sup>75</sup> Yet it remains a mystery for now.<sup>76</sup> As regards the understanding of the representation of the eternal recurrence in the form of circular or diurnal symbols, however, this may well be a reality already. In particular, Nitske suggests that the symbols of sunrise and sunset express the eternal recurrence in *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*. Nietzsche's "...entire work appears to be the complete cycle of the life of the herald of the Overhuman: the sunset – the revaluation of all values – the sunrise – the state of enlightenment – the weariness (satiety) of such a state – the sunset again, and so on and so forth. (This is what Nietzsche's idea of 'eternal recurrence' is about)" (Nitske). First, Nitske notes the presence of diurnal symbols, sunrise and sunset, in the text. Second, she relates them to the values.<sup>77</sup> Third, the analogical relation is of a changing, transformative nature, i.e., sunset changes into sunrise, sunrise back into sunset and so on, just as the revaluation of the old values changes into the enlightened creation of new values and what is new and energetic becomes old and weary again and so on and so forth. Fourth, she calls this cycle the eternal recurrence. On a closer reading, the transformation of the values invites the use of biological metaphors: death, rebirth, maturity, decline and death again and so on and so forth of the values. Thus the diurnal symbols come to indicate the biological metaphors (as in Alderman), and that with reference to the values. Further, the biological metaphors refer to values as Zarathustra experiences them – as he experiences *himself*. Given that Nitske refers to the cycle of transformation as the eternal

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<sup>75</sup> See Ницке, Диана, «Язык символов и символизм языка в творчестве Ф. Ницше». [Nitske, Diana, "Yazyk simvolov i simvolizm yazyka v tvorchestve F. Nitshe."] (Nitske, Diana, *The Language of Symbols and the Symbolism of Language in F. Nietzsche's Works*.) Translations from the Russian of the title and quotes are mine. See also Alvin Toffler, *The Third Wave* (1980).

<sup>76</sup> However, one can surmise that Nietzsche may have anticipated a time when the world gets completely symbolised about, as it is being done now in the computer age.

<sup>77</sup> Platonic-Christian values in need of revaluation. See my discussion of Gooding-Williams on the three metamorphoses of the spirit in the "Concluding Thoughts on the Diurnal Structure" of Chapter 7, pp. 371 – 375. See also Nietzsche on Christian values in *The Antichrist*.

recurrence, the diurnal symbols, reflecting the biological metaphors, represent Zarathustra's constantly changing, eternally recurrent experience of the self and the world. What is valuable in all of this is that, *first*, Nitske states that the diurnal symbols represent the eternal recurrence and, *second*, she makes an unconscious suggestion for the recurrence of the diurnal symbols in the text. Coupled with Alderman's observation that Zarathustra follows the cyclical path of the sun, the diurnal symbols (sunrise and sunset) representing the eternal return, according to Nitske, may be said to return in the text while symbolising the doctrine. On the narrative level, the return of diurnal symbols further entails the return of symbolic diurnal cycles. In the meantime, both Alderman's and Nitske's discussions invite further curiosity as regards the relation between the diurnal symbol and Nietzsche's doctrine.

In the above connection, there is yet another diurnal interpretation, very similar to Alderman's dramatic reading and Nitske's diurnal perspective, that offers a more detailed approach to Nietzsche's diurnal images. It describes most of his diurnal symbols individually, while drawing attention to the relation between the midnight symbol and the eternal recurrence, without, however, suggesting the recurrence of diurnal symbols in the text. Let us take a deeper insight into this.

### **11. Solomon and Higgins: (Undeveloped) *Diurnal Interpretation 2***

In the section of *What Nietzsche Really Said* (2000) entitled "Nietzsche's Bestiary: A Glossary of His Favourite Images", Robert Solomon and Kathleen Higgins present a wonderful glossary of Nietzsche's figurative language terms that contains, among others, diurnal symbols each having their connotations for Nietzsche. Under the subsection "times of day" it is first noted that "Nietzsche follows the customary employment of times of day to represent distinct periods of an individual's life, or the life of a people" (Solomon and Higgins 240), something that will be

considered in section II of Chapter 5. The subsection then goes on to describe each diurnal symbol in particular and its general meaning for the poet-thinker. “Thus, high noon, or midday, represents the high point of energy and activity” (*ibid.*), or, in our case, Zarathustra’s maturity. “Twilight [or evening] suggests the imminence of night, when energy is in decline and the importance of the day’s concerns recedes” (*ibid.*). At this point the scholars introduce an example: “Twilight is used with this intent in the title *Twilight of the Idols*, to suggest that the reign of what Nietzsche considers false gods in the West (including the Western conception of God) is about to end. (This title also puns on the title of Wagner’s opera *Götterdämmerung*, *Twilight of the Gods*)” (*ibid.*). Although the reference is made only to the work that bears a speaking title, the fact of *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* having Zarathustra experience frequently an emotional decline in the evening time is perhaps presupposed, as is the symbol of noon in both “The History of an Error” of *Twilight of the Idols* and “At Noon” of *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*. “Midnight represents the silent moment in which one day gives way to another” (*ibid.*) or, in our case, Zarathustra gives birth to himself: he dies and is to be born anew. “Nietzsche describes midnight as ‘the stillest hour,’ the point at which significant change occurs, even though it is hardly noted” (*ibid.*). Here the scholars most probably refer to a particular chapter in *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* – “The Stillest Hour”. However, it will be shown in section 5 of Chapter 7 that Zarathustra’s conversation with the Stillest Hour takes place „gen Abend“ (II „Die stilleste Stunde“, *KGW* VI 1, 183: 10), or “toward evening” (II “The Stillest Hour” 257). The content of the symbol description, however, also points to “The Drunken Song”. At this point Solomon and Higgins make the important statement that “[Nietzsche] also uses midnight as a naturalistic image of temporal recurrence. The suggestion seems to be that the moment of midnight, which serves as a gateway between the previous day and the new day, shows us dramatically what is

true of every moment: that the present is always new, but always drawn from the life that precedes it” (*ibid.*) and, I add, from the life that follows it, i.e., the new present preordains what is to come. What is to come is a new day, a new morning and rebirth, the symbolism of which the scholars do not overtly consider. With regard to their latter suggestion (concerning the midnight symbol), the confirmation for and the mechanics of Nietzsche’s explicit, perhaps intentional usage of diurnal symbolism as the representation of the eternal recurrence will be accordingly provided in the last section of Chapter 7. Although these commentators have come up with a brilliant characterisation of most of Nietzsche’s diurnal symbols and suggested their relation to the eternal recurrence as based, most likely, on “The Drunken Song”, they have attempted neither to explore the cultural genesis of Nietzsche’s diurnal symbols and their cyclicity in relation to the doctrine, which will be done in section II of Chapter 5, nor to hypothesise that this relation may be incorporated into the book’s corpus, namely that the diurnal symbols recur, thereby representing the doctrine, something that this work undertakes to demonstrate in the final chapter.

Overall, Alderman’s observation that Zarathustra follows the cyclical path of the sun in “Zarathustra’s Prologue” and Nitske’s suggestion that sunset and sunrise represent Zarathustra’s eternal recurrence, coupled with Solomon’s and Higgins’ glossorial description of the midnight symbol as inaugurating the eternal recurrence make a plausible case for further studying the relation between the diurnal symbols and the doctrine in *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*. The latter as its end result involves consideration of the diurnal narrative that the recurring diurnal symbols, as they are gradually teased out, tend to exhibit.

In that regard, while the return of the sun unfolds as a solar narrative, the drama of recurrent diurnal cycles that Zarathustra re-enacts manifests itself as a literary narrative of his

existence, which must not be subjected to any alteration but affirmed as it has been in its entirety. In this sense, the return of diurnal symbols constitutes the symbolic diurnal narrative structure representing the sequence of eternal recurrence and its necessity.

## **12. Nehamas: ER as a *Literary Narrative***

In chapter 5 of *Nietzsche: Life as Literature* (1985), “This Life – Your Eternal Life”, Alexander Nehamas “emphasizes literary elements, which provide a nonfoundational formation of the ‘text’ of one’s life. In an ingenious way, Nehamas reads eternal recurrence as an overarching metaphor for the world as a text to be interpreted. The cyclic image of time expresses a manner of composing an integrated, unified self in the midst of becoming” (Hatab 2005: 119). This is quite a poetic, though scripted, reading of life. “... [Gary] Shapiro questions this approach because he sees eternal recurrence forcing a confrontation with the dissolution of self-identity (*Nietzschean Narrative*, 86ff.)” (Hatab 2005: footnote 17, 177).<sup>78</sup> In this sense, whether Nietzsche gives Zarathustra a unified or a dissolved self, his character’s creative self-fashion entails necessity, which becomes crucial in terms of life affirmation.

That everything is interconnected “in the general union of existence” (HH I: 208) makes our life a perfect literary narrative that cannot be different than it has been but can be interpreted and re-interpreted infinitely. “This model connects the eternal recurrence with Nietzsche’s overarching metaphor of the world as a text that is to be interpreted... [and] the examination of life... will have to go on forever” (Nehamas 164). In this sense, people are literary characters and life is a literary work (166). “In the ideal case, to change even one action on the part of a character is to cause both that character and the story to which it belongs to fall apart” (165). A morally bad character, therefore, is essential to the whole of the narrative. The reader should

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<sup>78</sup> For a critical overview of aesthetic interpretations of Nietzsche, see Bernd Magnus, Stanley Stewart, and Jean-Pierre Mileur, *Nietzsche’s Case: Philosophy As/And Literature* (1993).



react aesthetically to literary figures and not judge them morally, for judging subterraneously runs on what Nietzsche calls the *spirit of revenge*, from which, according to him, humankind must be delivered if it is to become overhumanity (see “On Redemption”). In this way, Nehamas makes explicit Nietzsche’s point that the interconnectedness of events justifies any action, whether moral or immoral, within the whole of the narrative (166).

In parallel connection with Nehamas’ view of the world unfolding as a narrative necessity, Nietzsche fashions his literary character’s life narrative according to the symbolic diurnal cycles he weaves into the text. There are a number of diurnal recurrences within the narrative of *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, and the narrative of the book as a whole is structured as one large recurrent narrative – beginning and ending with Zarathustra’s rise in the morning – so as to represent the doctrine of eternal recurrence. The eternal sequence of moments within the eternal recurrence is therefore represented by the symbolic narrative – in particular, by the sequence of the diurnal symbols within a symbolic diurnal cycle and by the sequence of the symbolic diurnal cycles within the symbolic diurnal narrative of *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*. Moreover, the symbolic diurnal narrative structure of the book as a whole circles back on itself at the very end, representing thereby Zarathustra’s desire to relive his life all over again in exactly the same manner, thus affirming the whole of his existence. It is important to note that, since the eternal recurrence, as according to Nehamas, is the narrative of one’s life, within the framework of which everything is interconnected and necessary, every diurnal symbol is likewise essentially necessary to a diurnal cycle and every diurnal cycle to the sequence of the diurnal cycles within the narrative of *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*. In this sense, if at least one diurnal symbol or cycle is taken out of the text (as in Nehamas’ case with bad characters that are judged away from the text

by a judicious, vengeful reader), then Zarathustra's literary life will no longer be his.<sup>79</sup> He must therefore learn to affirm the whole of his symbolic diurnal existence, and commentators should treat *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* as a four-part book.<sup>80</sup>

In summary, using Bertram's mythological reading of eternal recurrence as an inner revelation of the return of all things within oneself as the background to all the other aesthetic interpretations, it has been shown that the doctrine is manifested through a number of aesthetic means, such as music, repetition, dance, the sun symbol, both static and dynamic, the seasons, and, finally, the diurnal symbols and the symbolic diurnal cycles. In particular, Higgins' account of music as a sound-producing phenomenon finds its embodiment in the stylistic device of repetition, a property that Hatab emphasises about Nietzsche's text, i.e., stylistic repetition creates a sense of music. The recurrent music of repetition as producing sound effects, in its turn, is further superseded by the rhythmic, audible silence of the dance as already a visually aesthetic phenomenon in Parkes' mobility-based discussion – a phenomenon which stands in between the acoustic and the visual properties of the text in question and in between the commentators' respective approaches thereto. The dance comes to be replaced by the most silent artistic device – the sun symbol, first as re-appearing – static, with Jappinen, then as rising and falling – dynamic, with Parkes' other reading. The latter (sun symbol) is further subjected to Puszczalowski's analysis that reveals it as generating the return of the seasons; in Ryan's astral case, the rise and fall of Zarathustra's star; in Alderman's dramatic case, the eternal alternation of days and nights; in Nitske's diurnal case, the return of sunset and sunrise (finally symbolising the eternal return); and, in Solomon's and Higgins' diurnal case, (the return of) midnight as the

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<sup>79</sup> There is no intention here to suggest a moral parallel between literary characters and symbols.

<sup>80</sup> See my "Concluding Thoughts on the Diurnal Structure" in Chapter 7, pp. 367 – 381.

symbol of temporal recurrence – a diurnal narrative structure, when viewed from Nehamas’ life-as-literature perspective echoing back to Bertram’s poetic approach, which charts a new course in the study of Nietzsche’s solar symbols – all in relation to the fundamental conception of his book, the eternal recurrence of the same. None of the (circular) solar aesthetic approaches (Jappinen, Parkes, Puszczalowski, Ryan, Alderman, Nitske, and Solomon and Higgins), however, have inquired into Nietzsche’s ultimate incentives behind his use of symbolic language generally, and with regard to his doctrine in particular, and, in this sense, none of them have ever explored the nature of the relation between the circular form and the affirmative content of his fundamental idea. Doing so will help to work out principles for the textual analysis of circular symbols in *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*. Let us turn, then, to the discussion of the reasons for Nietzsche using circular images to communicate his doctrine, and, specifically, the relation between the circular symbols and the idea of eternal recurrence.

## **Chapter 5: Circular Symbols and Eternal Recurrence**

This chapter examines the theoretical underpinnings of the relation between Nietzsche's circular symbols and his idea of eternal recurrence. In the first section a number of reasons for Nietzsche philosophising in circular images will be suggested to elucidate the phenomenon of circular symbols, especially in conjunction with the doctrine of eternal recurrence they are claimed to represent. These fundamental reasons will be shown to refer to his teaching's very essence: affirmation of existence, and, in this sense, the meaning of eternal recurrence not only becomes inseparable from but also receives its fullest expression in its symbolic form. In the second section categorisation of circular symbols into classes will help orientation in the subject matter of this research, while the connections made between the meaning of the doctrine and its form will make clear the ground upon which Nietzsche developed a specific symbolic type of language in *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*. This all will prepare the ground for the practical analysis of Nietzsche's circular and diurnal symbols in the final two chapters.

### **I. Reasons for Teaching through Metaphors**

This section first relates the doctrine of eternal recurrence – the doctrine of life affirmation, the doctrine of *love* – to Zarathustra's teaching in unique, personal metaphors and then, fundamentally, proceeds to examine the importance of figurative language through the reasons why Nietzsche philosophises in literary images. In this sense, it is essential to know why he has chosen a symbolic, specifically circular, form for the communication of eternal recurrence.

The quick answer is that metaphors affirm life.<sup>81</sup> Nietzsche has Zarathustra teach his doctrine through life-affirming metaphors (e.g., circular symbols) rather than life-denying concepts. Metaphors, being unique and belonging solely to the teacher (Zarathustra), fall on deaf ears, to which, by the way, the numerous negative reactions to Nietzsche's book testify. The result of Zarathustra's pedagogical endeavours is that he fails as a communicator but succeeds as a student, for he is self-taught. Nietzsche never loses the hope that there are people who are capable of realising that they should first become self-propelled wheels if they want to make the rest of the world go round. His on-going teaching says: Learn to move yourself and you will move others. Relying on Nietzsche's note: "To educate educators! But the first ones must educate themselves! And for these I write" (Nietzsche, cited in Schacht 1995: 222),<sup>82</sup> Richard Schacht in "Zarathustra/Zarathustra as Educator" (1995)

suggest[s] that in and by means of Zarathustra and *Zarathustra*, Nietzsche sought to provide posterity with something capable of performing the kind of 'educating' function he had discussed in that essay (*Schopenhauer as Educator*), and considered Schopenhauer to have performed for him.... Nietzsche was... convinced that the experience of encountering such an educator is quite essential, if one is to find one's way

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<sup>81</sup> As previously stated in footnote 39 of Chapter 2, section 7, p. 78, I use symbol and metaphor interchangeably throughout the text despite some differences between the two. Symbol refers or points to, is a sign or indicative of another phenomenon, e.g., the invocation of the serpent or the circle symbolises the eternal recurrence. Metaphor rather draws attention to itself while referring to the idea associated with it, e.g., the serpent or the circle of eternal recurrence. Particularly, a trope such as metaphor, metonymy or synecdoche is not a symbol because it has an independent meaning, "signifies a correspondence between two objects that is based on resemblance or similarity" (Klein 110) or contiguity, and points, if at all, to nothing other than itself, whereas the symbol "signifies the unity of concrete and abstract meaning" (*ibid.*), is based on representation and points to the object it seeks to express, 'press itself outward.' A trope has an immediate self-dominant, self-showing imagerial meaning within its own boundaries and does not exist outside its essential nature, whereas the symbol, whose "significance exceeds that of the concrete object" (*ibid.*) (e.g. the serpent or the circle) creates and refers, as if outside itself, to an image by hints, suggestions and intimations, which spawns various subjective interpretations of its meaning and in this respect, the imagerial content of the symbol is much richer than that of the trope. For the difference between symbol and metaphor, see Wayne Klein's discussion of Nietzsche's use of *Symbol* and *Gleichnis* in *The Birth of Tragedy* in the "Symbol and Allegory" chapter of *Nietzsche and the Promise of Philosophy* (1997: 109 – 116). (He establishes that Nietzsche uses *Symbol* and *Gleichnis* (allegory or image) interchangeably with reference to language and only *Symbol* in reference to music being the symbol of the primal unity anterior to musical symbolisation). See also Max Black's seminal discussion of the three main instances of metaphor – substitution (e.g., "The chairman *ploughed* through [instead of 'dealt summarily with'] the discussion" (274ff, esp. 278ff)), comparison (e.g., "Richard is *like a lion*" (283 – 285)), and interaction (e.g., "Man is a *wolf*" (286, see also 285 – 291ff), all italics mine) – in Black, "Metaphor" (1954/55: 273 – 294).

<sup>82</sup> "Nietzsche, manuscript source uncertain. Cited elsewhere as 'VII: 215' " (Schacht 1995: footnote 1, p. 248).

to a new Yes to life that does not depend upon buying into the various forms of illusion he began (in *The Birth of Tragedy*) by thinking were the only means of avoiding Schopenhauerian pessimism and the calamity of dead-end nihilism” (Schacht 1995: 223, 224).

As is clear, Schacht understands *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* as having an *educational* task. “Nietzsche’s term for ‘educator’ in [*Schopenhauer as Educator*] is *Erzieher*, rather than *Lehrer*; and *Erziehung* for him means something closer to *Bildung* than to *Lehren* or to ‘learning’ as these notions are ordinarily understood.<sup>83</sup> The Nietzschean educator is closer to... something like a *catalyst* of change and transformation. What matters more to him is” not to know more about ourselves and the world but “to raise our sights and awaken us to possibilities we will have to reach out and exert ourselves to realize” (Schacht 1995: 231). Furthermore, Schacht insists that the teachings of *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* must be dispensed with:

The *Übermensch*, Eternal Recurrence and Zarathustra himself thus all have their places *within* the educational process Nietzsche crafts for us, rather than at its end, as its results. They are among the materials of a ladder that is to be dispensed with once it has been climbed. If we become fixated upon them, we have made mere means of this education into its end; for their role is not to capture and hold our attention, but rather to aid us in reaching the developmental point at which we can go without them – as Zarathustra himself suggests often enough (Schacht 1995: 238, 239).

Two remarks should be made: the first is with regard to pedagogy having to be dispensed with – teaching is what teachers and professors do, including Schacht; the second is with regard to the developmental point at which we can be on our own – as though one knew the location or occurrence of this point! Contrary to Schacht, I believe – without, however, going against Zarathustra’s injunction that his disciples should abandon him before they return to stay with him (end of Part II) – one must incorporate Zarathustra’s teachings into one’s will, remaining with them for the rest of one’s life, which will, only in this case, help one to work out one’s own way.

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<sup>83</sup> *Bildung*. That is, building in the sense of educating, as ‘image-forming’. *Lehren*. That is, to ‘teach’ or ‘learn’ what has been given and/or as it has been given, as if mechanistically.

We do not throw off the ladder for good once we have used it in climbing up towards the heavens. We erect it again and again.

Schacht further ties the doctrine of eternal recurrence to the question of love in Part III. Part III elevates to prominence “the meaning of the earth” learnt from the *Übermensch* in Part I. “[I]t becomes clear that it is crucial to the transformation that occurs in the Third Part” (Schacht 1995: 245). Focusing on Part III, Schacht argues that Nietzsche means his *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* to educate us, through the Eternal Recurrence, in the matter of affirming life, where “the basic condition of the possibility of all affirmation is *learning to love*” (*ibid.*).

In “On Passing By” (Z III:7) the point is made that “passing by” is the best thing to do where one cannot love; and then, as the Third Part unfolds, the idea of the importance of loving and learning to love is explored in a variety of contexts, from “learning to love oneself” (Z III:11:2) to learning to appreciate “the many good inventions on earth” and grasp that “for their sake, the earth is to be loved” (Z III:12:17), to loving “life” (Z III:15) and even “eternity” (Z III:16). The “three evils” rehabilitated and celebrated – sex, lust to rule, and selfishness – are three basic forms of loving that we must both learn to affirm and learn to cultivate beyond their simplest forms of expression.

Zarathustra’s wisdom is powerless to sustain him by itself. What he can love, however, he can affirm, and find meaningful; for love bestows value and meaning. Here life expresses itself as the fundamentally Dionysian phenomenon Nietzsche takes it to be. And at the conclusion of the Third Part, he attempts to construct a means not only of conveying this point but of enabling us to ascend his version of the ladder of love to its ultimate height, from which even a world viewed under the aspect of Eternal Recurrence can be affirmed. (Schacht 1995: 244, 245)

Schacht, therefore, provides a *pedagogical* reading of *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, viewing the eternal recurrence as performing an *educational* function: one must *learn to love* life *even if* life and the world eternally *recur* as the same.<sup>84</sup> The doctrine is regarded as a negative *stimulus* to enhance and cultivate love of life; life is taken to be eternally returning as nauseously the same. The assumption being made is that literature educates us. However, at the very end of his journey Zarathustra rejects even the higher men, considering them unworthy of, not yet ripe for, his teaching – that is why, like a lion surrounded by doves, he leaves his cave, „glühend und stark,

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<sup>84</sup> Learning to love life means responding to existence creatively (and affirmatively).

wie eine Morgensonne, die aus dunklen Bergen kommt“ (IV „Das Zeichen“, *KGW* VI 1, 404: 21 – 23), or: “glowing and strong as a morning sun that comes out of dark mountains” (IV “The Sign” 439). Thus, although Zarathustra is an educator – „,siehe, *du bist der Lehrer der ewigen Wiederkunft* —, das ist nun *dein* Schicksal!” “ (III „Der Genesende“ 2, *KGW* VI 1, 271: 29, 30), or: “behold, *you are the teacher of eternal recurrence* – that is your destiny!” (III “The Convalescent” 2: 332), his animals tell him, he cannot succeed in educating anyone (cf. “...A book for All and *None*”, italics mine) unless they are capable of being educated (for, at bottom, Nietzsche correctly believes, one never learns anything except what one already knows on one’s own.<sup>85</sup> Zarathustra’s task, then, is to reveal his knowledge, and those who can see will see it and those who can hear will hear it. It is not enough for Zarathustra alone to be capable of being educated: it is humane of him – and Nietzsche – to be concerned also with the education of humanity). The subtitle of the book, as well as Zarathustra’s abandonment of all of his disciples, imply that his teaching or “speeches... caught no one’s attention” (Nazirov *A Poet’s Gallery* 2011: “Zarathustra” 159). However, he remains concerned with his work: „,Ich trachte nach meinem *Werke!*” “ (IV „Das Zeichen“, *KGW* VI 1, 404: 16), or: “I am concerned with my *work*” (IV “The Sign” 439) – with his own self: the eternal recurrence as incorporated into his own will – and, by virtue of that, with those others who are capable of being concerned with themselves in likewise manner. In this regard, the circular symbols of eternal recurrence should be viewed as solely *personal* symbols employed for the representation of the doctrine. Neither the old saint in the backwoods, nor the people in the market place, nor Zarathustra’s disciples can ever note and appreciate the symbolic form in which the eternal recurrence is (re)presented. Nietzsche, then, has Zarathustra (fail to) teach (people) the doctrine of eternal recurrence through his personal

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<sup>85</sup> For example, if one is capable of loving and does love, one cannot have learnt to do so from someone else, i.e., it is innate in one (i.e., not acquired empirically). As for the eternal recurrence, Zarathustra is capable of it on his own.



diurnal symbols.<sup>86</sup> He fails in teaching others, but succeeds in teaching himself; he learns to love or affirm life through metaphors (e.g., circular symbols), rather than concepts.

Nietzsche's emphasis on figurative language in his writings reflects both his concern with the life-denying effects of concepts and his desire to affirm existence through life-giving images. Essentially unique images develop into commonly used concepts by means of metaphorisation, thereby eradicating one's personality. To reinstate the status of metaphor is to call upon the creative forces that shape and mold an individual. Since, as according to Nietzsche, it is creativity alone that justifies existence (BT, "Forward to Richard Wagner" 5), he goes on to philosophise in metaphorical language in *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*. The distinction (and/or interrelation) between concepts and metaphors requires elaboration.

Concepts are characterised by fixation and generalisation. Metaphors convey unique impressions. " 'The stimulation of a nerve is first translated [*übertragen*] into an image: first metaphor! The image is then imitated [*nachgeformt*] by a sound: second metaphor!' " (TL 1, cited in Lemm 2009: 120). "However, what distinguishes the transposition of nerve stimuli into pictures from sound's imitation of pictures is that, while the latter is inherently anthropocentric and anthropomorphic because it reflects a projection of the human onto the world, the former is free from such anthropocentrism and anthropomorphism" (Lemm 120). The passage from sense-impressions to individual sensation-images; from sensation-images to the analogous (metaphors) by imitation, repetition; and from the analogous to concepts – the process of conceptual crystallisation of sense-impressions – happens by way of metaphorisation and, paradoxically, results in the forgetting of metaphor and the weakening of unique sense-impressions, which warrants saying that "...the forgetting of metaphor is the eradication of personality" (Kofman

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<sup>86</sup> Zarathustra's animals as solar symbols are part of his learning and teaching process. In fact, he learns the eternal recurrence from his animals. If his animals are viewed as his own animality, then he learns his doctrine from himself. "The body is a great reason" (TSZ II "On the Despisers of the Body" 146), after all.

212). The degenerative kind of life “can only impoverish the world by reducing it to the narrow and ugly bounds of the concept – it does this out of spite against itself and out of resentment toward life” (210).

Nietzsche, therefore, seeks to affirm life and at the same time to revive metaphor in *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*. “To speak in metaphor (originally referring to a proper or natural term)... is to have language regain its most natural expression, its ‘most accurate, most simple, most direct’ style” (Kofman 209).<sup>87</sup> By calling upon symbol/metaphor, Nietzsche initiates the return to Pre-Socratic philosophy, Heraclitus, as opposed to Plato and Aristotle.

[Heraclitus] uses the most incredible of all cosmic metaphors – the world as the divine game of Zeus – to propose what is rationally inconceivable: the one is at the same time many. Zeus’ game is that of the artist and child who innocently create and destroy. The artistic instinct in life ceaselessly gives birth to new worlds with as much freedom and necessity as the game admits (Kofman 211).

As the last disciple of Dionysus, Nietzsche “personally re-enacts Presocratic philosophy by reversing the opposition between metaphor and concept, by reinstating metaphor itself, after its eradication by the concept and within the concept” (*ibid.*). As a result, metaphorical language, expressing unique experiences, feelings and emotions, is viewed as the foundation of concepts, and as such stands closer to life affirmation.

In the above connection, how does affirmation of existence occur through the language of eternal recurrence, and why did Nietzsche decide to philosophise in symbols? I believe that there are two general reasons why Nietzsche philosophises in symbolic images: 1) experimenting with language; and 2) symbols provide existential safety. I further believe that there are four specific reasons why Nietzsche has chosen a circular symbolic form for the eternal recurrence in *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*: 1) triple affirmation; 2) analogy; 3) Dionysian drunkenness; and 4) diurnal

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<sup>87</sup> Nietzsche cited in Kofman, “Metaphor, Symbol, Metamorphosis.” The citation is taken from Nietzsche’s *The Philosopher’s Book*; “The Last Philosopher,” §53, §56 (Kofman: footnote 9, p. 203).

symbols as a mask to conceal and instruct. The reason that underlies all the other reasons is that of affirmation of existence. This reveals an interplay between Nietzsche's desire to mask the meaninglessness of existence in order to create a safety realm and his desire to affirm life by trying out new things, such as the linguistic use of triple affirmation and the analogical and Dionysian characteristics of a circle in reference to the eternal recurrence, as well as the diurnal symbols as a mask for the latter.<sup>88</sup> This is why he utilises symbols to conceal his teaching and at the same time instruct his select audience. In this way, he tries to get the reader to interpret his text so that, in interpreting, they affirm their own existence. Nietzsche's circular symbols are among those that require discovery and/or interpretation, which is a challenging, yet life-affirmative, task. It is proposed to look at the reasons in more detail.

At every point of transformation there is a nihilism of values (Haar 12). "Nihilism invents a 'true world' " as in the case of Plato (14). Supersensible ideals (the True, the Beautiful, and the Good) are created unconsciously to mask the meaninglessness of existence. The emphasis is on their affirmation (*ibid.*). Likewise, there is a nihilism of diurnal symbols at every point of Zarathustra's spiritual transformation (e.g., a truth – to speak (to dead companions) in the market place – obtained in the morning is rejected by the ropedancer's fall at noon, declines in the evening and dies at night, after the corpse's burial, so as to be replaced by a new truth the next morning – to speak to living companions). Generally, diurnal symbols, as a variety of (circular) symbols characterised by a superabundance of life, hence slightly different from those supersensible ideals in origin, may have been created by Nietzsche both consciously and unconsciously to affirm and mask the meaninglessness of existence, respectively. Thus his creative affirmation – the affirmation of a *philologist* – always goes hand in hand with the desire to try novelties by playing with language, thereby refreshing its metaphorical foundations and

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<sup>88</sup> By triple affirmation I mean affirmation in three simultaneous ways. See Reason 3 on pp. 158, 160.

renewing its word stock. In this respect, linguistic experimentation for Nietzsche becomes central in the affirmation of existence, to which we turn first.

Reason 1: *Experimenting with Language*. Nietzsche employs (circular) symbols because he is bent on experimenting with truth and language. Humans, “forgetting that the original intuited metaphors were indeed metaphors, [take] them for the things in themselves” (TL 1, cited in Lemm 2009: 121), “an already given world” (Lemm, endnote, 204: KGW 12:9 [91]). In this sense, realising that truth is a “...mobile army of metaphors...” (TL 46), “[r]ather than attempting to stabilise conceptual language into fixed and absolute meanings, Nietzsche advocates breaking open conceptual language and releasing its ‘fixed’ and ‘absolute’ meanings into the flow of the continuous formation and transformation of intuited metaphors” (Lemm 122). So he goes on to at-tempt – in the sense of a philosopher of the future who attempts/tempts and experiments (the double meaning of *versuchen*) with truth and language (BGE 42) – to create/interpret – understood in the sense of *will to power* (BGE 36) – his own language and reality by philosophising in literary circular *symbols* in *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* – a symbolic reality which, on the one hand, he creates fearlessly and where, on the other, he would find safety.

Reason 2: *Symbols Provide Safety*. In “Blok and Nietzsche”, V.M. Papernyi points out that, besides seeing “the element of creativity” in Dionysianism, Nietzsche also saw “the world of suffering, destruction, evil, from which the artist saves him- or herself by depicting it in symbols, i.e., by purely objective *contemplation*. The enjoyment derived from such contemplation serves Nietzsche (in Schopenhauer’s wake) as the *justification* of the evil and suffering in the world” (Papernyi, footnote 106).<sup>89</sup> In this way, Nietzsche emphasises the

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<sup>89</sup> Translation from the Russian mine. For the Russian original see В.М. Паперный, «Блок и Ницше» [V.M. Papernyi, “Blok i Nitsshe”], *Ruthenia*.

justifying role of symbol in *The Birth of Tragedy* and, in this sense, he goes on to create an imaginary world – yet of real symbols<sup>90</sup> – where he will feel existentially safe, in *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, thus exercising his will to power, his will to create, i.e., to *lie* about the world,<sup>91</sup> which is “the only and ultimate *truth*” that there is – “the ‘truth’ inherent in the *creative* process itself”, one that the human generally and Nietzsche in particular undertakes in relation to the self and the world (Jaszi 238, italics mine). This world of symbols that Nietzsche creates, “[t]he lie which [his] will produces, the fiction that something is [in Bindschedler’s own words] the ‘*fingierte Welt von Subjekt, Substanz, ‘Vernunft’ usw. ist nötig*’ [i.e., “the *fictitious* world of Subject, Substance, ‘Reason’ etc. is necessary”<sup>92</sup>] for the maintenance and continuance of life” (*ibid.*). The use of circular symbols generally confirms Nietzsche’s attempt to draw one’s attention to the fact that the fundamental artistic human *drive* to form metaphors for life-enhancement purposes is at the core of human existence and is invincible in the face of concept-formation and despite self-deception and fearing to suffer harm. “That drive to form metaphors, that fundamental human drive... is in truth not defeated [by concepts].... The drive seeks out a channel and a new area for its activity, and finds it in myth and in art generally” (TL 2, cited in Lemm 2009: 147). Humans like to be deceived and feel comfortable; they also like to be deceived without fearing to suffer harm. That is why the artistic drive is invincible (Lemm 2009: 147: endnote 57, 211; TL 2).<sup>93</sup>

Reason 3: *Triple Affirmation* of Life. Nietzsche’s drive to supersede concepts by means of literary symbols is strong. In this way, he seeks to affirm life. Moreover, Nietzsche’s

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<sup>90</sup> Vivid symbols that are experienced as reality.

<sup>91</sup> Language, as a product of the human mind, no matter how original it may be, falsifies reality (while at the same time augmenting it).

<sup>92</sup> Translation from the German mine: Bindschedler cited in Jaszi, review of Maria Bindschedler, *Nietzsche und die poetische Lüge* (1954: 14).

<sup>93</sup> That is, concepts fail, metaphors/symbols succeed. Cf. Bely on teleological symbolism in Nietzsche, pp. 88 – 90.

affirmation of existence is closely bound up with the symbolic language he employs specifically to communicate the eternal recurrence, the doctrine of life affirmation. Given the concepts, the symbols or images, and, in particular, the circular, as well as diurnal, symbols of eternal recurrence, Nietzsche's affirmation, being characterised by superabundance of life, is three-dimensional. In other words, he seeks to affirm life by communicating the doctrine of eternal recurrence in concepts, as shown in Chapters 1 and 2, in various symbols or images (see Jappinen), and in circular symbols, as shown in the following chapters. Affirmation through circular symbols requires elaboration.

Borrowing the words Kofman used in relation to philosophical systems, a work of art, like *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, “must be evaluated not in terms of its truth, but in terms of its force and beauty. We should know whether it was made possible by superabundance or by a poverty of life, and if, through its means, the philosopher affirmed or denied life” (Kofman 210). In this sense, the symbolic language of *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* serves as absolute evidence of Nietzsche's intention to affirm his life and life in general. In his “Introduction” (1 – 6) to *Nietzsche's Thus Spoke Zarathustra: Before Sunrise* (2008) under his own editorship, James Luchte confirms the affirmative (and at the same time the re-contextualising) function of Nietzsche's poetic language in *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*:

With this work, Nietzsche subverts the restricted economy of the principle of sufficient reason through a return to *mythos* and *poesis*, not as a destruction of reason, but rather as its re-contextualization amidst the broader *topos* of human existence.... The return to the indigenous *topoi* of poetry and music is an affirmation, for Nietzsche, of the contingency of existence.... Nietzsche's poetic expression is an affirmation of becoming.... *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* is a challenge to the hegemony of logic and reason in philosophy, and with his articulation of a *topos* beyond the principle of sufficient reason, Nietzsche is inciting us to liberate ourselves from the epochal trajectory of “theoretical man” [Socratic rationalism] (Luchte 3).

Returning specifically to Nietzsche's symbolic language, if "[t]he metaphorical style indicates the fullness of life, just as the 'demonstrative' style indicates its poverty [and if] to deliberately use metaphor is to affirm life, in the same way that favouring concepts reveals a will to nothingness, an adherence to the ascetic ideal"<sup>94</sup> (Kofman 210), then to philosophise about the affirmation of existence not merely by way of 'demonstrative' concepts of eternal return (1) – e.g., one must learn to love life by willing to relive it – but in moving literary symbols (2) – e.g., Zarathustra welcomes the sun (of overabundance) and the sea (of possibilities), and is friends with the eagle (of pride) and the serpent (of wisdom) – and not only in any kind of symbols but specifically in *circular* symbols (3) of eternal recurrence, itself a doctrine of life affirmation – e.g., Zarathustra, in following the cycle of the sun, bites the head off the snake (of eternal recurrence), means that the expression or representation of the eternal recurrence in circular symbols – metaphors that affirm life, is a triple affirmation of existence.<sup>95</sup>

Reason 4: *Analogy between Symbols and ER*. The circular symbols seem to be more suitable for expressing the eternal recurrence, hence more affirmative of existence than, for example, non-circular symbols, due to the creative analogy drawn between the two general characteristics of a *circle* and the temporal structure of the doctrine: 1) *roundness* suggests *completeness*, expressing the *moment* of eternal recurrence; and 2) *continuity* suggests *endlessness* (of time), expressing the *sequence* of eternal recurrence. The diurnal cyclical symbols, in their turn, most perfectly represent the eternal recurrence due to their similar temporal structure. If, as according to Dina Aslamazishvili, Nietzsche understands "the symbol as the idea of 'eternal recurrence' ", then the eternal recurrence of symbols, where the symbol

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<sup>94</sup> Suppressing some drives and cultivating others; see the last couple of sections of Essay 3 in Nietzsche's *On the Genealogy of Morals*.

<sup>95</sup> Nietzsche attempted, in the language of circular symbolism, "to restore the idea of the great round (expressing a sense of the wholeness of things), before our linear 'power-over' mindset destroys not only the concept of life all together, but even the fact of life altogether" (Walker 2).

expresses the moment and sequence of diurnal symbols, may be said to serve as a poetic representation of the eternal recurrence of moments, where the eternal recurrence (a unity that repeats itself through a multiplicity of moments – the sequence of eternal return, and a multiplicity of moments that composes or is gathered into a unity – the moment of eternal return) expresses both the moment and the sequence of moments.<sup>96</sup> Also, repetition of circular and diurnal symbols, symbols *recurrent* within the narrative of the text, suggests the repetition of the character of the moment, allowing for difference and sameness in meaning.<sup>97</sup> Being circular in character, such repetitive symbols further suggest association with spinning, dizziness and vertigo, hence a sense of inebriation peculiar to the god Dionysus.

Reason 5: *Dionysian Drunkenness*. The circular and diurnal recurrent symbols, bearing cultural heritage, effect an emotional, as though drunken, affirmative response to existence. They are highly emotional *cultural* figures, more ‘comprehensible’ than grey concepts, and they speak louder than ordinary concepts of eternal recurrence (such as ‘affirmation of existence’ and ‘the desire to relive one’s life’) because they speak more softly, deeply, at the level of the collective unconscious (Jung). One does not understand – one feels and enjoys the symbols. As *vivid* images they appeal to the bodily *senses*, inducing pain or pleasure in our bodies, making us think (I “On the Despisers of the Body”; Allison 136): e.g., morning triggers *seeing* the sunrise, *feeling* the sunlight flooding in, *hearing* the birds singing, *seeing* and *touching* the morning dew on the grass and the morning fog, and *smelling* the morning freshness of the air. A pleasurable sensation coupled with circular – as if *spinning* – also repetitive, images as symbols of art causes an overwhelming, intoxicating experience. The circular symbols suggest the *drunken* Dionysian

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<sup>96</sup> Aslamazishvili, Dina Nikolayevna. *The Role of Symbol in the Spiritual Processes of Cultural Migrations* (2007). (Асламазишвили, Дина Николаевна. «Роль символа в духовных процессах культурных переходов».) [“Role of symbol in spiritual processes of cultural migrations.”] Translation from the Russian mine.

<sup>97</sup> See my discussion of Hatab’s interpretation of eternal return as repetition on pp. 116 – 119.



state of consciousness one experiences during the revelation of the eternal recurrence in poetic form. “All truly authentic art implies a kind of drunkenness and, with it, a loss of oneself, a transporting beyond oneself, that is the sole power of symbolization. To express oneself metaphorically and to become metamorphosed are thus comparable” (Kofman 205). In this sense, like the Dionysian human being expressing him- or herself symbolically (through music, dance, the symbolism of the body, its movements) (Kofman 201; Nietzsche BT, 3), Nietzsche chooses to express his idea of eternal recurrence through *drunken circular symbolism* (e.g., roundelay, round dance, whirling, waltz). *Repetition* of circular symbols (e.g., the wheel, the serpent) and diurnal cyclical symbols makes those symbols go as if in rounds, taking the reader along their circular course, making the reader feel dizzy and as if *drunk*, hence beyond him- or herself with joy. Thus, the agitation of the collective unconscious by way of emotional repetitive circular symbols induces (and is induced by) Dionysian drunkenness in a creative human being affirming existence through the symbolic form of eternal recurrence.

Reason 6: Diurnal Symbols as a Mask to *Conceal and Instruct*. Nietzsche’s desire to create diurnal symbols – symbols designed to spin the diurnal wheel inducing Dionysian drunkenness – serves both concealing and instructive aims. In “Nietzsche’s Masks”, the first chapter of *Nietzsche’s Gift* (1977), Harold Alderman “identif[ies] the two main masking devices Nietzsche uses: (1) allegories and metaphors, and (2) aphoristic style. The first of these devices is meant to serve both concealing and instructive functions while the second is meant to serve concealing ones. Nietzsche’s use of irony is, of course, a third masking device intended primarily to conceal...” (Alderman 9). Based on Alderman’s identification of masking devices in Nietzsche, the metaphorical language of *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* can be regarded as one of the masks Nietzsche uses to *conceal* his teaching for both selective and instructive purposes: (1) “it

leads astray those who can only go astray”, using Alderman’s terms; and (2) “masks may be instructive signs which a writer gives to the discerning reader so that he may discover what the thinker is really about” (*ibid.*). Another reason for Nietzsche to conceal his teaching in metaphorical language is anti-Socratic in character (for he views truth as ugly, as opposed to Socrates, for whom truth is beautiful) – one given by Jacques Derrida in *Éperons: Les styles de Nietzsche (Spurs: Nietzsche’s Styles)* (1979, 1978): Nietzsche’s style “uses its spur (*éperon*) as a means of protection against the terrifying, blinding, mortal threat (of that) which *presents* itself, which obstinately thrusts itself into view... [and] thereby protects the presence, the content, the thing itself, meaning, truth...” (Derrida 39). The diurnal symbolic structure is a specific, special mask in this regard, the existence of which has not yet been discovered by Nietzsche scholarship, to say nothing of its relation to the doctrine of eternal recurrence. The diurnal symbols are both concealed and concealing and, as such, are instructive. Being temporal symbols, they both hide and invoke the challenging meaning of eternal recurrence as the return of the moment (noon) within the endless sequence of moments (noon, evening, midnight, and morning), thereby demanding interpretation and the affirmation of existence.

This section has outlined six main reasons why Nietzsche sought to philosophise in metaphorical language, the main one being that of life affirmation. Sensitive to the nihilism of values and language, Nietzsche as a philologist desires to innovate by experimenting with language, thereby creating a seemingly safe reality of symbols, through which he attains a triple affirmation of life: conceptual affirmation, symbolic (metaphorical/imagerial) affirmation, and affirmation by circular symbols, the latter making an affirmative analogy with the eternal recurrence, the doctrine of affirmation and the circular form of these symbols suggesting

Dionysian drunkenness – the condition under which a total affirmation of existence is attained. While all of these reasons – experimentation, safety, triple affirmation, analogy, and drunkenness are concerned with life-enhancement, the last reason, that diurnal symbols are a mask employed to conceal the teaching so as to select the right ones for instruction, serves the pedagogical function of Nietzsche’s activity. It may thus be concluded that he seeks both to affirm and to teach others to affirm life through both figural language, in general, and the circular symbols of eternal recurrence, in particular. This caused several negative responses, as previously shown. Some, however, have responded positively to Nietzsche’s way of communicating his ideas in general and his idea of eternal recurrence in particular, as attested, especially, by the aesthetic interpretations discussed in the previous chapter. Since this work claims that Nietzsche utilises circular images to represent his doctrine, it is important to specify the nature of the relation between them before looking at how it actually plays out in his text.

## **II. Introduction to Literary Interpretation**

The idea of eternal return came to Nietzsche as a sudden, instant, lightning-fast revelation (EH “Thus Spoke Zarathustra” I, 3; Hatab 1978: 108). The eternal recurrence could not be explained allegorically, metaphorically or symbolically. Yet Nietzsche employed symbolic language to communicate the doctrine in *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*. He wanted thereby to bring across to the reader the urgency of this revelation through vivid circular symbols, as if the eternal recurrence could be conceived of or imagined as a circle or cycle.

In this regard, Nietzsche’s circular symbols are meant to engross both him and his reader. I believe that, after Nietzsche experienced the emotional revelation of the eternal recurrence, he attempted a symbolic representation of that revelation. In communicating his experience, he intended – given the intensity of his symbolic language – to induce an emotional response and

mimetic identification on the reader's part through the belief in the power of literary symbolism as a lived reality. "Poetic speech (mimetic literality) makes or produces a belief world through the immediate power of words" (Hatab 2005: 95). We respond to a theatrical production *as if* it were real and happening. Our response is emotional. In this regard, poetry becomes a reality when we respond to it emotionally, not rationally. I suggest that the poetic circular symbols of eternal recurrence, as well as the eternal recurrence of these symbols, should be responded to emotionally and taken as a reality, as literally happening. An emotional response to both the symbols of eternal return and the eternal return of the symbols would then both produce and depend on a belief in their poetic power. In this regard, there is no difference between the belief and the emotional response in the first place. This may be grounds for believing that Nietzsche realises his representation of eternal recurrence through his emotional belief in the poetic power of both the circular symbols of eternal return and the eternal return of cyclical diurnal symbols. He does so beyond explanation and argumentation. One may then agree with Hatab that "there is an element of mimetic identification that *produces* belief in a manner different from ordinary experience, reflective analysis, or the 'discovery' of 'facts' " (Hatab 2005: 95). It is a special belief, a belief that makes one *special*. Nietzsche's belief is born of the joy he experiences when creating the world of circular symbolism, and this very joy is something he attempts to impart on his reader. How can one possibly enjoy, in the fullest sense of this word, a poem or poetic prose if one does not respond to it emotionally? To agree or disagree with a poem, which implies understanding, critical thinking, arguments, and explanations, is not to enjoy it. To *enjoy* poetry, or circular symbols, is to be *enjoined* or encircled by poetry, or circular symbols. To enjoy is to live the reality of what is enjoyed, the reality of encircling, circular recurrent symbols. Thus "...we can say that the power of poetry produce[s] a *virtual reality*" (Hatab 2005: 96), and the

power of circular symbols, in particular, produces a virtual (visual) lived reality of the symbolic representation of eternal recurrence.

Of all Nietzsche's symbols of eternal recurrence in *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, the image of the circle and the symbolic cycle of the sun have not been given due consideration in contemporary scholarship. This study focuses on the *solar* aspect of Nietzsche's *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*. It is argued that the *literary* symbolic language of the text expresses analogically the *literal* truth of eternal recurrence: the moment and sequence of a circle image and/or a symbolic diurnal cycle resemble the moment and sequence of eternal return. The *literalness* of Zarathustra's doctrine of eternal recurrence and the *literariness* of Nietzsche's symbolic language should be considered to be indispensable to each other, for they both occur within each other's context, where the literally recurrent *moment* is presented literarily.

Alderman strongly holds "that *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* is a work of fiction; that is to say it contains no facts or empirical arguments and no metaphysical axioms from which Nietzsche purports to deduce eternal verities..." (Alderman 14). Stressing "the essentially aesthetic character of Nietzsche's style", he notes "that at important points in his presentation [Nietzsche] will make use of images, metaphors, and symbols rather than evidence and arguments" (15). Thus Alderman is convinced that "[s]uch devices... require literary rather than scientific modes of interpretation. The use of such devices is not merely incidental to Nietzsche's work. For Nietzsche, the world is more like a metaphor (i.e., indefinite and soft-edged) than it is like a logical theorem (i.e., definite and hard-edged)" (*ibid.*). In this sense, scientifically considered, we cannot use circular (and diurnal) symbols as empirical evidence for the eternal recurrence, but we could regard them as a perfect literary device employed to suggest or represent the doctrine. Since, therefore, Nietzsche's circular symbols are not arguments or evidence for arguments, but

literary images, they require literary interpretation; that is, as symbols, they are intended to refer, by analogy or association, to another thing or phenomenon, in this case, to the eternal recurrence of the same. Literary interpretation as figurative interpretation is fraught with multiple meanings encountered in considering the philosopher's way of communicating his main ideas.

Polysemy, then, is an essential aspect of Nietzsche's symbolic language. In "Nietzsche and Metaphysical Language" (1985, 1977), Michel Haar, in commenting generally that Nietzsche develops a language of his own, notes that, understandably, a concept expresses one meaning, but Nietzsche's key words (the Overman, the Eternal Recurrence of the Same, the Will to Power, Nihilism, etc.) bring forth a plurality of meanings (Haar 6). This has to do, I believe, with the poetic nature of Nietzsche's language.

In regard to the eternal recurrence – this work's concern – the multiplicity of symbolic meanings elicits various meanings of the doctrine that the circular symbols represent, such as repetition and diversity (same and different meaning), changeableness and continuity (constant reevaluation), completeness and dispersal (affirmation and suffering), each according to the symbol's characteristics. For example, the *wheel* suggests repetition (rotation), continuity (movement) and completeness (roundness), while the *serpent* implies diversity (writhings and windings), changeableness (pliability and skin-shedding) and dispersal (numerous coils).

The *day cycle*, another example, encompasses all of the characteristics: repetition (e.g., another day) and diversity (yet a different day), changeableness (e.g., day turning into evening) and continuity (eternal movement in and change of time), completeness (all four constituents of a day cycle) and dispersal (occurrence of same constituents in other cycles). Indeed, on the figurative level, the form of the expression of the eternal recurrence breaks out into and is at the same time made whole by many circular symbols that bespeak the doctrine. In other words,

circular symbols, both as a whole and in part, each having a particular meaning, represent the doctrine both as a whole (affirmation) and in part (various particular properties outlined above that suggest suffering) within the structure of *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*.

*Classification.* Nietzsche employs various types of symbolic images for the eternal recurrence. In order to have an understanding of what specifically the circular and diurnal symbols are, we must place them within a larger context – by virtue of classification. In “Design, Composition, and Symbol” (1969), Virgil C. Aldrich divides symbols into three groups: 1) *natural* symbols (e.g., the ocean, the lake, white); 2) *cultural* symbols (e.g., the flag); and 3) *mythological* symbols: “divine and demonic figures” (Aldrich 386, 387). This work focuses on Nietzsche’s natural and cultural, specifically *circular*, symbols expressing eternal return.<sup>98</sup> The solar planetary symbols, such as the sun and the earth generating diurnal symbols (morning, noon, evening, midnight) and the solar animal symbols, such as the eagle and the serpent are natural symbols. The music box, the hourglass, the circle, the ring, the wheel, and the ball are cultural symbols. Both types of circular symbols are imbued with both cultural and the author’s original meaning. The latter slightly, sometimes significantly, redefines the former. In Nietzsche’s case, given the originality of the idea of eternal recurrence, the meaning of the circular symbols he employs to communicate his doctrine is remarkably original.

Nietzsche’s circular, both natural and cultural, symbols further divide into two subgroups: 1) *static* (e.g., the music box, the hourglass, the circle, the ring, the wheel, the ball; the eagle and the serpent); and 2) *cyclical* (e.g., the sun and diurnal symbols). Generally, there are two subgroups of static symbols in Nietzsche’s text: *metamorphic* and *non-metamorphic*.<sup>99</sup>

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<sup>98</sup> Lack of divine and demonic figures in Nietzsche’s text can perhaps be explained through the death of mythological symbols stemming from the death of God.

<sup>99</sup> I use the term static here to refer to symbols which do not constitute temporal metamorphic cycles, as opposed to cyclical symbols, which do.

Static metamorphic symbols are those that transform unnaturally. Some of Nietzsche's static symbols, with which, among others (e.g., the dog, the cow), Jappinen is concerned, do not metamorphose, while others (e.g., the camel, the lion, and the child), with which Puszczalowski and Gooding-Williams are concerned, do; yet their metamorphoses are unnatural.<sup>100</sup> Cyclical symbols include seasonal symbols (autumn, winter, spring, and summer), which naturally transform into each other and then themselves again (Puszczalowski). For the first time attention will be given to Nietzsche's *diurnal cyclical* symbols (e.g., morning, noon, evening, and midnight), which, like the seasons, naturally metamorphose into each other and then themselves again, thereby representing the eternal return. Likewise, for the first time, both circular and diurnal symbols will be considered in light of an analogy drawn between their characteristics and those of the doctrine.

*Analogy.* In Nietzsche's "*Also sprach Zarathustra*" als literarisches Phänomen (1974), which views *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* as a book about not "the promulgation of a series of doctrines, but the development of Zarathustra himself, and particularly his overcoming of the hindrance from within himself to the giving of his message", Anke Bennholdt-Thomsen's focus "primarily on the tragic impossibility of fixing the doctrine in words, given the nature of language itself, so that it has to be revealed and received in living" (Williams 969) underestimates the capacity of Nietzsche's specific type of language – the language of circular and diurnal cyclical symbols – to express the essence of the eternal recurrence understood as the return of the moment within the sequence of moments. The following discussion concerns the relation of the circular symbol to the eternal recurrence in *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*. The relation is that of analogy and association and invokes the question of the circular symbol being both

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<sup>100</sup> That is, the camel, for example, does not naturally transform into the lion, but its transformation is spiritual in "On the Three Metamorphoses".



narrative and non-narrative in character. Although Ward Pafford in his article entitled “The Literary Use of Myth and Symbol” draws a distinguishing line between myth as elaborative and symbol as non-elaborative or non-narrative (132), careful analysis of Nietzsche’s circular symbols of eternal recurrence generally shows *circular* symbols proper to be both non-narrative (expressing the moment of eternal recurrence), through a one-time occurrence, and *narrative* (expressing the sequence of eternal recurrence), through repetitive invocation; and *diurnal* symbols, both non-narrative (expressing the moment of eternal recurrence through the moment of a diurnal constituent within the sequence of the diurnal constituents within a diurnal cycle), through invocation (or implication), and *narrative* (expressing the sequence of eternal recurrence through both the sequence of the diurnal symbols within a symbolic diurnal cycle and the sequence of symbolic diurnal cycles within their own symbolic sequence), through repetitive invocation (or implication) imbedded in their natural/willed transformative continuity. In other words, both circular symbols proper and diurnal symbols, as non-narrative, indicate the moment, but also, as narrative, the sequence of eternal recurrence. Like circular symbols proper, which are narrative through multiple occurrence, those circular symbols proper which are non-narrative through a one-time occurrence also indicate both moment and *sequence* – all through association of the geometrical characteristics of a circle with the properties of eternal recurrence.

*Geometrical Association.* Analysis of circular images will proceed according to the following implicit principle. If a symbol suggests the image of a circle, it is generally believed to represent the doctrine of eternal recurrence. The symbol is considered circular if it has the characteristics of a circle or repeats itself as if in a circle. The circle has the following characteristics: roundness and continuity. Its roundness expresses completeness (for round symbols “try to express a human sense of the wholeness of things” (Walker 4)); its completeness

the *moment*, while its continuity expresses endlessness, and endlessness expresses the *sequence*.<sup>101</sup> So the circular symbol represents both the moment and sequence of eternal return.

In terms of the relation between the return of the character of the moment (which makes *meaning* possible) and the moment and sequence of eternal return generally, the sequence allows for *different* meaning to be given to existence, while the moment provides for the *same* meaning. Generally, a circular symbol, whether or not it occurs by way of repetition (through repetitive invocation) and whether or not its meaning remains the same or has slightly or significantly changed throughout the text, will be regarded as representing both the *moment* and *sequence* of eternal return. As regards the multiple use of a symbol, the eternal return of the same character of the moment may be represented by:

- 1) the same symbol expressing a *different* meaning each time it is used;
- 2) the same symbol expressing the *same* meaning each time it is used (Zarathustra's moment of life affirmation).

If the circular symbol occurs by way of repetition, this suggests that the repetition itself represents the endlessness or *sequence* of eternal return. If that is the case, then such a circular symbol, the repetition of which expresses sequence, represents not only the moment and sequence – on the level of a one-time occurrence – but also the moment and sequence of the moment and sequence of eternal return – on the level of recurrence (what Nietzsche calls “the nuptial ring of rings” in “On Old and New Tablets”, or “will willing itself” in “On the Three Metamorphoses”). This concerns circular symbols such as the sun, the wheel, the ring, and the serpent. These symbols are concrete objects, at bottom, which are circular in form; they are not circular because they return to themselves. Diurnal symbols, however, do return to themselves,

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<sup>101</sup> Generally, the circle is a feminine sign indicating protection (of sacred space), equality, and *infinity*. See Barbara Walker, *The Woman's Dictionary of Symbols and Sacred Objects* (4).

but not because they are circular in form but because they are cyclical by nature, and, as such, they employ temporal and transformational analogies with the eternal recurrence.

The diurnal cyclical symbols, however, are not concrete objects, not even abstract circles, but rather abstract phenomena (morning, noon, evening, midnight) and cannot therefore be circular in form. But these symbols *are* circular images, not only because they repeat themselves through repetitive invocation but also by *circling* upon themselves through the day cycles they constitute, not only in nature, as they do, but also, as will be shown, in the text. However, the diurnal symbols circle or cycle back upon themselves thanks to their *temporal* nature. Elaboration on this is important for establishing the structural temporal analogy between the diurnal symbols and the eternal recurrence they represent.

*Temporal Analogy.* In the chapter entitled “The Eternal Recurrence in the Parable of Zarathustra”, in *Nietzsche’s Philosophy of the Eternal Recurrence of the Same* (*Nietzsches Philosophie der ewigen Wiederkehr des Gleichen*, 1956), Karl Löwith notes that “Zarathustra... contains Nietzsche’s whole philosophy in the form of a thoroughly pondered system of parables” (60), in our case, a system of diurnal symbols, drawing attention to the *temporal* symbol of noon.<sup>102</sup> His “...first plan for *Zarathustra* had ‘Noon and Eternity’ as a general title.... By means of this ‘plan’... Nietzsche found himself ‘reborn’ from the sickness unto death to a life that wills itself anew eternally and to a ‘new way of dying’ ” (Löwith 61). From Nietzsche’s plan it is already evident that the temporal symbol of noon will become central to the idea of eternal recurrence and diurnal symbolism will be involved in the representation of that idea. Indeed, as a temporal symbol, noon finds its culmination in “At Noon,” where the moment and sequence of

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<sup>102</sup> “Nietzsche declares in a letter that far from being a collection of isolated speeches, *Zarathustra* rather consists of hidden, lengthy chains of thought and the depiction of the philosophic problem; in this letter he characterizes his work as ‘well-made’ ‘to speak as a master joiner’ (*Friedrich Nietzsches Gesammelte Briefe*, 5 vols. [cited as *Br.*], and *Die Briefe Peter Gasts an Nietzsche*, 2 vols. (1923 – 1924), *Br.* IV, pp. 175ff.)” (Löwith 60: Footnote 117, p. 239).

moments are united into one eternal *temporal* whole within the idea of eternal recurrence as affirmation of complete existence. “In the decisive critical moment of the great noon... a cessation of time occurs. As the time of a unique decision, once and forever, the *moment* has – eternity. To this extent ‘noon and eternity’ is the characteristic time and the ever recurring title for the idea of eternal recurrence” (Löwith 63). As such, noon becomes the temporal symbol of eternally justified existence. Being part of a symbolic diurnal cycle (representing “eternity”), noon points to the need to ferret out and study the other diurnal symbols and their functioning in the text in order to fully grasp the temporal symbolic representation of the idea of eternal recurrence.

It is noteworthy that Nietzsche employs *temporal* symbols to speak of his relation to the temporality of becoming and the world as a whole. The temporal symbols are those of morning, day, evening, and night. (The other symbols used in the text are, so to speak, *atemporal*. Those include animal symbols (e.g., dog and cow), spatial symbols (e.g., horizontal: meadow, and vertical: mountain), astral symbols (e.g., sun, moon, stars) and others.) The temporal diurnal symbols express both *temporality* (endless eternity), or the sequence of eternal recurrence, and *atemporality*, or the moment of eternal recurrence, while performing two functions in *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*: they constitute both the *temporal symbolic diurnal narrative chronology* that signifies the temporality of the transient world (as becoming) and the *atemporal symbolic diurnal mythical aspect* of the text that signifies the atemporality of the eternal world (as Being), respectively. Thus, through the use of the temporal cyclical diurnal symbols, which express both temporality (sequence) and atemporality (moment) at the same time, Nietzsche attempts to reconcile Being and becoming, time and eternity (truth and falsehood, will and nature, determinism and creativity, etc.), by combining the temporal symbolic diurnal narrative

chronology that the diurnal symbols, as well as cycles, represent with their atemporal symbolic diurnal mythical implications.

*Transformational Analogy.* The temporal analogy between the diurnal symbols and the eternal recurrence includes a *transformational* analogy: the diurnal symbols successively change into one another just as do the moments of eternal recurrence. The nature of this transformation is expressed in *biological* metaphors. The relation between the diurnal symbols (morning, noon, evening, midnight) and the biological metaphors (rebirth, maturity, decline, and death) proposed by Alderman engages the question of the latent meaning of such symbols. Based on Erich Fromm's discussion of the latent meaning of symbols in *The Forgotten Language: An Introduction to the Understanding of Dreams, Fairy Tales and Myths*, that there is a difference and a parallel between the logic of the manifest and the latent story – we make connections within each story, i.e., external events are related to each other by their association with the same inner experiences so that the manifest story represents the latent story (Fromm 90), where “all the realistic events [in our case, day constituents] described are symbols for the inner experiences of the hero” (89) – we may uncover latent symbolic meanings behind Zarathustra's manifest actions: e.g., the fact that he appears in the morning (rebirth), speaks at/of the great noon (growth, maturity), retires in the evening (decline), and wanders aimlessly/dies at night (death). The unity exemplified between the diurnal symbols and the biological metaphors may be explained by Nietzsche's desire to reflect his own spiritual transformation, which can be attested to by the recent study of his alchemical symbols discussed above.

Using Bishop's analysis of the alchemical symbols in *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* as confirmation for Nietzsche's desire to transform himself, it is possible to view Nietzsche's diurnal symbols as symbols of transformation or transformational symbols, where the

transformation is not alchemical (reflecting psychological transformation) but *diurnal*, at once natural and existential/willed, encompassed by the temporality of existence. He shows the diurnal cyclical symbols as symbols that transform themselves, while mirroring Zarathustra's transformation. The symbolic noon-evening-night-morning transformation pertaining to the diurnal cycle reflects the existential life (growth)-decline-death-rebirth transformation pertaining to Zarathustra's experience of the self and the world (as will become evident in the analysis below). In this regard, Jung's assertion that " 'the man Nietzsche himself did not realize, when he said God was dead, that it meant that he would get into the mill, into the alchemical pot where he is cooked and transformed' " (Jung cited in Bishop 10) is far-fetched, since the author of *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, by subjecting his literary character to the long (eternal) diurnal cyclical transformation bearing close resemblance to the alchemical one, already exposes himself to the same kind of inner metamorphosis.<sup>103</sup> Contrary to Jung's exaggeration, therefore, I believe that the transformational cyclical plasticity of diurnal symbols inherent in Nietzsche's self-conscious model of diurnal transformation attests precisely to his intention to convey such a transformation as he experienced and embodied in his Zarathustra. As a result, since change occurs in and over time, the temporal analogy inaugurates the transformational analogy expressed in biological metaphors between the diurnal symbols and the eternal recurrence, while Nietzsche's diurnal symbols become transformational symbols and symbols that transform him (or Zarathustra in particular) as though in a cycle.

*Identity.* Both temporal and transformational analogies involve the question of Zarathustra's identity within the day cycle or cycles. The symbolic diurnal cycle comprised of the moments of dawn, noon, afterglow, and midnight is different at every moment of the diurnal cycle of existence – at the moment of dawn, noon, afterglow, and midnight – in relation to every

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<sup>103</sup> Jung. *Nietzsche's Zarathustra: Notes of the Seminar Given in 1934 – 1939* (54).

preceding or following moment: for example, the diurnal cycle is different at the moment of dawn than at that of midnight or that of noon; but it is also simultaneously meaninglessly the same at every moment of this cycle in relation to its meaninglessly changeable self, i.e., changeably self-same, through the cycling (recurrence) of its changeable self (i.e., return to its different self) within the eternal diurnal cycle of repetition. Likewise, in terms of human identity, Zarathustra is different at every moment of the diurnal cycle of existence – at the moment of dawn (rebirth), noon (peak of growth/maturity), afterglow (decline), and midnight (death) – in relation to every preceding or following moment; but he is also simultaneously meaningfully the same at every moment of this cycle in relation to his meaningfully changeable self, i.e., changeably self-same, through the cycling (recurrence) of his changeable self (i.e., return to his different self) within the eternal diurnal cycle of repetition; with the only exception being that the diurnal cycle, at once same and different, is without meaning in itself, whereas Zarathustra has and gives meaning to existence by making every day and every moment of that day cycle meaningfully different. Thus, just as the diurnal cycle is simultaneously both the same and different at every moment of its cycling – the moment of dawn, noon, afterglow, and midnight, so is Zarathustra, although having and giving meaning, simultaneously both the same and different at every diurnal moment within the symbolic diurnal cycle.

Both the symbolic diurnal cycle and Zarathustra are temporal and eternal at the same time, through the eternal return of the same. The symbolic diurnal cycle as a *sequence* or *narrative* allows for temporal differences, i.e., destruction and creativity, while a particular *moment* of the cycle is an immersion into the eternity of the same recurrent moment, which allows Zarathustra, through endless repetition, ultimately to confirm and seal his identity as an immortal human being, beyond time. That is, eternity is in every moment because every moment

recurs eternally. The return of the moment presupposes an infinite number of moments. Does it mean that Zarathustra is the same at the same moment of dawn for example? Yes and no. He is the same in terms of, for example, experiencing the moment of a new *truth* being revealed to him at the same moment of dawn, symbolising the *moment* of eternal recurrence, but different in terms of the new content the moment of a *new* truth receives, symbolising the *sequence* of eternal recurrence.

With the analogies considered, what remains unexplained is the phenomenon of the alternation of days and nights and the association of the divisions of the day with biological metaphors in both culture and *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*. It will become evident that the return of symbols in Nietzsche's text occurs by way of a creative, wilful return which draws upon ancient symbolism. The four symbolic divisions of the day cycle in *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* resemble the diurnal cyclical symbolism in the ancient imagination, where morning generally symbolises (re)birth; noon, growth or maturity; evening, decline; and night, death.<sup>104</sup> It is proposed to look first at ancient diurnal symbolism and then at Nietzsche's way of employing of it.

*Morning.* Dawn is "the joyful symbol of awakening to a fresh day", potentiality, youth, promise, and hope (Chevalier 275). "Dawn is the symbol of light, the promise of fullness and a wellspring of hope in every being" (*ibid.*). In the Bible, "[m]orning is a symbol of both purity and promise" (*ibid.*, 675). Generally, daybreak is "[a] symbol of the commencement of manifestation" and the rising sun is "[a] symbol of the commencement of a new cycle of life" (Gaskell 201, 731).<sup>105</sup> "Many ancient peoples used to practice the rite of welcoming the rising sun.... Ancient Greeks, Egyptians, Caucasians built their temples and sanctuaries with the

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<sup>104</sup> "The first comparison to be made with the day is that of a regular succession of events – birth, growth, maturity and decline" (Chevalier 275). For the symbol of *day* see further Chevalier, *A Dictionary of Symbols* (275).

<sup>105</sup> For the symbolism of *daybreak* see further Gaskell, *Dictionary of the Sacred Language of all Scriptures and Myths* (201).



entrance facing eastwards so that the rising sun could light up the interior through the open door” (Golan 47).<sup>106</sup> For example, “Stonehenge sanctuary in England, dating back to the 18th – 17th centuries B.C., is oriented towards the point of sunrise on the summer solstice” (*ibid.*).

*Noon.* The sun standing at noon marks the peak of the day, signifying high intelligence. In Ismaili esotericism, “[n]oon, when there are no shadows, is the Seal of Prophecy, the zenith of spiritual light” (Chevalier 654). “In Biblical tradition, noon symbolizes light in all its fullness” (*ibid.*). Generally, “[m]idday marks a sort of sacralized moment, a pause in cyclic motion before the fragile balance is broken and the Sun totters into a decline. It conjures up the Sun halted in its course – the only moment when there is no shadow – an image of eternity” (*ibid.*). “The Sun standing still is timelessness; the eternal Now; the *nunc stans*; illumination; escape from time and the round of existence” (Cooper 162).<sup>107</sup> The sun motionless in the zenith is “[a] symbol of the culmination of the Higher Self in the buddhic consciousness, at the beginning or the ending of the cycle” (Gaskell 732).

*Evening.* The English proverb “The evening crowns the day” well reflects the drawing-to-a-close of the daily cycle of existence (Vries 169).<sup>108</sup> Evening and sunset become the symbol of sadness and dying. “The perishing of a form and method in which we have lived may naturally bring a pensive sadness like that which always comes to us as we watch a setting of the sun, but he who is in the true spirit of the sunset turns instantly from the westward to the eastern look” (Phillip Brooks, *Mystery of Iniquity*, 329; cited in Gaskell 254). Sun-setting is “[a] symbol either of the termination, or the commencement, of the great cycle of life” (Gaskell 732). Like the east, the west was also considered sacred (Golan 47). Burying the dead facing westwards, for example, was widespread in antiquity. “Ancient Indian texts refer to the setting sun as ‘dying’. In

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<sup>106</sup> For the symbolism of *sunrise* see further Golan, *Myth and Symbol: Symbolism in Prehistoric Religions* (47).

<sup>107</sup> For the symbolism of the *sun* see further Cooper, *An Illustrated Encyclopaedia of Traditional Symbols* (162).

<sup>108</sup> For the symbolism of *evening* see further Vries, *Dictionary of Symbols and Imagery* (169).

ancient beliefs sunset was perceived as the sun's departure to the abode of the dead. Europeans, Egyptians, and American Indians [514, pp. 326, 327] believed that the entrance to the world of the dead was in the west" (*ibid.* 48). In this regard, "[v]arious peoples had a custom of burying their dead towards evening [726, pp. 134, 135]; it was apparently believed that the soul of the deceased passed to the other world together with the setting sun" (*ibid.*). The association of the west with death is also reflected in English. "In old England people used to say: 'The deceased departs with the sun' [790, p. 271]" (*ibid.*). Even today "[t]he old popular belief that the west is associated with death is reflected in the English phrase *to go west*, meaning to perish, to be lost" (*ibid.*). Both morning and evening were regarded as sacred. "Ancient Greeks welcomed the rising sun and saw off the setting sun; there are prayers in the Rig-Veda appropriate for addressing the rising and the setting sun" (*ibid.* 48, 49). The three daily divisions of the day were all reflected at the same time in culture. For example, "[t]he Russian tale of Vasilisa the Beautiful mentions three riders – red, white, and black – which, in M. Khudyakov's opinion [575, p. 262], symbolize the rising, high noon, and setting of the heavenly body" (*ibid.* 49). Another more evident example is the Egyptian sun god declaring: " 'I am Hepri in the morning, I am Ra at midday, I am Atum in the evening' [347, p. 91]; these are the names of deities which represented the sun in its various phases" (*ibid.* 49). The setting sun (and setting-sun signs) is also the symbol of "revival, renascence, immortality" (*ibid.* 48). "[I]n the ancient Indo-European system of religious concepts... the image of the setting sun (the setting-sun sign) which, though dying, will rise again tomorrow, was an incarnation of immortality... [A]fter setting, the heavenly body was expected to rise again the following day" (*ibid.*).

*Night.* Generally, night symbolises mystery, death and germination, and preparation for (re)birth. "The Greeks regarded Night (Nyx) as the daughter of Chaos and mother of the Sky

(Ouranos) and the Earth (Gaia). Night also gave birth to death, dreams, sleep, vexation, friendship and deceit” (Chevalier 701). Night is the symbol of the Underworld and death (*ibid.*). It also symbolises “the period of gestation, germination or conspiracy which will burst out into life in broad daylight.... Night is the image of the unconscious and, in the darkness of sleep, the unconscious is set free.... In mystical theology, Night symbolizes the disappearance of all knowledge which may be defined, analysed or expressed...” (*ibid.*). “Like darkness, night signifies the pre-cosmogenic, pre-natal darkness preceding rebirth or initiation and illumination, but it is also chaos; death; madness; disintegration; reversion to the foetal state of the world.... Going by night symbolizes esotericism” (Cooper 112).<sup>109</sup> Night as primordial is “[a] symbol of potential being, or of the cycle of life in the underworld” (Gaskell 535). As darkness, it is “[a] symbol of a condition of ignorance, error, and evil” (536). As nullity, it is “[a] symbol of negation, secrecy, or the forgetting of all past experience” (*ibid.*). Now that the association of the divisions of the day with biological metaphors has been outlined by referencing a number of dictionaries of ancient symbolism, it is time to turn to Nietzsche’s own way of using this cultural heritage.

In the above connection, how does the return of the diurnal symbols in *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* come into being? The natural eternal return of day and night can be viewed as an extension or part of the original text of a seemingly cyclical nature, as viewed in ancient culture (above). The everyday experience of the cycle of day and night, employing the terminology of morning, noon, evening, and midnight, causes the cycle to be experienced as eternal in human consciousness: tomorrow there will be another day and another night and so on and so forth. The components of the day cycle become metaphors, and, through everyday use, trite metaphors at that. Through the belief in the conventional eternal return of day and night and attributing special

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<sup>109</sup> For the symbolism of *night* see further Cooper (112).

symbolic meaning to each component of the cycle, the eternal return of the symbols of *morning*, *noon*, *evening*, and *night* comes to represent the eternal return of existentially significant *moments*, further symbolising *birth*, *growth* and *peak of growth*, or *maturity*, *decline*, and *death*, respectively. Thus the ordinary experience of day and night can be transformed into a creative manipulation of diurnal symbols in *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* for the purpose of expressing one's ordinary, everyday (-night) experience in extraordinary existential terms: the sunrise, noon, sunset, and midnight in one's innermost experience of the self and the world – one's complete existence – captured by the idea of eternal recurrence as life affirmation.

Furthermore and along these lines, how do the diurnal symbols in *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* become cyclical? This happens through the necessity in the symbolic diurnal cycle being caused by that in the will willing itself by willing one single moment of joy. In this sense, one should remember that the ethic of the eternal recurrence “opposes in reality every categorical imperative (‘I should’) and proposes in contrast an imperative of necessity (‘I am constrained to’)...” (Haar 32). But where does the ethic of necessity come from? “This ethic – namely, being forced to will a necessity that is the necessity of volition itself – is circular. The significance of this circle is: the Will which wills the Eternal Return is that will which wills itself, which finds *in itself* the necessity to will itself” (*ibid.*) by willing one single moment of joy. Because every moment is necessarily tied to another, every moment is a necessary link in the circular chain of eternity. The will, then, wills its past, present, and future by willing just one moment.

With that in mind, the diurnal recurrence (the return of diurnal symbols) is due to Zarathustra's will willing itself (the eternal return of the same). The diurnal symbols within a symbolic diurnal cycle are related to one another necessarily, through the *will*. The necessity in Zarathustra's will willing itself by willing one single moment of joy, thus affirming one single

diurnal symbol representing this moment (e.g., noon in “At Noon” or midnight in “The Drunken Song”), inaugurates the necessity of the return of (temporal) diurnal symbols within a symbolic diurnal cycle and the return of diurnal cycles within the sequence of diurnal cycles, while also relating the last to the first cycle (i.e., the book’s ending to its beginning). The evening, midnight, and morning symbols, for example, are shown to return to themselves because Zarathustra affirms the noon. The natural alternation of days and nights, therefore, is transformed into the creative recurrence of diurnal symbols in the text so as to reflect the eternal recurrence of the same. However, there is no exact correspondence between the three. The return of days and nights is merely a poetic (symbolic) representation of eternal recurrence.

It is one thing to experience the chaos of existence, but another to respond to it by loving and willing it to recur eternally. Yet another thing is to speak about it in *words*, to represent it as a circle, to employ diurnal cyclical symbols in order to represent it; in short, to impose a creative system of affirmation on it. In this sense, Nietzsche follows his own aesthetic principle written also aesthetically, as it pertains to a writer: “To *impress* upon Becoming the character of Being – *this* is the highest form of the Will to Power... That everything returns – here a world of Becoming comes closest to the world of Being” (WP 617, cited in Haar 34, *impress* – italics mine). I believe, therefore, that Nietzsche attempted to impose a symbolic system upon his language in order to express his abysmal thought – the eternal recurrence of the same. Without putting the constraints of cyclical symbolic form upon his language, he would not perhaps have been able to communicate his teaching as effectively, in accordance with the nature of the cyclical doctrine itself, as he did. Nietzsche thus creates a new language – the language of the eternal recurrence of cyclical diurnal symbols. The course of his symbolic language is cyclical. Diurnal symbols flow out of one into another: morning into day, day into evening, evening into

night, night into morning, and so on. Cyclical symbols can be understood only in relation to one another, and within the cyclical system of diurnal symbolism. The point of reference, or departure, for each of the cyclical symbols in a diurnal symbolic cycle will always remain shifting and a matter of individual choice. For example, one is free to start with the symbol of morning, which will have the night symbol as its predecessor in tracing the diurnal symbolic cycle or cycles. The diurnal cyclical symbols reflect Zarathustra's moving, willing, creating forward into the future while remembering, willing, re-creating the past in the present for the future, where willing *forward* is not opposed to willing *backward* (not backward willing as backward thinking) but the very incarnation thereof, and these symbols, structurally, resemble the pattern of diurnal cyclical symbolism in various ancient cultures.

The symbolic approach to Nietzsche's idea of eternal recurrence has helped to categorise his circular symbols, as well as outline their relation to the doctrine and the principles for their further analyses, while thereby enlarging the justification of his use of symbolic language with regard to the fundamental conception of his book. In particular, the literary discussion of Nietzsche's circular symbols and their facility in the communication of eternal recurrence has helped to establish that: 1) the artist-philosopher utilises circular symbols, among others, to communicate his doctrine; 2) his circular symbols fall into two classes: circular proper and cyclical, or diurnal; 3) the former's relation to the doctrine employs geometrical analogy; 4) while the latter's employs temporal; 5) transformational analogy works within the framework of the temporal one; 6) the practical analyses of the symbolic communication of the eternal return will proceed in accordance with the types of analogy drawn between the circular symbols and the doctrine; and 7) the diurnal symbolism of *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* is modeled on the alternation of days and nights as conceived in ancient culture.

In summary, the above discussion has featured the affirmative strategies of Nietzsche's symbolic language, especially in connection with the eternal recurrence, the doctrine of affirmation. Several reasons for Nietzsche using specifically circular images to communicate his teaching have been outlined to justify his language choice, the more general one being that the affirmative aspect common to all vivid images adds to the creative existential function of the eternal return, while the more particular one being that the three types of analogy – geometrical, temporal, and transformational – make a plausible connection between the circular symbols and the main conception of *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*. The principles of practical analysis have been also outlined for both circular and diurnal symbols in Nietzsche's texts. Although the cyclical symbols are related to the circular images, they evince a slightly different characteristic. In that view, it was established that the functioning of circular symbols in relation to the eternal recurrence will be examined on the basis of geometrical analogy, while the operation of cyclical diurnal symbols will be shown to unfold on the grounds of temporal and transformational analogies. Now that the theoretical groundings for both types of circular symbols and their respective textual analyses have been furnished, it is time to turn to Nietzsche's actual communication of his abysmal thought. The circular symbols proper will be considered first as their relation to the eternal return is contextually more evident than that of the diurnal symbols. The implicit, at times hidden, diurnal symbols will be discussed following the analysis of circular symbols proper so as to elucidate Nietzsche's circular symbolic language, thereby bringing out the structural tendencies inherent in the arrangement of *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*.

## **Chapter 6: The Circular Representation of Eternal Return**

This chapter confirms that Nietzsche's recurrent image for the eternal recurrence is the circle or an implicit circularity in the images of the eternal recurrence. The image of circularity present in Nietzsche's discussion of the eternal return in *The Gay Science* (sections 109, 233, 285, and especially 341), which he wrote prior to *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, will be considered first. As for *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, it features a greater abundance of circular images, dispersed throughout the work but covering fifteen chapters in total. Parts I and III each include six chapters accommodating circular symbols, Part II one, and Part IV two. Although there are more circular images in one place than another, no part of the book is lacking a circular symbol, which attests to the fact that Nietzsche structured his work so as to keep it together by means of circular images. The analysis of both works will follow the analogical principles worked out in Chapter 5. As it unfolds, a more evident pattern of circular symbols will emerge. As a result, the circular images will make evident that Nietzsche sought to respond to his own existential question, one raised in GS 341, by having his literary character, Zarathustra, come to terms with the circle of eternal recurrence. It will be established, therefore, that the circle or ring symbol is a successful poetic representation of the doctrine of eternal recurrence as incorporated into the will.

### **I. Analysis of the Circular Images in *The Gay Science***

This section discusses various circular or implicitly circular images of eternal recurrence in *The Gay Science*. The book features four passages on eternal return which draw upon circular or closely related images. The image of the *musical box* eternally repeating its tune suggests the circularity or recurrence of the chaotic universe (GS 109). There is a strong intimation of the *lane* image (as if part of the circle image) for the eternal recurrence in Nietzsche's further



emphasis on the interconnectedness of all equally important actions throughout all time: past, present, and future (GS 233). Nietzsche's first explicit introduction of the eternal recurrence in the image of *war* and *peace* suggests a constant interplay of rest and activity in terms of change and return, as if in a circle (GS 285). Finally, the overturning of the *sandglass* or *hourglass*, the metaphor for existence, also suggests a circular image for the eternal recurrence of the same events (GS 341).<sup>110</sup> The images create a sense of progress from music to events to existence to time while exhibiting a relation to the eternal return of the moment and one's response to the question of life, with the notion of temporality becoming more prominent as the cosmological implications of the doctrine slowly retreat from the imputed perspective.

### 1. The Musical Box in GS 109

In GS 109, Nietzsche introduces a vivid, seemingly circular image of the world. But first he explains what the world is not. For Nietzsche, the world is not a machine: „Hüten wir uns schon davor, zu glauben, dass das All eine Maschine sei; es ist gewiss nicht auf Ein Ziel construiert, wir thun ihm mit dem Wort ‚Maschine‘ eine viel zu hohe Ehre an“ (*KGW V 2, FW III 109, 146: 18 – 20*), or: “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” (GS 109: 167). Nietzsche goes on to say that the universe resembles an endlessly playing musical box: “the whole musical box repeats eternally its tune which may never be called a melody” (*ibid.*), or „*das ganze Spielwerk wiederholt ewig seine Weise, die nie eine Melodie heissen darf*“ (*KGW V 2, FW III 109, 146: 12 – 14, italics mine*). At first glance it may seem as though the reference to the universe is being made in cosmological terms. Nietzsche, however, admonishes

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<sup>110</sup> ‘Sandglass’ is closer to the German *Sanduhr* (*Sand + uhr* = sand + hour). ‘Hourglass’ is a standard English translation, more explicit in stressing the reference to time through the ‘hour’, which becomes central to the temporal concept of eternal recurrence. I use these terms interchangeably.

against any rationalisation being applicable to the world, when he says quite clearly that the world is not a machine. The image of a music box is rather a musical image and has more to do with the tone. Here it is useful to recall Higgins' musical interpretation of eternal recurrence, where she compares the present-centredness of the musical tone with that of the moment. Yet, on the other hand, if we look at the tone as returning to itself through the part of the literal, concrete music box making a calculable rotation, as that of a mechanism – a machine of a kind – then we may be seduced into believing that Nietzsche intended this image precisely as one of recurrent cosmology. But such a presentation of the world, ultimately an anthropomorphised world, has no bearing whatsoever on human existence, as has been shown throughout the first two chapters of this work. At this point Nietzsche has not as yet disclosed any of his temporal images of eternal recurrence (which focus on the temporality makes the existential interpretation much more plausible of all possible accounts of the doctrine). However, even the image of the musical box may contain some hint at the notion of time Nietzsche will be intending at a later point in *The Gay Science*, when he speaks of the tune. The tune stands for the sequence of eternal recurrence, while the tone, which he never mentions, but on which Higgins dwells extensively, without, however, referencing this or any particular image (see Chapter 4), represents quite legitimately the moment of eternal recurrence. The union of the two is expressed by the “whole” or „ganze“ in reference to the musical box symbolising all eternity. Most importantly, Nietzsche speaks of *repetition (Wiederholung)*. Overall, the musical box repeating its tune suggests the repetition of the universe as if in a circle. With the circle as such having been disproved in Chapters 1 and 2, it may be concluded that what remains of this circular image is its symbolic property, which forces appeal to the senses through poetic inspiration so as to create merely the sense of a circle; the *Spielwerk* retaining the symbolic image of circularity or *return*. Taking into account the analogy

between the circular image and the eternal recurrence based on the geometrical characteristics of a circle, the roundness of the circularity of the musical box expresses completeness (cf. *Ganze*), and completeness the moment, while its eternal continuity represents endlessness or the sequence of moments (cf. *Weise*). As an image with musical implications, the musical box is a symbol of eternal recurrence by virtue of the musical *tone* (moment) repeating itself as a *tune*, or *Weise* (sequence). In this regard, the musical box as a symbolic image combines tone with circular roundness (completeness) and tune with endless continuity. Indeed, the universe is not a melody, but chaos: „Der Gesamt-Charakter der Welt ist dagegen in alle Ewigkeit Chaos“ (*KGW V 2, FW III 109, 146: 6, 7*), or: “The total character of the world, however, is in all eternity chaos” (*GS 109: 167*), says Nietzsche, but the way he talks about it – in musical terms – makes the meaningless eternal recurrence of universal time a continuous melodious poetic refrain; the return of meaninglessness countered by the return of same or different *meaning*; and, as in ancient Indian culture, the whole universe seems filled with music, while the human being rejoices at it reverberating throughout the universe. Language, after all, is meaningfully metaphorical by nature, but so is music.<sup>111</sup>

## 2. The Lane in GS 233

In GS 233, Nietzsche continues to speak about the eternal recurrence of the same, but he does not seem to utilise any image for it. On closer reading, however, it is viable to unearth one such image. Of the significance of his actions, in his characteristic terse style, he says: „*Gefährlichster Gesichtspunct.* — Was ich jetzt thue oder lasse, ist *für alles Kommende* so wichtig, als das grösste Ereigniss der Vergangenheit: in dieser ungeheuren Perspektive der

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<sup>111</sup> Both language and music pertain to communication. However, according to Nietzsche’s *Birth of Tragedy out of the Spirit of Music*, music is prior to language. In this sense, language as a conceptual phenomenon is only a reduced, coarse form of music: tones invoke sensory images which are later metaphorised into words and concepts.

Wirkung sind alle Handlungen gleich gross und klein“ (*KGW V 2, FW III 233, 190: 7 – 12*), or: “*The most dangerous point of view. – What I do or do not do now is as important for everything that is yet to come as is the greatest event of the past: in this tremendous perspective of effectiveness all actions appear equally great and small*” (*GS 233: 212, 213*). Here Nietzsche stresses the interconnectedness of all equally important actions throughout all time: past, present, and future. The return of the same meaningless interconnectedness and of the same meaningful importance of every action, no matter how “small” or “great” it may seem, at every single *moment* is the defining character of this lightning-fast aphorism. The reader is called upon to introduce for it an image of his or her own – I suggest that of a *lane*, the first, although implicit, *temporal* image of eternal recurrence.<sup>112</sup> The image of the temporal lane (the lane of moments – causes and effects – inaugurated by the self-caused moment<sup>113</sup>) seems to be most inherent in the doctrine as presented. It is *linear* in character<sup>114</sup> – though it should be remembered that no linear or other representation does justice to time, something that has already been discussed in Chapter 2 – and expresses the following two premises contained in what, again, seemed, but was disproved (see Chapter 2), to be the deductive argument for the very controversial communication of eternal recurrence in *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*: 1) all things are knotted together (“On the Vision and the Riddle” 2 and “The Drunken Song” 10) and 2) all is in flux, i.e., all changes (“On Redemption” and “On Old and New Tablets” 8), with the emphasis on the first – *necessity* – thereby recalling and essentially enlarging germanely upon the previously discussed section: „Hüten wir uns, zu sagen, dass es Gesetze in der Natur gebe. Es giebt nur Nothwendigkeiten“ (*KGW V 2, FW III 109, 146: 23 – 25*), or: “Let us beware of saying that

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<sup>112</sup> Cf. the two lanes of eternity in “On the Vision and the Riddle” 2.

<sup>113</sup> The moment at which one makes a decision of one’s own free will, thereby bringing both the moment and the decision into existence.

<sup>114</sup> That is, historical in character: the past comes into existence historically, through an act of will.

there are laws in nature. There are only necessities” (GS 109: 167). Three points should be made here. First, necessity reflects the significance of any event, as well as of the decision made with regard or leading to its occurrence, whether in the past, present or future. Second, obviously, the lane image is not a circular image, but this is so only at first glance. The endlessly extending lane (image) expressing the continuous sequence of eternal recurrence may be looked at as part of a perfect circle (image) indicating the completeness of the moment. Third, Nietzsche not only conceals the meaning of his idea of eternal return, as he does with his musical symbol in GS 109; he also conceals the image itself, as he does with that which poses to be as the lane image in GS 233, thereby enforcing self-interpretation upon his reader for life-enhancing purposes. If the musical box symbol calls *hearing* into play, the implicit lane image (paradoxically) plays on the *eyes*. The former finds confirmation for possessing temporal properties through the latter, as *hearing with the eyes* (I “Zarathustra’s Prologue” 5: 128) (a catachresis in itself), while the latter acquires the joyful, playful musical attitude towards both the existential decision-making and the necessary occurrence through the former, as *making and facing music*, with the sensorial perception of the world in general (the more acute it is, the livelier one is) being the source of Nietzsche’s imaginative thinking, so vital for his existential poetic creativity.

### **3. War and Peace in GS 285**

In GS 285, Nietzsche first introduces his concept of eternal recurrence (GS; Kaufmann: footnote 13, 230): Now that God the guarantor is dead: „*Excelsior!* —...,du hast keinen fortwährenden Wächter und Freund für deine sieben Einsamkeiten’ “ (KGW V 2, FW IV 285, 207: 23, 24), or: “*Excelsior*. ‘...you have no perpetual guardian and friend for your seven solitudes’ ” (GS 285: 299). Human beings cannot secure inner peace any more – they must therefore strive to achieve it: „,deinem Herzen steht keine Ruhestatt mehr offen, wo es nur zu

finden und nicht mehr zu suchen hat’ “ (KGW V 2, FW IV 285, 207: 29, 30), or: “ ‘...no resting place is open any longer to your heart, where it only needs to find and no longer to seek’ ” (GS 285: 230). Moreover, such an ambitious human being, on the one hand, comes to want to have no rest any more, while, on the other, he or she wishes to get away from this desire but finds him- or herself entrapped within its confines: „,du wehrst dich gegen irgend einen letzten Frieden, du willst die ewige *Wiederkunft* von Krieg und Frieden: — Mensch der Entsagung, in Alledem willst du entsagen? Wer wird dir die Kraft dazu geben? Noch hatte Niemand diese Kraft!’ “ (KGW V 2, FW IV 285, 207: 30, 208: 1 – 4), or: “ ‘you resist any ultimate peace; you will the eternal *recurrence* of war and peace: man of renunciation, all this you wish to renounce? Who will give you the strength for that? Nobody yet has had this strength!’ ” (GS 285: 230, all italics mine). Nietzsche concludes with a *lake* image, hoping for the human being to become self-contained and self-responsible without the existence of God:

Es giebt einen See, der es sich eines Tages versagte, abzufließen, und einen Damm dort aufwarf, wo er bisher abfloss: seitdem steigt dieser See immer höher. Vielleicht wird gerade jene Entsagung uns auch die Kraft verleihen, mit der die Entsagung selber ertragen werden kann; vielleicht wird der Mensch von da an immer höher steigen, wo er nicht mehr in einen Gott *ausfließt* (KGW V 2, FW IV 285, 208: 4 – 11),

or: “There is a lake that one day ceased to permit itself to flow off; it formed a dam where it had hitherto flown off; and ever since this lake is rising higher and higher. Perhaps this very renunciation will also lend us the strength needed to bear this renunciation; perhaps man will rise ever higher as soon as he ceases to *flow out* into a god” (GS 285: 230).

Nietzsche’s five points are quite clear: 1) there is no divine authority any more; hence 2) there is no peace; 3) such a state is both willed and resisted; and 4) there is no escape from this alternation or *recurrence*; but 5) there is a hope for the recurrence to enhance human existence. The core phrase of Nietzsche’s here is the eternal recurrence of war and peace. It suggests a

constant interplay of rest and activity in terms of change and return characterised by alternation. The very process of alternation between different or gradually different states implies a kind of *circularity* but within certain confines – those of human nature. The finitude or wholeness of the latter is represented by the water image (lake) at the very end of the aphorism. The first image – the *circle*, suggested by the alternation of rest and activity – must be considered in conjunction with the second one – the *lake*. Taken together, the circularity of water contained happens within the boundaries of the dam around the lake. The circularity described refers to the way human energy, or the human will, operates. In his psychological interpretation of eternal recurrence (see Chapter 4), Parkes considers the lake image as related to the sea or ocean image, i.e., the circularity transpires between the self and the world. This aphorism, as is clear, focuses on the circularity within the self, since Nietzsche does not go beyond this water image, as he does in the other passages Parkes considers. According to Nietzsche, the whole world belongs primarily within the self. This self experiences itself as constantly struggling with itself. This self-struggling relation is expressed through the circular imagery of the eternal recurrence of peace and war, rest and activity, harmony and chaos. The self experiences itself as if in a *circle*. It is constantly pressed to respond meaningfully to the eternal recurrence of meaninglessness left in the wake of God's demise. In this regard, the two main features of the circular image are alternation (recurrence) and rest and activity (states); of the water image, containment (lake) and fluidity (water). Read together, both the circle and the lake image express self-containment, wholeness, completeness – the moment – while the circularity itself represents the continuous flow, the endless temporal sequence of eternal recurrence.

While Nietzsche is explicit on the lake image generally representing the *rest* of time and given as a counterpart and a clue (the explicitly communicated desired state intimates the

implicit real one) to the concealed circular image of peace and war standing for continuous *motion* or movement of time, he hides, for self-interpretative purposes, the circle image behind, but at the same time reveals it through, the alternation of emotional states, just as he does with the lane image in GS 233. To the temporal lane image of necessity there is added the image of circularity or recurrence of peace and war: (as though) the lane becomes a circle and the inner strife necessary. At this point Nietzsche gets closer to considering the structure of time – the structure of the recurrent moment as full of contradictions represented by peace and war metaphors, the reconciliation of which the suffering and creative individual seeks and rarely achieves, and even that for a short period of time – a moment.

#### **4. The Hourglass in GS 341**

In GS 341: 273 – 274, *The greatest weight* (or *KGW V 2, FW IV 341, 250: 7 – 31, Das grösste Schwergewicht*), Nietzsche presents his first fully developed version of eternal recurrence: he has a demon come to question whether you would want to relive your life as it has been, including this moment. There are twelve images employed in this aphorism: 1) night or day („eines Tages oder Nachts“); 2) the demon („ein Dämon“); 3) the spider („diese Spinne“); 4) the moonlight among the trees („dieses Mondlicht zwischen den Bäumen“); 5) the eternal hourglass of existence („die ewige *Sanduhr* des Daseins“); 6) the moment („dieser Augenblick“); 7) the speck of dust („Stäubchen vom Staube“); 8) gnashing of teeth („mit den Zähnen knirschen“); 9) cursing the demon („den Dämon verfluchen“); 10) god („ein Gott“); 11) the greatest stress („das grösste Schwergewicht“); and 12) the seal („Besiegelung“) (*KGW V 2, FW 341*) – quite a symbolic number, symbolic of the twelve apostles – all you need to have the whole world lead a genuine life.



The first image (day and night) is diurnal and, as such, expresses temporality. It will enjoy its full development in the diurnal structure of *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*. The second image (the demon) speaks for itself: the wicked meaninglessness of existence, the return of which is (to be) countered by the tenth image (god) in the last section of Chapter 2 of this work. The third image (the spider) stands for the smallness of any event; the fourth (the moonlight), for greatness, involving the question of necessity and underlining the importance of all kinds of events, echoing back to the implicit temporal lane image in GS 233. The fifth image (the turning hourglass) is a very important *temporal* image, which stands for the recurrence of existence. The sixth image (the moment) is also a temporal image of time as perceived existentially at the *present* moment, but it is also a bodily image, if considered in etymological terms: *Auge* (eye) plus *Blick* (blink), emphasising the lightning-fast experience of time, its ungraspableness, elusiveness, its constant flying, like the invisible wind, its fleeting and flowing, like water through the fingers (the existential structure of the moment is further developed in “On the Vision and the Riddle” 2). The seventh image (the speck of dust) describes as short and almost meaningless the life of a single human being swallowed up by the engulfing universe’s ever-hungry mouth of time, as viewed from an external perspective. The eighth image (gnashing of teeth) is a biblical allusion (e.g., Luke 13:28; Matthew 13:42), drawing on the force of the biblical word, and the alternative (negative) response to the recurrence of meaningless existence as represented by the second image (the demon). The ninth image (cursing the demon) is a consequence of the eighth, curse being charged by the spirit of helpless, impotent revenge, from which one must be delivered by willing the chaotic disparate many into one harmonious whole, if one wants to become an Overhuman, as discussed in “On Redemption”. The tenth image (god), a religious image at bottom, indicates a positive, creative response to life and its

adversities, a total affirmation of existence by willing to relive it an infinite number of times, an inspired state of mind symbolised by the noontide in “At Noon”. The eleventh image (the greatest stress) is a down-to-earth, heavyweight athletic image, which must be borne as a light yoke, for there is no lightness without heaviness, but heaviness is something that can exist without its counterpart: one is hard-pressed to choose; but by choosing lightness one necessarily has to take on the weight. The twelfth image (the seal) is a bureaucratic image, one that is contract-based, one that confirms one’s choice made according to the eleventh image: there is no return, no taking back an oath given to oneself, for one assumes full responsibility for the decision one makes.

Of the images discussed, the turning hourglass of existence is noteworthy for suggesting a circularity in the text. Although the hourglass or sandglass (*die Sanduhr*) is not circular in itself, it is presented as constantly turning or being *turned* upside down whenever it runs down and out. The overturning of the sandglass, the *temporal* metaphor for existence, suggests the image of a *circle* as the symbol for the eternal recurrence of the same events. The two latent properties of the hourglass image are circularity and temporality. The question is how they are related. As a temporal image, the hourglass stands for the return of the moment within the sequence of moments. As a circular image, the roundness created by its rotation expresses the completeness of the moment, while the continuity of its circular motion indicates the endless sequence of time. The union of its two aspects creates the sense of a circle through the repetition of the moment. Physically considered, all of the points of the turning hourglass, except the axial one(s), circumscribe a real circle in the air, the static (cf. the self-containment of the lake image in GS 285) expressing the ever-same repetition of the moment and the circularly continuous expressing the sequence of moments. Being a concrete material object referring to some

mysterious abstract notion, such as time, while simultaneously performing the function of a geometrical figure, the hourglass as a circular symbol attempts to bring forth and enforce a concrete experience of existence, of life as actually lived.

As regards the main ingredient of the hourglass, the grain of sand stands for the moment, while the flow of grains, as the flow of time, represents the sequence of eternal recurrence. However, it should be remembered that all metaphorical analogies are inexact, for, while the grains of sand are finite in quantity, the moments they represent are infinite: time never runs out, it is neither a circle nor a line. The finite amount of grains, rather, emphasises what the lake image in GS 233 seeks to underline – the self-containment of the self, the entirety of one's life. The turning hourglass, therefore, remains a circular temporal symbol of eternal recurrence – one that teaches acceptance of the whole of existence. The relation between the notion of temporality and the image of circularity becomes much more evident and intense in *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, where Nietzsche utilises many more circular symbols, to the discussion of which we now turn.

## **II. Analysis of the Circular Images in *Thus Spoke Zarathustra***

Nietzsche employs a much richer variety of images to communicate the eternal recurrence in *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* than he does in *The Gay Science*. Amongst them are Zarathustra's two infinite lanes and the dwarf's circle ("On the Vision and the Riddle 2"). Zarathustra is angry with the dwarf's narrow understanding of the eternal recurrence as a circle (because, in reality, the eternal recurrence cannot be understood – but only *poeticized* – as either a circle or a line, i.e., the eternal recurrence is not a geometrical but a figurative circle, a circle that suggests or invokes circular images for this doctrine). Nevertheless, Nietzsche seems to be in love with the circle as a symbolic representation for the eternal recurrence, for everything profound, he says, loves to wear a mask (BGE 40). The circle is a perfectly false symbolic mask

for the deep meaning of the eternal recurrence. So he goes on to adopt the dwarf's light (*leicht*), poetic representation of time as a circle for the whole of *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* (the poets lie too much, says Zarathustra, but he too is a poet ("On the Blessed Isles" and "On Poets")). He does so by creating a variety of circular images for the eternal recurrence (thereby also showing that Zarathustra conquers the dwarf, the spirit of gravity, who cannot face the eternal recurrence of his own meaningless existence).

Nietzsche thus lays great emphasis on the circle by associating many circular images recurrent in the text with the eternal recurrence, e.g., a *serpent wound around* the neck of an eagle soaring through the sky in wide *circles* (I "Zarathustra's Prologue" 10: 137); "a self-propelled *wheel*" (I "On the Three Metamorphoses" 139; I "On the Way of the Creator" 174, 175; and I "On Child and Marriage" 181, 182); the world rolls together in *circles* (I "On Love of the Neighbor" 173, 174); "he threw his *ball*" (I "On Free Death" 186); "[t]he thirst of the *ring* lives in you" (II "On the Virtuous" 206); "time itself is a *circle*" (III "On the Vision and the Riddle" 2: 270); "my mountain still winds all the *belts* of the sun round itself" (III "Upon the Mount of Olives" 286, 287); the world is "a full *apple*" and "a ripe golden *apple*" (III "On the Three Evils" 1: 299); "I draw *circles* around me and sacred boundaries" and "in the widest *circle*" (III "On Old and New Tablets" 19: 320, 321); "the advocate of the *circle*", "the *wheel* of being", "the *year* of being", "the same *house* of being", "the *ring* of being", "round every Here *rolls* the *sphere* (ball) There, and "*Bent* is the *path* of eternity" (III "The Convalescent" 2: 329, 330), "to turn over again, like an *hourglass*" (III "The Convalescent" 2: 332); "the nuptial *ring* of *rings*" and "the *ring* of recurrence" (III "The Seven Seals (Or: the Yes and Amen Song)" 1 – 7: 340 – 343); "Oh, the golden round *ring*" and "the golden round *ball*" (IV "At Noon" 389, 390); "go, but *return!*" and "the *ring's will*" (IV "The Drunken Song" 10: 435; 11: 435, respectively;

all italics mine). These images will require detailed analysis in order to show that Nietzsche indeed uses the circle as a figure of speech to communicate or otherwise suggest the eternal recurrence throughout *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*. Moreover, it will become evident that most of the circular images (the serpent, the circle, the wheel, the ring, the ball, the apple or the image of the *circle* within various circular images) return to themselves by repetitive *invocation* throughout the text, thereby also representing the eternal return.

### 1. Eagle and Serpent: Wide Circles in “Zarathustra’s Prologue”

Nietzsche’s first mention of circular symbols in *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* occurs in “Zarathustra’s Prologue”: „Und siehe! Ein Adler zog in weiten *Kreisen* durch die Luft, und an ihm hing eine *Schlange*, nicht einer Beute gleich, sondern einer Freundin: denn sie hielt sich um seinen Hals *geringelt*“ (I „Zarathustra’s Vorrede“ 10, *KGW* VI 1, 21: 10 – 13), or: “And behold! An eagle soared through the sky in wide *circles*, and on him there hung a *serpent*, not like prey but like a friend: for she kept herself *wound around* his neck” (I “Zarathustra’s Prologue” 10: 137, all italics mine). There are three images of eternal recurrence in this passage: the image of “wide circles” („weiten *Kreisen*“), “a serpent” („eine *Schlange*“), and “wound around” („*geringelt*“). The first is mental (belonging in a class of cultural symbols); the second, natural (specifically, animal); the third (*der Ring*), cultural.

While the circle and the ring are clearly circular, the serpent in and of itself is not. Yet, when this animal is presented or imagined as a coil or coils, the latter suggest the image of a circle. There is no ring as such either in this pictorial representation of the serpent wound around the eagle’s neck, but what it suggests is the union or friendship of eagle and serpent, pride and wisdom.<sup>115</sup> As regards the type of symbols used, what is implicit in the serpent imagery is that a

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<sup>115</sup> See my discussion of Thatcher on the friendship of the eagle and the serpent, pp. 100 – 104.

natural symbol such as the serpent, which is not circular in itself, is made culturally circular, i.e., culture (Lat. *cultivāre*, to till; cultivate) is shown to transform nature.

Both the circular animal flight and the serpent's ring or coil(s) are images of eternal return. While the circle circumscribed in the air represents the eternal return by virtue of its roundness, suggesting the completeness and wholeness of the moment; and its continuity, the endless sequence of moments; the serpent symbolises the doctrine by dint of its coil and its extended body, suggesting the same respective properties expressing the moment and sequence of moments – something that neither Pappas nor Loeb explain when they refer to the serpent as representing the eternal return (see Chapter 3).

At first glance no hint at temporality *per se* can be detected in this animal imagery. However, paying closer attention to the very act of the eagle with the serpent wound around its neck flying in wide circles, it is possible to see the occurrence of time. The flight takes duration, and it occurs on the spur of the moment: the extension of the wide circles symbolises the sequence of eternal recurrence, while the sensuous pictorial imagery hides the experience of flowing or flying time through amazement and wonder at the scene, to which these exclamatory words bring attention appealingly: „Und siehe!“ (I „Zarathustra's Vorrede“ 10, *KGW* VI 1, 21: 10), or: “And behold!” (I “Zarathustra's Prologue” 10: 137) suggests the completeness of the fully engrossing moment. It is true that “On the Vision and the Riddle” 2 contains the first explicit discussion of eternal return, but the first intimation or reference to the doctrine by means of circular symbols proper occurs right at the start of *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* – in “Zarathustra's Prologue.” Jappinen notes this too, though with reference to the wheel image in the following chapter, “On the Three Metamorphoses”: “The figure of the wheel itself prefigures the

symbolism of the [eternal recurrence]—with its holistic roundness and the continuity of sequence” (Jappinen 344).

Generally, the eagle and serpent scene creates the sense of a double circle which is composed of one larger circle and the other smaller, a kind of a circle-within-a-circle image: 1) the animals fly in circles; and 2) the serpent encircles the eagle, which anticipates Zarathustra’s “nuptial ring of rings, the ring of recurrence” (III “The Seven Seals (Or: the Yes and Amen Song)” 1 – 7: 340 – 343), which he repeatedly invokes at the end of Part III in reference to the eternal recurrence of eternity, to which we shall return later.

The existential meaning of the circle of flying that has, enclosed within it, the ring of the serpent is that one should will one’s life to recur but also will it to recur, and do that an infinite number of times. At this point in the text there is no intimation that the circle is related to the will. However, their conjunction becomes evident in “On the Three Metamorphoses”, where the image of the wheel and the will willing itself are placed side by side in the text.

## **2. The Self-Propelled Wheel in “On the Three Metamorphoses”**

In “On the Three Metamorphoses”, Nietzsche connects one of his circular symbols – the *wheel* – with the *will*: „Unschuld ist das Kind und Vergessen, ein Neubeginnen, ein Spiel, ein aus sich rollendes *Rad*, eine erste Bewegung, ein heiliges Ja-sagen. Ja, zum Spiele des Schaffens, meine Brüder, bedarf es eines heiligen Ja-sagens: *seinen* Willen will nun der Geist, *seine* Welt gewinnt sich der Weltverlorene“ (I „Von den drei Verwandlungen“, *KGW* VI 1, 27: 7 – 12), or: “The child is innocence and forgetting, a new beginning, a game, a self-propelled *wheel*, a first movement, a sacred ‘Yes.’ For the game of creation, my brothers, a sacred ‘Yes’ is needed: the spirit now wills his own will, and he who had been lost to the world now conquers his own world” (I “On the Three Metamorphoses” 139; *seinen* – Nietzsche’s emphasis; *Rad* and *wheel* –

italics mine). The child spirit is described as free of revenge against the past (innocence and forgetting); as a novice in life who has no prior baggage of knowledge and who does not know how to act; as a human being who likes to play with anything that may come to hand; as a self-dependent, self-contained being; as one who makes the first step – commits the first act in one's life; as a yes-saying, i.e, life-affirming, being, which means the will willing itself. Thus Nietzsche moves from forgetting to ignorance to play (or creativity) to self-sufficiency to life-affirmation, or the will willing itself.

The symbols of the self-propelled wheel, a cultural symbol and thus suggesting creativity as confirmed by “the game of creation”, and the child's spirit willing its own will, i.e., the will willing itself, among others, are utilised to describe the essential nature of the child, itself a symbol for the free creative spirit. While the English “self-propelled” means that the wheel propels itself, the German „aus sich rollendes Rad“ implies that the wheel rolls out of itself, reflecting the metaphorical relation between the inner and the outer world – as though the child acted from within its own self, without any external influence or impediment, its action proceeding from its inner world and being directed outward at the outer world to shape and mold it as it pleased. The wheel, then, creates the image of a self-sufficient circle, whose roundness symbolises the wholeness and completeness of the moment; and whose circular extension, the sequence of time.

As regards the wheel image itself, the wheel's rolling in time suggests the sequence of eternal recurrence, while the self-sufficiency of its rolling, its rolling out from itself, indicates the self-dependence of the moment, the moment being the source for the eternity of time. The self-sufficient rolling, however, cannot obviously take place without the will willing itself. That is, when we speak of the self-propelled wheel in reference to the child spirit and its will, we imagine



a kind of will that wills itself to propel itself out from itself. Metaphorically speaking, the will becomes *wheel-like* or circular: it is bent upon itself. Wheel and will – these almost rhyme in English.<sup>116</sup> The child’s circular will thus bespeaks self-sufficiency or self-containment, as in the case of the lake image in GS 285, and the affirmation of existence. The previous discussion of the animals’ circle of circles and the forthcoming account of the nuptial ring of rings both feature a double circle and double ring imagery that is well-captured by the self-propelled wheel symbol, the symbol for the eternal recurrence as incorporated into the will, as the will willing the return of existence and as the will willing its own return, i.e., the will willing itself.

### 3. The Self-Propelled Wheel in “On the Way of the Creator”

In “On the Way of the Creator”, Nietzsche relates the image of the self-propelled wheel to the way of the creator in opposition to the way of the herd’s unproductive common conscience which says: „,Wer sucht, der geht leicht selber verloren. Alle Vereinsamung ist Schuld’: also spricht die Heerde“ (I „Vom Wege des Schaffenden“, *KGW* VI 1, 76: 5, 6), or: “ ‘He who seeks, easily gets lost. All loneliness is guilt’ – thus speaks the herd” (I “On the Way of the Creator” 174, 175). In particular, he has Zarathustra ask whether one is a self-propelled wheel, that is, whether one is self-sufficient and original: „Aber du willst den Weg deiner Trübsal gehen, welches ist der Weg zu dir selber? So zeige mir dein Recht und deine Kraft dazu! Bist du eine neue Kraft und ein neues Recht? Eine erste Bewegung? Ein aus sich rollendes *Rad*? Kannst du auch Sterne zwingen, dass sie um dich sich drehen?“ (I „Vom Wege des Schaffenden“, *KGW* VI

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<sup>116</sup> Wheel: ME *whel(e)*, OE *hwēol*, *wheohl*; akin to Gk. *kýklos* (cycle). Will: ME *willen*, OE *wyllan*; akin to L *velle* to wish. These do not rhyme either in German (*Rad* and *Wille*), Greek (κύκλος, τροχός, περιστρέφω, γυρίζω – *kyklos*, *trochos*, *peristrefo*, *gyrizo* and βούληση, θέληση – *boulisi*, *thelisi*) or Latin (*circulus*, *rota* and *voluntas* or *voluntatis*). However, the roots of Gk βούληση, θέληση (wheel) – *boulisi*, *thelisi* – (especially the root of the first word) seem to echo the roots of L *voluntas*, G *Wille* or *wollen* and E will, which warrants the hypothesis that there is an implicit connection between a free-rolling wheel and a free-unfolding will. Terminology from e-dictionaries: *The Random House Webster’s Unabridged Dictionary 3.0.*; *The German-English Dictionary*; *The Greek-English-Greek Dictionary*; and *The Latin Dictionary and Grammar Resources*.

1, 76: 14 – 18), or: “But do you want to go the way of your affliction, which is the way to yourself? Then show me your right and your strength to do so. Are you a new strength and a new right? A first movement? A self-propelled *wheel*? Can you compel the very stars to revolve around you? (I “On the Way of the Creator” 174, 175, all italics mine). What Nietzsche shows is that the way of the creator is the way of the wheel.

In the previous discussion it was established that the wheel refers to the will willing itself as a self-sufficient entity (as the will willing itself into motion). What this passage adds to the wheel image is creative *originality*. The image of the self-propelled wheel as the image of a self-sufficient human being who has “the way to yourself”, elicits them as original, by definition, not by contrast with the image of the unproductive “herd” („Heerde“), but by their own standards, as against their own background: the self-sufficient, creatively original self is original measured against its own self. Surely, this kind of originality driven by the fundamental human quality suggested by the wheel image – the will willing itself, by having the self revolve around itself, will have “the very stars” – the best others – “revolve around you”. In this passage, then, the wheel symbol signifying the eternal return of meaningful existence is shown to counter the symbol of the common conscience of the herd, representing the eternal return of unproductive meaninglessness. Since the cause of the return of meaningful existence is original in relation to itself, it inaugurates the return of meaningful differences within its sequence of time. What is the same in this return, however, is the originality of the will, as well as the will’s constant willing itself, within the moment of eternal recurrence.

The image of temporality in this context, besides being suggested by the circular characteristics of the wheel, reveals itself through the three types of eternal recurrence, as identified at the end of Chapter 2: 1) the return of same meaninglessness represented by the herd;

2) the return of meaningful differences expressed by the will's creative originality; and 3) the return of the same meaningful originality. The first fits the dual-time frame (i.e., moment and sequence) of eternal recurrence as the seat for the dual-time frame of eternal return as expressed by the second (sequence) and the third (moment). At this point the wheel image performs a selective function: either one chooses the first type of return or the second and the third; the latter two always go together as all meaningful differences stem from one complete same meaningful whole. That is, the autonomous will as the sole power that generates an infinite number of different phenomena remains the same through willing the return of all of the existential varieties it has procured and thus it wills its own return.

In the above connection, it is no coincidence that Nietzsche utilised a cultural symbol and connected it with originality: the wheel as both a created object and a symbol is a product of human contrivance and intelligence that requires self-propelled ingenuity. The person who invented the wheel was original; Nietzsche is original in having invented the self-propelled wheel to refer to the creative self-sufficient spirit; Zarathustra, as one who is stronger than Nietzsche, invents the self-propelled wheel for himself out of himself. Such is the way of the wheel, and such is the way of the creator.

#### **4. The Self-Propelled Wheel in “On Child and Marriage”**

In “On Child and Marriage”, Zarathustra draws an analogy between the marriage of man and woman and the marriage of the self to itself, including an analogy between their respective consequences – in each case the child. In regard to both he says: „Du bist jung und wünschst dir Kind und Ehe. Aber ich frage dich: bist du ein Mensch, der ein Kind sich wünschen *darf*?... Über dich sollst du hinausbauen. Aber erst musst du mir selber gebaut sein, rechtwinklig an Leib und Seele. Nicht nur fort sollst du dich pflanzen, sondern hinauf!...“ (I „Von Kind und Ehe“, *KGW*

VI 1, 86: 5, 6, 14 – 16), or: “You are young and wish for a child and marriage. But I ask you: Are you a man *entitled* to wish for a child?... You shall build over and beyond yourself, but first you must be built yourself, perpendicular in body and soul. You shall not only reproduce yourself, but produce something higher” (I “On Child and Marriage” 181, 182). In terms of matrimony, if one wishes to marry and have a child, i.e., to build beyond oneself, one must be responsible for one’s child. But in order to be responsible for others, one must first be responsible for oneself, i.e., be built oneself, for a bad son or daughter cannot be a good husband or wife or parent. Likewise, in terms of the spirit, if the self wills to marry itself, its other, and have an *idea*, i.e., to create beyond itself, it must be responsible for the idea it has produced. But in order to be responsible for what no longer belongs to the self – for others – the self must first be responsible for itself, i.e., be built itself, for a bad self cannot be a good counterpart to its other and a good parent to its child: it must be responsible for the values that have been created and for the values *it* has created. Here Nietzsche focuses on the self’s will creating its own values, to be more precise, on the self’s *responsibility* for itself, for the values it has produced and now must live up to. This kind of responsibility is represented by the self-propelled wheel symbol: „Einen höheren Leib sollst du schaffen, eine erste Bewegung, ein aus sich rollendes *Rad*, — einen Schaffenden sollst du schaffen. Ehe: so heisse ich den Willen zu *Zweien*, das *Eine* zu schaffen, das mehr ist, als die es schufen“ (I „Von Kind und Ehe“, *KGW* VI 1, 86: 18 – 21), or: “You shall create a higher body, a first movement, a self-propelled *wheel* – you shall create a creator. Marriage: thus I call the will of two to create the one that is more than those who created it” (I “On Child and Marriage” 181, 182, all italics mine). Surely, to create a responsible self out of oneself is to create beyond oneself. A responsible self is a creator who fashions itself, just like the wheel that propels itself from within itself. As is clear, the wheel symbol acquires an additional human

quality – responsibility. The will willing itself, represented by the self-propelled wheel, certainly involves accountability for the life it has, does, and will lead. To affirm all of existence by willing it back, as well as by willing to will it back, is to profess one’s ultimate accountability.

Viewed within the context of eternal recurrence, in order to be responsible for the difference it has inaugurated through the return of the moment, the will must first be responsible for itself, i.e., it must first be capable of affirming all of life before making any difference in it. Responsibility, in this sense, is a property that belongs on the three levels of eternal return: 1) the will is responsible for countering the return of same meaninglessness by means of meaningfulness; 2) it is responsible for the meaningful differences themselves countering the meaningless return; and 3) it is also responsible for the maintenance of its own same meaningful self, where the second, expressing sequence, and the third, indicating the moment, consume the first, signifying both.

In terms of meaning accrual through repetitive invocation in the narrative (three occurrences in the text), which, according to Jappinen, signifies the sequence of eternal recurrence, the wheel symbol, as has been presented by Nietzsche, combines the three main qualities of the creative self-willing will: self-sufficiency or self-containment from “On the Three Metamorphoses”, original creativity from “On the Way of the Creator”, and responsibility from “On Child and Marriage”. The will as the will willing itself responds creatively to the return of meaninglessness and, since it is self-dependent, remains responsible for the various original ideas it has created, including itself. In this sense, the wheel symbol does not only represent the eternal recurrence of the same as the doctrine of affirmation, both on the narrative level and as a particular occurrence in the text, but also it returns to itself; i.e., the repetitive invocation of the wheel symbol – by virtue of *repetition* as a stylistic device, as according to Hatab (see Chapter 4,

pp. 116 – 119) – represents the eternal return, while the narrative itself features the *return* of the symbol which, by returning to itself, affirms its own existence. Thus, not only does the will alone affirm life in its plenitude, but also the symbol it has created, taking on a life of its own, undertakes to justify existence by its repetition.

It has been seen that the image of the circle in the wheel metaphor for the eternal recurrence extends also to marriage. For Zarathustra, marriage plays an important role. Its specific function is to produce something higher than those *humans* who produced it, namely, the *Overhuman* – a self-propelled *wheel*, a will willing itself, that is, a human being who is capable of willing the eternal recurrence of the same. In this sense, one should not go too far or even too *near* – to the *neighbour*, to create the far Overhuman; one needs only to turn to oneself, to become *friends* with oneself: „Die Zukunft und das Fernste sei dir die Ursache deines Heute: in deinem Freunde sollst du den Übermenschen als deine Ursache lieben. Meine Brüder, zur Nächstenliebe rathe ich euch nicht: ich rathe euch zur Fernsten-Liebe“ (I „Von der Nächstenliebe“, *KGW* VI 1, 74: 30 – 32; 75: 1, 2), or: “Let the future and the farthest be for you the cause of your today: in your friend you shall love the overman as your cause. My brothers, love of the neighbor I do not recommend to you: I recommend to you love of the farthest” (I “On Love of the Neighbor” 174). Simply put, one should be concerned with oneself, not with others, if one wants to grow (into the Overhuman); and when one cares about oneself, one also cares about others.

### **5. The *Ring* in “On Love of the Neighbor”**

In “On Love of the Neighbor”, Zarathustra teaches love of the friend: „Nicht den Nächsten lehre ich euch, sondern den Freund“ (I „Von der Nächstenliebe“, *KGW* VI 1, 74: 18), or: “I teach you not the neighbor, but the friend” (I “On Love of the Neighbor” 173, 174). The

kind of friend he teaches is one who makes his or her own fragmented world complete by giving it a purpose, a goal: „Ich lehre euch den Freund, in dem die Welt fertig dasteht, eine Schale des Guten, — den schaffenden Freund, der immer eine fertige Welt zu verschenken hat. Und wie ihm die Welt auseinander rollte, so rollt sie ihm wieder in *Ringen* zusammen, als das Werden des Guten durch das Böse, als das Werden der Zwecke aus dem Zufalle“ (I „Von der Nächstenliebe“, *KGW* VI 1, 74: 24 – 29), or: “I teach you the friend in whom the world stands completed, a bowl of goodness – the creating friend who always has a completed world to give away. And as the world rolled apart for him, it rolls together again in *circles* for him, as the becoming of the good through evil, as the becoming of purpose out of accident” (I “On Love of the Neighbor” 173, 174, all italics mine). There are three images of the self’s world in this passage: 1) the image of fragments or accidents constituting the evil in existence; 2) the image of the purpose or the whole making up the good in life; and 3) the image of the world rolling together again in circles or *rings* – the image of the world’s unity, completeness, wholeness. The first refers to the differences, meaningful and meaningless alike, of which life is composed. The second expresses the state of harmony and perfection achieved in the very process of suffering and creativity. The third intends the actual creative willing and affirmation of existence. The rolling together in circles of the world is a necessary consequence of the will willing itself symbolised by the self-propelled wheel in the three previously discussed passages.

The meaning of the circle image implicit in the wheel now extends from the self-willing will to the willed existence and the varieties it has to offer. In this regard, given the three images outlined above, it is possible to speak of the self-dependent will operating within the boundaries of the three respective types of return: 1) the return of same meaningless or different meaningful

fragments symbolising the sequence of eternal recurrence;<sup>117</sup> 2) the return of the same entire goal through the willing of differences, indicating the moment of recurrent time; and 3) the return of the interplay between the first and the second, between many and one, evil and good, meaninglessness and meaning, difference and sameness, war and peace, as expressed previously by the *lane* image in GS 233. It is not only in one circle or ring that the self's world returns to itself. Nietzsche speaks of a multiplicity of circles or rings, which attests to the multiplication of the will: there are many wills, he says elsewhere (WP) and each will seeks to impose its perspective. All of the wills, however, constitute one great force: the will to power. It is not a case of the will willing to possess power because it does not have it. The will itself is power unfolding as the will to power. Such a will is represented by the ring symbol: the holistic roundness signifies the moment, while the continuity expresses the sequence of eternal recurrence.

Living in the dual timeframe, as symbolised by the circles or rings that pull the self's world together, engages the question of the relation of the self to itself. This interrelation is expressed through the notion of friendship. The theme of friendship has already been invoked, in "Zarathustra's Prologue", with regard to the union of eagle and serpent flying in wide circles through the sky. According to Thatcher, it is the union of opposites achieved through the eternal return. Given the circular imagery, the friendship of eagle and serpent may be said to be like the union of a locked-in ring – as marriage. What this passage adds to the circular symbol, however, is the further discussion of friendship, one within the self – one that unfolds as the many selfish circles or rings pulling the self together into one circular whole – let me call it a ripple effect in reverse. When a heavy object falls into water, the circular or ring-like waves radiate from within the center of the fall. If we imagine these circular ring-waves coalescing into the central point

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<sup>117</sup> A particular idea may still be meaningless if it has not been decided yet how it fits within the whole.



from which they have proceeded to their round extremities, we get the figural picture of the will willing the fragments (waves) back into their pulsating origin – the will. Thus, the will willing the rolling together of the wave-like fragmented world is the will's friendly, ring-like attitude towards itself. The will's friendship is creative, for it always seeks to make itself whole, but, in doing so, it furthers existential varieties which are willed back into one whole again, and so on and so forth. This makes the will willing the rolling together in rings of existence commensurate with itself, as round and perfect as the marriage ring. In this sense, the ring symbol of eternal recurrence picks up the analogy drawn between the theme of matrimonial union and the self's reciprocal relation to itself: the self's ring-like friendship with itself shares the matrimonial characteristic through the *ring* symbol. Only the self *ringed* by its own existence, like the dam around the lake, can establish a genuine rapport with the other, whether in friendship or in marriage or in a family relationship. Nietzsche, then, by recommending love of the farthest – the Overhuman, is rejecting Christian love of the neighbour while at the same time paradoxically enforcing it as a necessary consequence of the self-sustained will willing the rolling together in rings of its own world through the friendly reconciliation of itself with itself.

To sum up, the course of the self's world runs out and begins again, as if in a ring or a circle. This world stands completed when willed as a whole, as a ring or a circle. The German *Ring* is the circular symbol of the world made complete through the eternal recurrence (rolling apart and back together again) of the same will. The creating friend that the will fashions out of itself is one that gives form or shape – purpose, to its own world – chance, in ring-like completeness.

## 6. The Ball in “On Free Death”

In “On Free Death”, Nietzsche meditates on the time of death. Zarathustra’s teaching says: „stirb zur rechten Zeit!“ (I „Vom freien Tode“, *KGW* VI 1, 89: 4), or “Die at the right time!” (I “On Free Death” 183). Even those who should never have been born, however, want to go on living: „Aber auch die Überflüssigen thun noch wichtig mit ihrem Sterben, und auch die hohlste *Nuss* will noch geknackt sein“ (I „Vom freien Tode“, *KGW* VI 1, 89: 8, 9), or: “But even the superfluous still make a fuss about their dying; and even the hollowest *nut* still wants to be cracked” (I “On Free Death” 183, all italics mine). The theme of dying at the right time is actually tied necessarily, as a corollary, to the question of genuine existence; for, according to Zarathustra, the right life makes the right death: „Seinen Tod stirbt der *Vollbringende*, siegreich, umringt von Hoffenden und Gelobenden“ (I „Vom freien Tode“, *KGW* VI 1, 89: 15, 16), or: “He that consummates his life dies his death victoriously, surrounded by those who hope and promise” (I “On Free Death” 183, 184, all italics mine). Life is what matters to Nietzsche, and death, being the last moment of life, is just as important. Those leading an unproductive existence past their prime are compared by Zarathustra to „[s]aure Äpfel“ (I „Vom freien Tode“, *KGW* VI 1, 90: 17), or “sour apples” (I “On Free Death” 184) that want to keep on hanging on the branches of the tree of life. In contrast with “the preachers of slow death” (*ibid.* 185) (Christian priests), he asks for „Prediger... des *schnellen* Todes“ (I „Vom freien Tode“, *KGW* VI 1, 90: 30), or “preachers of *quick* death” (I “On Free Death” 185) to come and shake the rotten ones. Some die too late, others too early: „Wahrlich, zu früh starb jener Hebräer, den die Prediger des langsamen Todes ehren... Vielleicht hätte er leben gelernt und die Erde lieben gelernt — und das Lachen dazu!“ (I „Vom freien Tode“, *KGW* VI 1, 91: 3, 4, 10, 11), or: “Verily, that Hebrew died too early whom the preachers of slow death honor.... Perhaps he

would have learned to live and to love the earth – and laughter too” (I “On Free Death” 185). Had he (“that Hebrew”) tarried awhile on earth, he himself would have recanted his teaching, says Zarathustra, but he was immature to renounce it: „Aber ungerieft war er noch. Unreif liebt der Jüngling und unreif hasst er auch Mensch und Erde“ (I „Vom freien Tode“, *KGW* VI 1, 91: 15, 16), or: “But he was not yet mature. Immature is the love of the youth, and immature his hatred of man and earth” (I “On Free Death” 185, all italics mine). The right kind of death, the one that Zarathustra would choose for himself, would be that of the mature, ripe, round sun: „In eurem Sterben soll noch euer Geist und eure Tugend glühn, gleich einem Abendroth um die Erde... Also will ich selber sterben, dass ihr Freunde um meinetwillen die Erde mehr liebt; und zur Erde will ich wieder werden, dass ich in Der Ruhe habe, die mich gebar“ (I „Vom freien Tode“, *KGW* VI 1, 91: 25, 26, 28 – 30), or: “In your dying, your spirit and virtue should still glow like a *sunset* around the earth.... Thus I want to die myself that you, my friends, may love the earth more for my sake; and to earth I want to return that I may find rest in her who gave birth to me” (I “On Free Death” 185, 186, all italics mine). In dying, however, Zarathustra wants to bequeath his solar heritage to his disciples, but of the two – death and legacy – he decides only on the latter, while ironically vouchsafing his life: „Wahrlich, ein Ziel hatte Zarathustra, er warf seinen *Ball*: nun seid ihr Freunde meines Zieles Erbe, euch werfe ich den goldenen *Ball* zu. Lieber als Alles sehe ich euch, meine Freunde, den goldenen *Ball* werfen! Und so verziehe ich noch ein Wenig auf *Erden*: verzeiht es mir!“ (I „Vom freien Tode“, *KGW* VI 1, 91: 31 – 33; 92: 1 – 3), or: “Verily, Zarathustra had a goal; he threw his *ball*: now you, my friends, are the heirs of my goal; to you I throw my golden *ball*. More than anything, I like to see you, my friends, throwing the golden *ball*. And so I still linger on the *earth*: forgive me for that” (I “On Free Death” 186, all italics mine).

In this chapter Nietzsche provides five major circular images of eternal recurrence: 1) the hollow nut („die hohlste Nuss“); 2) the sour apple („[s]aure Äpfel“); 3) the sunset („Abendroth“); 4) the golden ball („den goldenen Ball“); and 5) the earth suggested by the ball image. The first three and the fifth are natural, the fourth cultural, but all of them are *spherical* (including the sunset, as derived from the sun), a type of circularity. The first two – the nut being hollow, empty of existence, and the sour apple being as though bitter towards life – express *negativity*; the last three – the sunset, full of light and splendour, and the golden ball, as a metaphor both for the sun, full of gold, and the earth full of productive soil and living water, both signifying the plenitude of life – *positivity*. The common aspect of the cultural symbol – the golden ball possessing the golden characteristic of the sun, and the natural symbols – the sunset as a derivative of the sun and the earth whose eternal companion is the sunset, as all reflecting a positive attitude towards existence, is used to counteract the negative life perspective of the first two circular images – the nut and the apple with empty or bitter content, respectively. Although these failed fruits or foods are capable of being taken into the self, they are no nourishment for the healthy will.

Nietzsche relates his most conspicuous, main symbol – the ball – to Zarathustra’s *goal*. From “The Convalescent” we learn that Zarathustra is the teacher of eternal return and that his destiny, therefore, is to teach his doctrine of life affirmation. Given that Nietzsche uses the ball to refer to the goal, he undoubtedly associates the circular image directly with the eternal recurrence. Generally, the (spherical) roundness of the circular images symbolises wholeness, or the moment, and their circular continuity, endlessness, or the sequence of eternal return. The positive symbol(s) – the *ball* (and sunset), in particular, represent(s) the return of (same or different) meaningfulness in existence, while the negative circular images (the hollow nut and the sour apples) represent the eternal return of (same) meaninglessness.

There are minor circular images implicit in several words, such as „...der *Vollbringende*,... *umringt*...“ (I „Vom freien Tode“, *KGW* VI 1, 89: 15), or “...consummates... surrounded...” (I “On Free Death” 183, 184), „*ungereift*... *Unreif* ... *unreif*“ (I „Vom freien Tode“, *KGW* VI 1, 91: 15, 16), or “not yet mature. Immature... immature...” (I “On Free Death” 185, all italics mine) that support Nietzsche’s artistic expression of eternal recurrence by way of circular symbols, in particular, the ball symbol. The three minor circular images are imparted by the word-parts *voll* (full as if spherically circular), *ring*, and *reif* (also meaning *round* in German), or full, ring, and ripe, respectively. The first speaks of genuine life’s fullness (*voll*); the second, of the others’ support for one dying – as that offered, though to itself, by the will’s self-sufficiency and friendship, marriage, love (*ring*) in “On Love of the Neighbor”; the third, of Jesus’ spirit’s wishful maturity and ripeness (*reif*). All of these contribute to the affirmativeness of the ball imagery employed in relation to the goal – the doctrine of affirmation. The ball and the goal merge together as though in a wishful dying scene.

Overful of circular symbols, Zarathustra wants to pass the round ball of his goal – his main circular symbol in this context, representing his genuine mode of living – on to his disciples so as to continue living through those who too will live and die at the right time, i.e., will have genuine existence. Nietzsche’s play on the words ball and earth (*Ball* and *Erde*), when Zarathustra says he still wants to linger awhile on the *round* earth to see his disciples throw the golden *ball* to others, i.e., to pass on his teaching, confirms that Zarathustra’s authentic living consists in making his life complete – *round* and perfect, as by gathering every accident of the past into one present as though round whole for the sake of human future (II “On Redemption” 251). Eternal life (as Zarathustra’s ideas carried on by his disciples) and existential authenticity

(as in this one only eternal life that he has) are thus linked together by the ball symbol. Such is the meaning of the golden ball, the symbol of eternal recurrence and continuation of life.

### 7. The Ring in “On the Virtuous”

In “On the Virtuous”, Nietzsche is concerned with the topic of virtue and the lexicology of the virtuous, who only soil their souls with words, as from outside their selves: „Denn diess ist eure Wahrheit: ihr seid *zu reinlich* fuer den Schmutz der Worte: Rache, Strafe, Lohn, Vergeltung. Ihr liebt eure Tugend, wie die Mutter ihr Kind; aber wann hörte man, dass eine Mutter bezahlt sein wollte für ihre Liebe?“ (II „Von den Tugendhaften“, *KGW* VI 1, 117: 1 – 4), or: “For this is your truth: you are too *pure* for the filth of the words: revenge, punishment, reward, retribution. You love your virtue as a mother her child; but when has a mother ever wished to be paid for her love?” (II “On the Virtuous” 206). In reality, however, all of these words belong to the so-called virtuous self and one should be tired of them, for they know little of what is good and evil and do not make the self more than it is – more than the *ring* it is: „Es ist euer liebstes Selbst, eure Tugend. Des *Ringes* Durst ist in euch: sich selber wieder zu erreichen, dazu ringt und dreht sich jeder Ring... Dass eure Tugend euer Selbst sei und nicht ein Fremdes, eine Haut, eine Bemäntelung: das ist die Wahrheit aus dem Grunde eurer Seele, ihr Tugendhaften! —“ (II „Von den Tugendhaften“, *KGW* VI 1, 117: 5 – 7, 14 – 16), or: “Your virtue is what is dearest to you. The thirst of the *ring* lives in you: every ring strives and turns to reach itself again.... That your virtue is your self and not something foreign, a skin, a cloak, that is the truth from the foundation of your souls, you who are virtuous” (II “On the Virtuous” 206, all italics mine).

As is clear, Nietzsche resumes emphasising the will’s self-sufficiency and self-containment (discussed in regards to the self-propelled wheel and the ring symbols above) by

relating it to the topic of virtue. The circular relation of the self to itself is very clearly expressed through the image of *thirst*: the self's will wills itself as if in a *ring*. This formula of the will incorporates any particular action of the will into the will itself. The will does not discover anything more than it has put – into itself. The holistic roundness or completeness of the ring-like will thirstily willing, as if in a ring, what it has created expresses the moment of eternal recurrence, while the ring-like continuous act of willing it back into itself represents the sequence of time. The will willing the return of meaningful (created) virtues back into their origin – the self – is shown to counter the return of meaningless existence, such as that which allowed those to be created and placed beyond the self, within the realm of said existence. Just as the ring strives to reach itself again, so also the self's will wills itself by willing the return to its port of origin of whatever it has brought into being; for example, when it seeks reward for the deeds it has done.

Besides communicating the eternal recurrence, the ring symbol itself comes to recur in the text. In “On Love of the Neighbor” the ring symbol is used in relation to creative friendship; in “On Free Death” it resounds as a word-part of “*umringt*” in reference to those supportive of consummate life; in the passage at hand it unfolds as the thirsty desire for itself in affirmation of the virtues the will has unknowingly fashioned for itself. Thus the ring symbol moves from the self's friendship to support of its life's plenitude to affirmation of the self as the creator of virtues. The continuous movement of the ring symbol, its capacity to accrue new meanings in the narrative, expresses the sequence of eternal recurrence through repetitive invocation, while its self-sufficiency as a symbol to signify the eternal return (both sequentially and momentarily) in the context manifests itself as the moment of eternal recurrence. Thus the return of the ring symbol representing the eternal recurrence on the narrative level includes the ring symbol

indicating the eternal return on the contextual level – the literary ring kind of rings – expressing a double (even triple) affirmation of existence, as in the case of the recurrence of the wheel symbol discussed above.<sup>118</sup>

The ring symbol teaches us that we cannot be as virtuous and just as we deem ourselves to be about life: „Und wenn sie sagen ‚ich bin gerecht,‘ so klingt es immer gleich wie: ‚ich bin gerächt!‘ “ (II „Von den Tugendhaften“, *KGW* VI 1, 118: 8, 9), or: “And when they say, ‘I am just,’ it always sounds like ‘I am just – revenged’ ” (II “On the Virtuous” 207). All we can do is affirm it as a ring, by having just one genuine self-sufficient virtue – the virtue of virtues – one that strives towards itself, one that *wills* itself, just as the ring wills itself when it thirsts and turns to reach itself again. The ring, then, is the symbol of the virtuous self’s will willing itself by willing the eternal recurrence of its own virtues. Just as the (self-)same wave [„die selbe Welle“] that has carried the toys off to the depths from the children playing by the sea “shall bring them new toys and shower new colorful shells before them” (II “On the Virtuous” 208) [„soll ihnen neue Spielwerke bringen und neue bunte Muscheln vor sie hin ausschütten“ (II „Von den Tugendhaften“, *KGW* VI 1, 119: 17, 18)], the thirst of the ring that has taken away the virtuous words from the self will bring it new virtues and new colourful shells – those meaningful differences which the eternal return of the moment willingly inaugurates.

### **8. The Circle in “On the Vision and the Riddle”**

In “On the Vision and the Riddle” 2, Zarathustra, as we already know, discusses the eternal recurrence with the dwarf. Zarathustra chides the dwarf for viewing time as though from the outside, for a human being always lives in the *moment*.<sup>119</sup> Time is not a circle but can be experienced as the eternal recurrence of the same, i.e., as a combination of the holistic moment

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<sup>118</sup> See Reason 3 on the triple affirmation of existence in Chapter 5, pp. 158 – 160.

<sup>119</sup> That is, the dwarf takes an objective, rational stance towards time.



(the Gateway) and sequential time (the two lanes of eternity). “The distinction between continuity in eternity (sequential time) and the holistic moment (‘Augenblick’) is stated here explicitly for the first time, without resort to philosophical abstractions” (Jappinen 240). The reconciliation of two timeframes, however, takes place in “At Noon” of Part IV, when Zarathustra lapses into the eternal moment while at the same time remaining half conscious of temporal continuity.

The dwarf scene has been dwelt upon extensively in Chapter 2 and needs no reiteration here. Three major points, however, may be called to mind: 1) time is neither a line (as per Zarathustra’s presentation) nor a circle (as according to the dwarf), something that Jappinen does not discuss in her research; 2) the seemingly deductive argument following the above dialogue in the vision-riddle chapter has been disproved in favour of the existential argument; and 3) the eternal return should be understood as the return of the moment. Yet the dwarf’s imagery of time as a *circle* has not been discussed from a poetic, symbolic perspective. So one question which remains is why Nietzsche employs the image of the circle [*Kreis*] for the eternal recurrence if, according to Zarathustra, time is not a circle.<sup>120</sup>

First, it should be mentioned that the concealed *lane* image in GS 233 gets exposed through the imagery of the two lanes of eternity – two ordinary time spheres, past and future, eternally contradicting each other at the present moment. Second, it should be borne in mind that language, according to Nietzsche, is highly metaphorical in nature. Considering these two observations together, we are led to infer that the lane image for time is merely a symbolic representation Zarathustra draws upon to portray his doctrine. In this vein, no objection can be made to the dwarfian presentation of time as a circle, since it is likewise, possibly, even more

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<sup>120</sup> This still needs to be considered within a literary, symbolic context to differentiate between Zarathustra’s circle and the dwarf’s circle.

poetically intensive than the Zarathustran presentation of time as a lane. Surely, Zarathustra rejects the cosmological implications of the dwarfish perspective, as it allows no experience of the tension in the moment, but to reject the poetic circle of time would be a travesty to Zarathustra's poetical approach to existence. After all, Zarathustra, too, is a poet.

In what way, then, is the circle of time a poetic image? It suffices the dwarf to say that when the time of being runs out it will repeat itself in exactly the same manner, drawing along with itself the repetition of all events, without having to bring in any poetic analogies, such as that created by the circle. The following three assumptions about the circle are compelled to work poetically here: 1) there are a finite number of points on the circle – a finite number of footsteps;<sup>121</sup> 2) the circle continues and reaches itself again – it walks and gets home (one of the two characteristics of the circle); 3) its return creates the sense of the repetition of the same – it returns to where it left, as one would walk round the circular earth and come back to the same spot. None of this, of course, is true, unless, possibly, one could make a trip around the world. The circle never continues or reaches anything, to say nothing of return, and there are an infinite number of points on the circle, as the point occupies no space and takes no time. The first assumption refers to the past and the future; the second, to the original past which becomes present again; the third, to the time as measured, say, by a (circular) clock. What the dwarfish view of time leaves out of the scope is the moment that defies all empirical characteristics, such as attributed by the empirical sciences: space, time, number, colour, and smell. What, however, Zarathustra borrows of the dwarf's poetic, though erroneous, perspective of time are the second and third assumptions, which he turns into the following two observations about the circle: 1) the continuity of the circle represents the endless sequence of eternity, on which, for example, Zarathustra explicitly draws in "On the Virtuous" by speaking of the thirst of the will's ring

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<sup>121</sup> A point here is regarded as measurable.

striving and reaching itself again; and 2) to imagine vividly how the circle follows its own continuity and ends up where it began creates the sense of repetition. But this implies the plausibility of the dwarf's first assumption: the finitude of the circle, or the finite amount of time and events, something that Zarathustra avoids in his representation of time by way of circular images when he introduces/enters the gateway as the return of the *moment*, while preserving the second and the third assumptions. The introduction of the moment compels him to view the circle as exhibiting another characteristic besides continuity: *roundness*, which in turn suggests wholeness; and wholeness, the holistic moment. The moment takes asunder the rational foundation of dwarfish time, but, on the other hand, it furthers the intensification of the poetic image of the circle, making it complete. Although roundness is implicit in the dwarf's circle image, it does not merge with the circle's continuity, as it does in Zarathustra's circular images preceding and following the dwarf scene. The reason of the merger, I believe, lies in the *irrational* (versus rational or calculated) response to time (and being) as a circle. All poetic images, as opposed to, for example, a mathematical equation like  $1+1=2$ , are based on *association*, following no logical reasoning and displaying no coherence between the thing or phenomenon (e.g., eternal recurrence) that is imagined and the thing or phenomenon (e.g., the circle) that is called upon to imagine. If Zarathustra follows the rational implications of time being a circle, then he will become subsumed by the dwarf, as well as by the serpent into which the dwarf transforms as he disappears, as in Loeb's reading. If Zarathustra follows the irrational implications of time being a circle, i.e., the circle being merely a poetic image of time, then he becomes himself, who he is, not the dwarf, not the serpent. In order to choose the latter, he must therefore respond irrationally both to the dwarf and the serpent. Zarathustra's anger with the dwarf is of an irrational origin. The protagonist (Zarathustra) knows that the dwarf is mistaken

about time, but he cannot help responding angrily to the dwarf's ignorance. One's folly always irritates another's wisdom. Then wisdom may turn wild. And Zarathustra does get *angry*, which spurs him to enforce the existential intensity of the moment upon the dwarf, saying that the latter (together with his folly) will recur eternally, which the small man cannot bear to endure. One has to be tall and stately for that – one reason for the ugly dwarf to metamorphose into an exquisite, elegant snake, which will represent the merger of the moment and the sequence of eternal recurrence, as does Zarathustra's own serpent, for example, in "Zarathustra's Prologue". The dwarfish serpent, standing for the circle of time, seeks to *outcircle* Zarathustra by choking the young shepherd that Zarathustra is. Let us see if it succeeds.

### 9. The Snake in "On the Vision and the Riddle"

In "On the Vision and the Riddle" 2, after relating his conversation with the dwarf, Zarathustra narrates the shepherd scene: the young shepherd (Zarathustra) helplessly fights the snake that has bitten fast into his throat but then triumphantly bites the snake's head off and spits it out; as a result, he transforms into a laughing Overhuman. Let us follow it through.

Einen jungen Hirten sah ich, sich windend, würgend, zuckend, verzerrten Antlitzes, dem eine schwarze schwere *Schlange* aus dem Munde hieng. Sah ich je so viel Ekel und bleiches Grauen auf Einem Antlitze? Er hatte wohl geschlafen? Da kroch ihm die Schlange in den Schlund — da biss sie sich fest. Meine Hand riss die Schlange und riss: — umsonst! sie riss die Schlange nicht aus dem Schlunde. Da schrie es aus mir: ‚Beiss zu! Beiss zu! Den Kopf ab! Beiss zu!‘ — so schrie es aus mir, mein Grauen, mein Hass, mein Ekel, mein Erbarmen, all mein Gutes und Schlimmes schrie mit Einem Schrei aus mir. — (III „Vom Gesicht und Räthsel“ 2, *KGW* VI 1, 197: 23 – 33; 198: 1, 2, italics mine),

or:

A young shepherd I saw, writhing, gagging, in spasms, his face distorted, and a heavy black *snake* hung out of his mouth. Had I ever seen so much nausea and pale dread on one face? He seemed to have been asleep when the snake crawled into his throat, and there bit itself fast. My hand tore at the snake and tore in vain; it did not tear the snake out of his throat. Then it cried out of me: 'Bite! Bite its head off! Bite!' Thus it cried out

of me – my dread, my hatred, my nausea, my pity, all that is good and wicked in me cried out of me with a single cry (III “On the Vision and the Riddle” 2: 271, italics mine).

There are the following facts of the matter: 1) in terms of the snake’s action and intent, it has bitten into the shepherd’s throat to choke him; 2) in terms of the shepherd’s physical inability, he cannot swallow it as he is choking on it; 3) in terms of the shepherd’s options, he can only either choke on the snake or pull it out, the latter being a rational, calculated action which proves impossible, since, when the shepherd tries to do so, he fails; or bite its head off as advised, thereby performing an irrational physical action, even though *advised* to do so: his mouth is attacked by the snake, and it is his mouth that reacts to protect itself from the snake without the help of the hands and without the advice from *another*; the counsel the shepherd receives coming out of the depth of his own self, which is attested to by Zarathustra’s later identification with the shepherd; 4) in terms of his actual choice, he does the latter.

Here we can speak about Zarathustra’s unconscious countering of the vengeful small human being who seeks to impose the rationality of circular time in the form of an ugly snake that has bitten into his throat. The issue of this situation should not be centred around the fact of biting off the snake’s head and spitting it away, thus conquering the eternal recurrence, as the scholarly consensus holds (e.g., Loeb), but about *how* it is done – about the agent or agency and its type, whether it is conscious or unconscious. Let me call it the hands or mouth argument, focusing on both parts of it. 1) The use of the hands: the young shepherd’s (or Zarathustra’s) rational, calculated act (as it pertains to human animals) of using his hands to pull the snake out of his mouth simply fails; Zarathustra’s hands that pull the snake out of the shepherd’s mouth are identified with those of the shepherd. 2) The use of the mouth: seemingly, the act of biting the snake’s head off is first consciously advised, then unconsciously performed. Indeed, it is not even vice versa because the conscious advice, paradoxically, is that of the irrational body. The

irrational action of the young shepherd's (or Zarathustra's) body is quicker, stronger and more reliable than his rational thought of using his hands to tear the snake out of his mouth. Bite! Bite off that snake's head! – everything broke out of him. This cry from within, from the bottom of one's heart is not the cry of the mind, but of the body. "The body is a great reason", says Zarathustra elsewhere (I "On the Despisers of the Body" 146). The young shepherd, Zarathustra, responds as he can:

— Der Hirt aber biss, wie mein Schrei ihm rieth; er biss mit gutem Bisse! Weit weg spie er den Kopf der *Schlange* —: und sprang empor. — Nicht mehr Hirt, nicht mehr Mensch, — ein Verwandelter, ein Umleuchteter, welcher *lachte*! Niemals noch auf Erden lachte je ein Mensch, wie *er* lachte! Oh meine Brüder, ich hörte ein Lachen, das keines Menschen Lachen war, — (III „Vom Gesicht und Räthsel“ 2, *KGW* VI 1, 198: 14 – 21, *Schlange* – italics mine),

or: "The shepherd, however, bit as my cry counseled him; he bit with a good bite. Far away he spewed the head of the *snake* – and he jumped up. No longer shepherd, no longer human – one changed, radiant, *laughing*! Never yet on earth has a human being laughed as he laughed! O my brothers, I heard a laughter that was no human laughter" (III "On the Vision and the Riddle" 2: 272, *snake* – italics mine). Laughter is an irrational response of the body. It can hardly be controlled – another piece of evidence for the hands or mouth argument.

An emotional, creative response subverts all rational thinking. The rationalistic serpent of eternity has no chance but be defeated: he who comes with a serpent perishes of the serpent. Zarathustra has *outcircled* the dwarf. The reality (of time) so elegantly conceived, as by the exquisite serpent, has warped within his poetic imagination. The circle that the snake represents has *melted* in Zarathustra's mouth, metamorphosing into the aesthetic circle of eternal recurrence; the *merger* of roundness (moment) and continuity (sequence) represents the eternal return of meaningful differences (continuity) inaugurated by the return of the holistic *moment* (sameness) countering the eternal return of the same meaninglessness of a finite number of

differences (purporting to eradicate human meaning) instituted originally by the dwarfish view of time as itself a circle, as well as the return of the same meaninglessness of existence as such – the laughing Overhuman’s position (where the human’s would mean the opposite of it all).

Does this all imply that Zarathustra’s response to the meaningless or petty existence is irrational? Precisely so. For it is the most creative one. The unconscious aesthetic response to existence is the greatest reason of the human body. The climax of the work, to wit, transpires at the symbolic hour of the Great Noon (though he relates this his story to the sailors in broad nighttime – see section 7 of Chapter 7) representing the union of reason and feeling: the greatest reason – Noon – of the irrational body – Midnight. The merger of the two, noon and midnight, is proclaimed at the celebration of eternal recurrence in “The Drunken Song” of Part IV, when the world for Zarathustra has become round and perfect, as it has in “At Noon”.

Thus, upon transforming the dwarfish temporal circle (or serpent) into a poetic circle of time, Zarathustra is now at liberty to apply the circle image to his idea of eternal recurrence.<sup>122</sup> Up to this point, he has been doing so unconsciously. Now he will proceed to employ circular symbols consciously. Rather, it is more a matter of not having discussed the relation of the circle to time previously; neither is it a matter of actually having discussed, in the strictest sense of this word, this issue in “On the Vision and the Riddle”. The relation is as hidden as it can be. After all, it is not a riddle-in-vain. Does a peek through the circle or gateway make the riddle more valuable? Let us continue examining how the circular symbols communicate the eternal recurrence.

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<sup>122</sup> Cf. G *Kreis* and *Schlange*, L *circulus* and *serpēns* (orig. prp. of *serpere* to creep, crawl), Gk *kyklos* and *hérpēs*. G *Schlange* is akin to E *sling*, ME *slyngen* < ON *slyngva* to sling, fling, c. OE *slingan* to wind, twist. L *circulus* and *serpēns* make sufficient assonance akin to E *circle* and *serpent*. Etymology from *The Random House Webster’s Unabridged Dictionary* 3.0.

## 10. The Belts in “Upon the Mount of Olives”

In “Upon the Mount of Olives”, Zarathustra speaks of his necessity to *mask* himself for safety purposes: „Und *muss* ich mich nicht *verbergen*, gleich Einem, der Gold verschluckt hat, — dass man mir nicht die Seele aufschlitze?“ (III „Auf dem Oelberge“, *KGW* VI 1, 216: 20 – 22, *verbergen* – italics mine), or: “And *must* I not conceal myself like one who has swallowed gold, lest they slit open my soul?” (III “Upon the Mount of Olives” 286). He then explains how he manages to conceal himself: „*Muss* ich nicht Stelzen tragen, dass sie meine langen Beine *übersehen*, – alle diese Neidbolde und Leidholde, die um mich sind?... wie *könnte* ihr Neid mein Glück ertragen! So zeige ich ihnen nur das Eis und den Winter auf meinen Gipfeln – und *nicht*, dass mein Berg noch alle *Sonnengürtel* um sich schlingt!“ (III „Auf dem Oelberge“, *KGW* VI 1, 216: 23 – 25, 27 – 31), or: “*Must* I not walk on stilts that they overlook my long legs – all these grudge-joys and drudge-boys who surround me?... how *could* their grudge endure my happiness? Hence I show them only the ice and the winter of my peaks – and not that my mountain still winds all the *belts* of the sun round itself” (III “Upon the Mount of Olives” 286, *Sonnengürtel* and *belts* – italics mine). As a result of his masking devices, people develop a one-sided view of his existence: „Sie hören nur meine Winter-Stürme pfeifen: und *nicht*, dass ich auch über warme Meere fahre, gleich sehnsüchtigen, schweren, heissen Südwinden“ (III „Auf dem Oelberge“, *KGW* VI 1, 216: 32 – 34), or: “They hear only my winter winds whistling – and not that I also cross warm seas, like longing, heavy, hot south winds” (III “Upon the Mount of Olives” 286). And, as is customary with those who think they know, the people that surround Zarathustra begin to form an opinion of him which, as is his wont, he absorbs like a sponge: „Sie erbarmen sich noch meiner Unfälle und Zufälle: — aber *mein* Wort heisst: ‚lasst den Zufall zu mir kommen: unschuldig ist er, wie ein Kindlein!‘ “ (III „Auf dem Oelberge“, *KGW* VI 1, 217: 1 – 3), or:



“They still have pity on my accidents; but *my* word says, ‘Let accidents come to me, they are innocent as little children’ ” (III “Upon the Mount of Olives” 286, 287).

At the outset Zarathustra compares himself to the one who has swallowed gold, using the *gold* image in conjunction with the idea of concealment (*verbergen*). Through Nietzsche’s play on *Berg* (mountain) and *verbergen* (conceal) that occurs later in the text, coupled with the imagery of the *height* (a high mountain and the stilts image as concealing Zarathustra’s height), the *gold* image is related to the *mountain* metaphor so that the high mountain comes to be full of gold, which it harbours and conceals from the view of those who are low. Zarathustra indicates that he is only visible from a distance by showing only the ice and winter on the peak of his mountain, i.e., that he is cold and distant, and not that his mountain winds the *belts* of the sun (*Sonnengürtel*) round itself, i.e., that he is warm and hot, or approachable. In this way, his mountain receives hot golden solar belts. The image of heat is further supported by the warm seas and the hot south winds in contradistinction to the cold winter winds, the former concealed as opposed to the latter which are displayed. The *hot golden solar belts* image express the will’s passion, nobleness, power, and eternal return, respectively. The *belt* is a circular image of eternal recurrence by way of its continuity expressing endlessness, and its roundness, the moment. Besides possessing formal characteristics that warrant relating the belt image to Nietzsche’s *Grundgedanke*, it acquires contextual support for functioning as a circular symbol of the doctrine. For as soon as Zarathustra has gone through his various masking images, he speaks of fragmented accidents that his passionate, noble (life-affirming) will’s power is capable of bringing into one circular, purposeful whole. It is noteworthy that the idea of eternal recurrence is paradoxically concealed through this vivid, glaring symbol, as this idea is not for everyone, but only for those who can exercise their creative life-enhancing imagination and accordingly

respond to the return of meaningless existence represented by those who are incomplete, with a one-sided perspective on life.<sup>123</sup> The plurality of the belts, each with its own continuity, only reinforces the return of meaningful differences inaugurated by the return of the moment symbolised by the holistic roundness of the belt image.

What is remarkable about the mountain and the belt imagery is that the gold mountain expresses the will to power, while the belts of the sun indicate the eternal recurrence. The *mountain* winding the *belts* of the sun round itself as those proceeding from the mountain itself communicates the manifestation of the will to power as the eternal recurrence of the same, according to Heidegger's interpretation of the two doctrines expressing one thought (see section 3 of Chapter 1); the combination of the former, *natural* image with the latter, *cultural* one suggests the capacity of the eternal recurrence (and the will to power) as a cultural phenomenon (the belts) that transforms or directs the natural forces (the mountain), as in the New Testament where Jesus talks about the spirit moving mountains. Overall, in consonance with the masking principle of the vision-riddle chapter discussed above, this circular imagery is intended to conceal the idea of eternal recurrence while at the same time revealing it through creative interpretation.

### **11. The Apple in “On the Three Evils”**

In “On the Three Evils”, Zarathustra, as observed earlier, offers the missing premise, that the world is finite, for the deductive cosmological argument for the eternal recurrence, which has been previously disproved, in Chapter 2, in favour of the existential temporal one. He weighed the world one morning and found it finite: „,wo Kraft ist, wird auch die *Zahl* Meisterin: die hat mehr Kraft’ “ (III „Von den drei Bösen“ 1, *KGW* VI 1, 231: 18, 19), or: “ ‘Wherever there is

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<sup>123</sup> It takes originality for one to see what one does not see but what stares one in the face. See my discussion of Nietzsche on originality in Chapter 3, pp. 85 – 87.

force, *number* will become mistress: she has more force' ” (III “On the Three Evils” 1: 299). In the next paragraph Nietzsche expresses the world’s finitude through the image of an *apple*, whole and as if circular: „Wie sicher schaute mein Traum auf diese endliche Welt, nicht neugierig, nicht altgierig, nicht fürchtend, nicht bittend: — — als ob ein voller *Apfel* sich meiner Hand böte, ein reifer *Goldapfel*, mit kühl-sanfter samtener Haut: — so bot sich mir die Welt: —“ (III „Von den drei Bösen“ 1, *KGW* VI 1, 231: 20 – 24), or: “How surely my dream looked upon this finite world, not inquisitively, not acquisitively, not afraid, not begging, as if a full *apple* offered itself to my hand, a ripe golden *apple* with cool, soft, velvet skin, thus the world offered itself to me...” (III “On the Three Evils” 1: 299, all italics mine). He goes on to re-evaluate the three most evil, cursed things: sex, lust to rule, and selfishness (*ibid.* 300 – 303), finding the first necessary for the joys of creation and procreation; the second, for the enhancement of life; the third, as a stimulus for all. Nietzsche’s conceptual language, including such abstractions as number and force in his first presentation of the world, yields drastically to his figural circumlocution about what in the long run comes to be „ein menschlich gutes Ding... die Welt, der man so Böses nachredet!“ (III „Von den drei Bösen“ 1, *KGW* VI 1, 232: 9, 10), or “a humanly good thing[,] the world..., though one speaks so much evil of it” (III “On the Three Evils” 1: 299). Nietzsche’s comparison of the world to a full golden apple is not incidental. There are four contextual characteristics – roundness, fulness, ripeness, and gold colour, pertaining to this fruit. Both roundness and ripeness suggest circularity (the archaic German *reif* means circle – see also subsection 6); fulness, wholeness; and gold colour, the will to power (gold refers to the sun symbolising will to power – see my discussion of Parkes on the sun image in section 6 of Chapter 4 above). The imagerial representation of the world as an apple warrants an existential perspective of the world not as finite, as expressed in cosmological terms, but as

whole, or complete – as humanly experienced. The roundness of the apple expresses the moment of eternal recurrence, while its circular continuity – “its cool, soft, velvet skin” – signifies the sequence of time; the recurrence of the moment’s sameness inaugurating that of the same sequence’s differences within the world being complete. The fruit’s valuable gold content symbolises the eternally recurring will to power, much like the mountain and the belt image analysed above. Another eye-catching property of the apple is its self-containment, like that of the self’s will symbolised by the *lake* image in GS 285 and the self-propelled *wheel* symbol of eternal recurrence in “On the Three Metamorphoses”, “On the Way of the Creator”, and “On Love of the Neighbor”.

Together these features allow us to speak of the apple as a circular symbol of complete eternally recurring existence. Now the three evils can be viewed in a different light. The fulness of the apple – to wit, a *natural* symbol, one that is called upon to naturalise what otherwise has been cursed by anti-natural Christianity (represented by the counterproductive sour apple from “On Free Death”, see subsection 6, “The Ball in ‘On Free Death’ ” above) – symbolises the multiplication of existence through sex, its golden content, the enhancement of life (the will to power) through the lust to rule, and its circularity, the furthering of (self-)meaningful differences through selfishness. It may therefore be acknowledged that Nietzsche’s apple symbol not only has a strong associative relation with his abysmal thought, but also extends to other important, life-pertinent questions. One only needs to make proper connections between the hidden features of the circular symbol and the eternal recurrence, even when there is no overt evidence of the latter in the context, but only latent, and that in the circular image itself, which has to be teased out, and then bring the findings to bear upon the philosophical issues raised in the text. Nietzsche’s well-crafted circular symbol – the ripe golden round apple, an edible fruit, sweet and

mellow, the Edenic object of attraction and seduction, suggesting the fruitfulness of the desired world, is intended, then, to invoke his fundamental ideas, while intensifying their experience and thereby affirming existence in its plenitude and completeness.

## 12. The Circles in “On Old and New Tablets”

In “On Old and New Tablets” 19, Zarathustra speaks of the mystical function of the *circle*: it protects him from the undesirable ones: „Ich schliesse *Kreise* um mich und heilige Grenzen; immer Wenigere steigen mit mir auf immer höhere Berge, — ich baue ein Gebirge aus immer heiligeren Bergen. — Wohin ihr aber auch mit mir steigen mögt, oh meine Brüder: seht zu, dass nicht ein *Schmarotzer* mit euch steige!“ (III „Von alten und neuen Tafeln“ 19, *KGW* VI 1, 256: 24 – 26), or: “I draw *circles* around me and sacred boundaries; fewer and fewer men climb with me on ever higher mountains: I am building a mountain range out of ever more sacred mountains. But wherever you may climb with me, O my brothers, see to it that no *parasite* climbs with you” (III “On Old and New Tablets” 19: 320; *Kreise* and *circles* – italics mine). These parasites, weak and unproductive by nature, look for small weak spots in those who are strong and fruitful: „Schmarotzer: ... *das* ist seine Kunst, dass er steigende Seelen erräth, wo sie müde sind: in euren Gram und Unmuth, in eure zarte Scham baut er sein ekles Nest. Wo der Starke schwach, der Edle allzumild ist, — dahinein baut er sein ekles Nest: der Schmarotzer wohnt, wo der Grosse kleine wunde Winkel hat“ (III „Von alten und neuen Tafeln“ 19, *KGW* VI 1, 256: 29; 257: 3 – 8), or: “Parasites:... this is their art, that they find where climbing souls are weary; in your grief and discouragement, in your tender parts, they build their nauseating nests. Where the strong are weak and the noble all-too-soft – there they build their nauseating nests: the parasites live where the great have little secret sores” (III “On Old and New Tablets” 19: 320). Thus the small men seek to bring all others down to their level.

As is clear, the image of the circle serves Zarathustra as protection against the small human beings, the parasites; it separates wheat from weed, the Overhuman from the herd. But this is the working of the eternal recurrence. It splits humanity in two, as according to Loeb (see Chapter 3, pp. 105 – 107). However, the highest soul cannot help being the source for the lowest ones: „...wer aber höchster Art ist, der ernährt die meisten Schmarotzer. Die Seele nämlich, welche die längste Leiter hat und am tiefsten hinunter kann: wie sollten nicht an der die meisten Schmarotzer sitzen? —“ (III „Von alten und neuen Tafeln“ 19, *KGW* VI 1, 257: 10 – 14), or: “...whoever is of the highest species will nourish the most parasites. For the soul that has the longest ladder and reaches down deepest – how should the most parasites not sit on that?” (III “On Old and New Tablets” 19: 320, 321). For it must reach downward to hold a firm footing in suffering and destruction so it can reach upward in joy and creativity. Nietzsche goes on to describe the kind of soul that encompasses what seem to be opposites: straight paths and wanderings, joy and sorrow, purpose and chance, being and becoming, departure and arrival, force and counterforce, ebb and flow:

— die umfänglichste Seele, welche am weitesten in sich laufen und irren und schweifen kann; die nothwendigste, welche sich aus Lust in den Zufall stürzt: — die seiende Seele, welche in’s Werden taucht; die habende, welche in’s Wollen und Verlangen *will*: — die sich selber fliehende, die sich selber im weitesten *Kreise* einholt;... — die sich selber liebendste, in der alle Dinge ihr Strömen und Wiederströmen und Ebbe und Fluth haben: — oh wie sollte *die höchste Seele* nicht die schlimmsten Schmarotzer haben? (III „Von alten und neuen Tafeln“ 19, *KGW* VI 1, 257: 15 – 21, 23 – 26),

or:

The most comprehensive soul, which can run and stray and roam farthest within itself; the most necessary soul, which out of sheer joy plunges itself into chance; the soul which, having being, dives into becoming; the soul which *has*, but *wants* to want and will; the soul which flees itself and catches up with itself in the widest *circle*;... the soul which loves itself most, in which all things have their sweep and countersweep and ebb and flood – oh, how should the highest soul not have the worst parasites? (III “On Old and New Tablets” 19: 320, 321, *Kreise* and *circle* – italics mine.)

Through the self's ability to reconcile opposites the protective circle assumes the aspect of self-containment in the perspective of the soul catching up with itself in the *widest circle*, as with the eagle with the snake coiled around its neck flying around in *wide circles* (I "Zarathustra's Prologue" 10: 137) – the soul that wills and wills to will, i.e., the eternal recurrence of the same incorporated into the *will*. Obviously, the opposite of this type of soul – the parasitic, unproductive one – cannot will itself. In this sense, since the idea of eternal recurrence "is only announced as a possibility" that "depends on the will's being able to 'will backwards' – i.e., being able, on the one hand, to affirm in all truth both the past and the passage itself, and, on the other hand, to turn back into itself in order to affirm itself as willing the passage" (Haar 29) (that is, one must be able to will all things, past, present, and future, as well as to will one's own willing to will), there is a difference between their types of return. The return of the high soul, or the Overhuman, includes the return of the low soul, or the small man, the last man, the parasite, since by affirming (or willing the return of) one single moment of chaotic existence, the Overhuman wills (affirms) the whole of existence, including the parasitic existence of the last or small human. The comprehensive and necessary soul that the Overhuman is, then, returns meaningfully, whereas the parasitic one that the last small low human is recurs meaninglessly, with the former comprising and consuming the latter. The continuity of the circle expresses the sequence of eternal recurrence, which consists of a variety of differences, while its roundness indicates the moment holding the totality of existence. This is employed by the high soul to respond to the meaningless return of existence, while at the same time nourishing those who undermine existential meaningfulness. The latter's wickedness in itself is extremely important as it serves as a stimulus for the former's creative existence. Creators, then, must be exposed to all kinds of adversities in life, but they are called upon to come out unscathed, though "changed,

radiant, *laughing!*”, as the young shepherd, Zarathustra, who beheads the snake (III “On the Vision and the Riddle” 2: 272). The fire of divine creation, therefore, “consum[es] the cold and cunning wiles of the devil” (Nazirov *A Poet’s Gallery* 2011: “Cleanse the Spirit and your Eyes will Awake...” 79). The imagery of the circle as a protective tool has a selective function with creative implications in the vision-riddle chapter and repeats itself in “On Old and New Tablets”, a recapitulatory chapter in *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, as though to underline the importance of the circle image and its winning attitude prevailing over those who walk straight, rationalistic paths, while at the same time echoing back to the eagle with the snake wound around its neck flying in wide circles through the sky – a kind of primordial and prefiguring image of eternal return. The circle image, then, returns to itself through repetitive invocation, on the narrative level; its accrual of meaning (protection and self-containment reconciling the creative and parasitic types of existence) expresses the sequence of eternal recurrence, while the contextual self-sufficiency of the image (as referring to the doctrine by analogy and association), the moment. The invocation of the circle image, therefore, expresses the idea of eternal recurrence on both the narrative and the contextual level; the former includes the latter, while creating a sense of the circle of circles, or “the nuptial ring of rings” (III “The Seven Seals (Or: the Yes and Amen Song)” 1 – 7: 340 – 343), a preparatory jesture for the circle image in “The Convalescent”, a chapter on recovery after summoning the abysmal thought, and the forthcoming concluding chapter of Part III – “The Seven Seals (Or: the Yes and Amen Song)” – on reconciliation with eternity. While, simultaneously, the circle is a symbol of eternal recurrence, the repetition of the circle inaugurates the recurrence of the symbol, which becomes even more evident in the passage to be considered next.



### 13. The Circular Images in “The Convalescent”

In “The Convalescent”, Zarathustra comes to terms with the idea of eternal recurrence. Now that he has drawn circles around himself, he is fully equipped to summon and grapple with his *Grundgedanke*: „Du regst dich, dehnt dich, röchelst? Auf! Auf! Nicht röcheln — reden sollst du mir! Zarathustra ruft dich, der Gottlose! Ich, Zarathustra, der Fürsprecher des Lebens, der Fürsprecher des Leidens, der Fürsprecher des *Kreises* — dich rufe ich, meinen abgründlichsten Gedanken!“ (III „Der Genesende“ 1, *KGW* VI 1, 267: 1 – 5), or: “You are stirring, stretching, wheezing? Up! Up! You shall not wheeze but speak to me. Zarathustra, the godless, summons you! I, Zarathustra, the advocate of life, the advocate of suffering, the advocate of the *circle*; I summon you, my most abysmal thought!” (III “The Convalescent” 1: 327, 328, all italics mine). This passage expressly communicates the fact that Zarathustra is not only assisted by the circle, but that, also, he is its advocate. Zarathustra and the circle protect each other, guard each other against others. They are one: his circular will wills itself in circles. His will protects itself by willing itself: the self-willing of the will feeds itself on itself. The will’s self-sufficiency and mutual protectiveness come to the fore in this passage. This summoning scene with self-defensive implications is very important as it prepares Zarathustra for himself. After calling upon his abysmal thought, he falls as one dead, and when he comes to his senses his animals take care of him, keeping him company; the eagle brings him nourishment. But he „wollte lange nicht essen noch trinken... Endlich, nach sieben Tagen, richtete sich Zarathustra auf seinem Lager auf, nahm einen *Rosenapfel* in die Hand, roch daran und fand seinen Geruch lieblich“ (III „Der Genesende“ 2, *KGW* VI 1, 267: 14, 15, 23 – 25), or he “for a long time wanted neither food nor drink.... At last, after seven days, Zarathustra raised himself on his resting place, took a *rose apple* into his hand, smelled it, and found its fragrance lovely (III “The Convalescent” 2: 328, all

italics mine). As is clear, Nietzsche insinuates here the *apple* image from “On the Three Evils” 2. The apple gently prepares one to listen to the eternal recurrence. However, what we can hear about it are only words and sounds. But do they make sense at all and, if yes, then in relation to what? All of a sudden Zarathustra says how good it is that there exists language for human beings to build deceptive bridges between words and things so that things always look new (III “The Convalescent” 2: 329). Does it not seem that the words of eternal recurrence which are to follow may prove refreshing to both language and the perspective of things? Does it not seem, likewise, that they may also prove deceptive? Let us follow them through before making head or tail of the eternal recurrence. On this note, right after Zarathustra’s ode to language that dances over things, the animals expound the eternal return for Zarathustra, providing a whole pack of *circular images*:

— Oh Zarathustra, sagten darauf die Thiere, Solchen, die denken wie wir, tanzen alle Dinge selber: das kommt und reicht sich die Hand und lacht und flieht — und *kommt zurück*. Alles geht, Alles *kommt zurück*; ewig rollt das *Rad* des Seins. Alles stirbt, Alles *blüht wieder auf*, ewig läuft das *Jahr* des Seins. Alles bricht, Alles wird *neu gefügt*; ewig baut sich das gleiche *Haus* des Seins. Alles scheidet, Alles *grüsst sich wieder*; ewig bleibt sich treu der *Ring* des Seins. In jedem Nu beginnt das Sein; um jedes Hier *rollt* sich die *Kugel* Dort. Die Mitte ist überall. *Krumm* ist der *Pfad* der Ewigkeit“ (III „Der Genesende“ 2, *KGW* VI 1, 268: 28 – 34; 269: 1 – 5),

or:

“O Zarathustra,” the animals said, “to those who think as we do, all things themselves are dancing; they come and offer their hands and laugh and flee – and *come back*. Everything goes, everything *comes back*; eternally rolls the *wheel* of being. Everything dies, everything *blossoms again*; eternally runs the *year* of being. Everything breaks, everything is *joined anew*; eternally the same *house* of being is built. Everything parts, everything *greets every other thing again*; eternally the *ring* of being remains faithful to itself. In every Now, being begins: round every Here *rolls* the *sphere* There. The center is everywhere. *Bent* is the *path* of eternity” (III “The Convalescent” 2: 329, 330, all italics mine).

Zarathustra chides his animals for making a hurdy-gurdy song [*ein Leier-Lied*] of this – of “what had to be fulfilled in seven days” and for watching him battling with the snake that had crawled

into his mouth, i.e., for being cruel in watching him suffer (III “The Convalescent” 2: 330). Thus Zarathustra acknowledges his identity with the young shepherd in the vision-riddle and admits his disgust at the recurrence of the small human symbolised by the heavy black snake that had nearly suffocated him (331). The animals, being aware of the deceptive nature of language, tell him not to speak anymore but to *sing*, informing him that they know who he is and what he must become: „siehe, *du bist der Lehrer der ewigen Wiederkunft* —, das ist nun *dein Schicksal!*“ (III „Der Genesende“ 2, *KGW* VI 1, 271: 29, 30), or: “behold, *you are the teacher of the eternal recurrence*” (III “The Convalescent” 2: 332). It is his sole destiny to teach this doctrine and return eternally in order to teach it (*ibid.*). It sounds as if one should anticipate some, perhaps noble, dishonesty in regard to the language in which the doctrine is communicated, for singing (melody), as Nietzsche means it, makes no use of words, only sounds, or musical tones. But these, as according to Higgins’ musical interpretation, focus on the present-centredness of what may be an endless melody symbolising the moment of eternal recurrence. At precisely this moment, the moment of musical intimation, the animals provide a brief recapitulation of GS 341 that contains the temporal *hourglass* symbol:

Siehe, wir wissen, was du lehrst: dass alle Dinge ewig wiederkehren und wir selber mit, und dass wir schon ewige Male dagewesen sind, und alle Dinge mit uns. Du lehrst, dass es ein grosses Jahr des Werdens giebt, ein Ungeheuer von grossem Jahre: das muss sich, einer *Sanduhr* gleich, immer wieder von Neuem umdrehn, damit es von Neuem ablaufe und auslaufe: — — so dass alle diese Jahre sich selber gleich sind, im Grössten und auch im Kleinsten, — so dass wir selber in jedem grossen Jahre uns selber gleich sind, im Grössten und auch im Kleinsten (III „Der Genesende“ 2, *KGW* VI 1, 272: 3 – 13),

or:

Behold, we know what you teach: that all things recur eternally, and we ourselves too; and that we have already existed an eternal number of times, and all things with us. You teach that there is a great year of becoming, a monster of a great year, which must, like an *hourglass*, turn over again and again so that it may run down and run out again; and all these years are alike in what is greatest as in what it is smallest; and we ourselves are

alike in every great year, in what is greatest as in what is smallest” (III “The Convalescent” 2: 332, all italics mine).

In light of what seems, at first glance, to be a cosmological exposition of eternal recurrence, the animals finally expound the doctrine for Zarathustra, which sounds even more cosmological than the passage on the hourglass:

„Nun sterbe und schwinde ich, würdest du sprechen, und im Nu bin ich ein Nichts. Die Seelen sind so sterblich wie die Leiber. Aber der Knoten von Ursachen kehrt wieder, in den ich verschlungen bin, — der wird mich wieder schaffen! Ich selber gehöre zu den Ursachen der ewigen Wiederkunft. Ich komme wieder, mit dieser *Sonne*, mit dieser *Erde*, mit diesem *Adler*, mit dieser *Schlange* — *nicht* zu einem neuen Leben oder besseren Leben oder ähnlichen Leben: — ich komme ewig wieder zu diesem gleichen und selbigen Leben, im Grössten und auch im Kleinsten, dass ich wieder aller Dinge ewige Wiederkunft lehre, — — dass ich wieder das Wort spreche vom grossen Erden- und Menschen-Mittage, dass ich wieder den Menschen den Übermenschen künde. Ich sprach mein Wort, ich zerbreche an meinem Wort: so will es mein ewiges Loos —, als Verkündiger gehe ich zu Grunde! Die Stunde kam nun, dass der Untergehende sich selber segnet. Also — *endet* Zarathustra’s Untergang“ — — (III „Der Genesende“ 2, *KGW* VI 1, 272: 20 – 34; 273: 1 – 5, all italics mine except *nicht* and *endet*),

or:

“Now I die and vanish,” you would say, “and all at once I am nothing. The soul is as mortal as the body. But the knot of causes in which I am entangled recurs and will create me again. I myself belong to the causes of the eternal recurrence. I come again, with this *sun*, with this *earth*, with this *eagle*, with this *serpent* – *not* to a new life or a better life or a similar life: I come back eternally to this same, selfsame life, in what is greatest as in what is smallest, to teach again the eternal recurrence of all things, to speak again the word of the great noon of earth and man, to proclaim the overman again to men. I spoke my word, I break of my word: thus my eternal lot wants it; as a proclaimer I perish. The hour has now come when he who goes under should bless himself. Thus *ends* Zarathustra’s going under” (III “The Convalescent” 2: 333, all italics mine except *not* and *ends*).

After laying out what Zarathustra himself would have, the animals find him silent and withdrawn and leave him to converse with his soul. There is a sense of complete silence – yet a meaningful silence that speaks by not speaking – hanging in the air after many resounding words and verbal sounds have been poured from the heavens. Singing (i.e., melody) as a substitute for words and silence as a replacement for singing are the two key intimations that must be taken into account

when reading the *words* on the eternal recurrence. It is proposed to read these as they are, as literary circular symbols.

And there is quite a bunch of them: 1) the *wheel* of being [das *Rad* des Seins], akin to the self-propelled wheel symbol expressing the *will willing itself*; 2) the *year* of being [das *Jahr* des Seins], emphasising the importance of the *endless temporality* of existence; 3) the same *house* of being [das gleiche *Haus* des Seins], a cultural construction symbol suggesting the creative fullness and plenitude of life and thereby symbolising the *wholeness* of the moment; 4) the *ring* of being [der *Ring* des Seins], re-invoking the *thirst of the ring-like, self-sufficient will* from “On the Virtuous”; 5) round every Here *rolls* the *sphere* (ball) There [um jedes Hier *rollt* sich die *Kugel* Dort], as akin to the ring symbol implicit in the “rollt” as referring to the rolling together of the world in rings through the will willing itself in “On Love of the Neighbor” and to the ball symbol representing *meaningful existence* in “On Free Death”; 6) *Bent* is the *path* of eternity [Krumm ist der *Pfad* der Ewigkeit], echoing back to the battle between Zarathustra and the dwarf about the *circularity of time*, resulting in the former’s victory in the vision-riddle chapter – all in the first passage; 7) to turn over again, like an *hourglass* [einer *Sanduhr* gleich, umdrehn] – a recurrent *temporal* symbol from GS 341 containing the guiding key to the understanding of eternal recurrence in *life-evaluative* terms (in the second passage); and 8) with this *sun*, with this *earth*, with this *eagle*, with this *serpent* [mit dieser *Sonne*, mit dieser *Erde*, mit diesem *Adler*, mit dieser *Schlange*] – a number of circular solar symbols that can be best explained as *diurnal* symbols in the next chapter – (in the third passage).

Now the will willing itself (1: the *wheel*), the endless temporality of existence (2: the *year* of being), the wholeness of the moment (3: the same *house* of being), the thirst of the ring-like, self-sufficient will (4: the *ring*), meaningful existence (5: the *rolling sphere*), the circularity of

time (6: the *bent path* of eternity), affirmation of temporal existence (7: the *turning hourglass*), and the diurnal symbols (8: the *sun*, the *earth*, the *eagle*, the *serpent*), put together, express the eternal recurrence incorporated into the will (1) existentially experiencing the sequence of time (2) through the return of the moment (3) that is *willed* (4), affirmed creatively (5) within the framework of its circularity (6), thereby creatively responding to the question on the return of meaningless existence (7) so that the seemingly literal (cosmological) return turns into the real (existential) literary one represented by the sensuous solar and planetary and animal symbols (8). Such is the summary of the complex circular imagery of eternal recurrence that the serpent and the eagle provide at the closing of Zarathustra's down-going. Each of these circular images symbolises the moment (same meaningfulness) and sequence (same meaningful differences) of eternal recurrence through its roundness and continuity, respectively, while the occurrence and recurrence of the circle image throughout these circular symbols, as well as those considered previously, do so through repetitive invocation on both the contextual and the narrative level, respectively, thereby creating a circle of circles – a creatively affirmative response to the return of same meaningless existence. The remaining forthcoming *ring* symbol serves to seal this affirmation in the ultimate chapter “The Seven Seals (Or: the Yes and Amen Song)” of Part III; with the ring and the ball symbol in “At Noon” and the ring symbol in “The Drunken Song” in Part IV re-invoking the eternal recurrence for the last time.

#### **14. The Ring in “The Seven Seals (Or: the Yes and Amen Song)”**

In “The Seven Seals (Or: the Yes and Amen Song)”, Zarathustra professes his unbounded love for his woman, Eternity: „...Oh wie sollte ich nicht nach der Ewigkeit brünstig sein und nach dem hochzeitlichen *Ring* der *Ringe*, — dem *Ring* der *Wiederkunft*! Nie noch fand ich das Weib, von dem ich Kinder mochte, sei denn dieses Weib, das ich lieb: denn ich liebe dich, oh

Ewigkeit! *Denn ich liebe dich, oh Ewigkeit!*“ (III „Die sieben Siegel (Oder: das Ja- und Amen-Lied)“, *KGW* VI 1, 283: 15 – 21), or: “...Oh, how should I not lust after eternity and after the nuptial *ring* of *rings*, the *ring* of recurrence? Never yet have I found the woman from whom I wanted children, unless it be this woman whom I love: for I love you, O eternity. *For I love you, O eternity!*” (III “The Seven Seals (Or: the Yes and Amen Song)” 1 – 7: 340 – 343, all italics mine except the last sentence in both quotes, respectively). In terms of woman and eternal return, the *woman* image suggests changeability, expressing existential variability as warranted by the sequence of eternal recurrence, while Zarathustra’s ring-like love for the woman-like eternity communicates his affirmation of existence in its exuberant plenitude and creative inexhaustibility. In terms of the ring symbol and eternal return, eternity is, for Zarathustra, the whole expressed by the momentary roundness of the ring, while simultaneously it is a continuous extension of time represented by the sequential circumference of said ring and experienced through the return of the moment – an infinite eternity that repeats itself in every moment of existence, the return of meaningful differences countering the return of the same meaninglessness. The *ring* symbol is used to love and marry the woman, Eternity. The ring symbolises both eternal recurrence and Zarathustra’s marriage to (or affirmation of) the same changeable woman of eternity, his acceptance of her as she is. He repeats his avowal of love seven times, once (even twice – this phrase: “*For I love you, O eternity!*”) in each of the seven sections of the chapter, as if to seal the genuineness of his oath to the idea of eternal recurrence. However, in each case the ring image acquires a slightly different shade of meaning. The accumulation of meanings enriches the ring symbol of eternal recurrence, with the doctrine attaining maximal eloquent expression at the end.

In section 1 where Zarathustra wishes himself to be a soothsaying spirit, wandering like a cloud between past and future, the ring symbol becomes the expression of his decisiveness, whether or not to marry the woman Eternity. He is a pregnant, heavy cloud that is about to soothsay lightning bolts, kindling the future in a section which covers the theme of natural images. The *lightning* image is a main one and expresses a temporality focusing on the future. It refers to the *decision* that must be taken at the present moment symbolised by the roundness of the ring.

In section 2 where he likens himself to a gusting wind that comes as a broom to sweep all the cross-marked spiders, old tablets, tombs and musty chambers of God off the face of the earth (for he loves when the sky gazes through the broken roofs of the churches with its pure eyes), the anti-Christian (also anti-rational) imagery based on the *wind* parable turns the dwarfian *Kreis* into the Zarathustran circle – the nuptial ring of rings, which reflects Zarathustra’s having made his sweeping *decision*. When Nietzsche discusses the eternal recurrence in “On the Vision and the Riddle”, he has the dwarf use the term *Kreis*, circle, in reference to time, thereby suggesting that the eternal return is a cosmological doctrine (an idea that has been disproved).

Later in *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, the reference to the circle is dropped, but the conceit of circularity continues in Zarathustra’s reference to “the ring of eternal return” (“*der Ring der Wiederkunft*”). His refrain to bless the “nuptial ring of rings” that cements his mystical union with eternity [as already mentioned] is repeated seven times (*Za*, II: “The Seven Seals,” 2), a parody of the opening of the seven seals, Revelations 6–8, and the marriage of the Lamb, Revelations 19:7, and possibly a triumphant gloat that Nietzsche “outringed” Wagner (Diethe 83).

The reason why Nietzsche now prefers the *Ring* over the (dwarfian) *Kreis* is that he intends to present Zarathustra as *ring*-wedded to Life, as a legitimate *lover* of life subject to the law of *amor fati*. In other words, Zarathustra has learnt to accept life as it is, with all its joys and sorrows, i.e., he has achieved full affirmation of existence. Thus the dwarfian *Kreis* of the universe (Lat. ‘(re-)turned into one’) metamorphoses into the affirmative *Ring* of human life. The



wedding ceremony remarkably transpires at the mystical hour of the Great Noon (Midnight), the symbol of Zarathustra's total reconciliation with existence (see Chapter 7, sections 11 and 12).

In section 3 where Zarathustra wishes to have the creative breath, to be the creative lightning, and to "[play] dice with gods at the gods' table, the earth" (III "The Seven Seals (Or: the Yes and Amen Song)" 3: 341), creating new words, the *play* imagery expresses *chance* imbedded into the sequence of eternal recurrence symbolised by the continuity of the ring, where the return of meaninglessness is transformed into the return of meaningful differences, something that he (or Nietzsche) is already doing through his creative figural language.

In section 4, where he longs to drink from the blend-mug that unites what seem to be opposites (the farthest and the nearest, joy and pain, wickedness and graciousness, good and evil) by adding just one grain of redeeming salt – himself – the justification of all things through the union of opposites (represented by the *blend-mug* image) communicates his *affirmation* of the accidental playful sequence of eternity (section 3) at the moment of making his decision (section 2), symbolised by the sequential continuity and momentary roundness of the ring.

In section 5 where Zarathustra desires to become a seafarer who searches for the undiscovered in the open sea of contradictory existence, within himself, as in space and time – a seafarer who sails and swims across the on-coming contradictions in search of infinite *novelties*, the *seafarer* image offers the myriad sea of possibilities undulating within the sequence of eternal recurrence represented by the ring's continuity where affirmation of chance in the divine dice game of godless existence (section 4) continues endlessly.

In section 6 where Zarathustra wishes upon the world to be become dance and laughter – sarcastic laughter pronouncing evil holy (also what is heavy, light; body, dancer; and spirit, bird) – the unification of opposites by the *laughter* image (the image of the human being, changed,

radiant and laughing – the Overhuman *willing all things*) serves to affirm the seafarer's contradictions not by stepping out of the sea of becoming onto the firm shores of being but by diving deeper and deeper into the waters of the world-ocean (section 5) and not as with a heavy footstep landed with all grave seriousness upon the ground but by soaring lightly like an eagle with sharp eyes high above the earth, with the unity of the self and the (self's) world symbolised by the ring reconciling roundness and continuity.

In section 7 where Zarathustra has his bird-wisdom speak thus: „,Siehe, es giebt kein Oben, kein Unten! Wirf dich umher, hinaus, zurück, du Leichter! Singe! sprich nicht mehr! — ,sind alle Worte nicht für die Schweren gemacht? Lügen dem Leichten nicht alle Worte! Singe! sprich nicht mehr!’ —“ (III „Die sieben Siegel (Oder: das Ja- und Amen-Lied)“ 7, *KGW* VI 1, 287: 10 – 14), or: “Behold, there is no above, no below! Throw yourself around, out, back, you who are light! Sing! Speak no more! Are not all words made for the grave and heavy? Are not all words lies to those who are light? Sing! Speak no more!” (III “The Seven Seals (Or: the Yes and Amen Song)” 7: 343), there is no firm foundation in existence anymore – words cannot secure one. The ship has left its native shore; new foreign open distances stare him in the face (section 5), making him speechless. Laughter (section 6) has transformed Zarathustra into a light bird hovering over the plains and singing an eternal song without words. The image of height and *lightness* signal that Zarathustra's wedding ceremony is over now that his will has put on the ring of recurrence, saying the last word Amen so as to seal his *affirmation* of existence in all eternity, as though circular (whole) and continuous (infinite), as befits the properties of the ring. Nietzsche intends to suggest that the words of circular (ring) symbolism, in particular, have served their function – that they must be experienced inwardly, that in reality there is no actual correspondence between a word and an experience, between a circular symbol and eternal

recurrence, between the words “eternal recurrence” and what he, Nietzsche, actually experienced – so that everyone will have a different perspective on and feeling for his symbolic expressions.

As is clear, the ring symbol has acquired the following imagerial shades of meaning throughout the seven sections of this chapter: 1) the image of a pregnant *cloud* anticipating a lightning-fast solution at the moment of sheer decisiveness; 2) the anti-Christian and the anti-rational image of the *wind* enforcing a sweeping decision to be made, *Kreis* turning into a *Ring*; 3) the image of the *gods* playing dice with existence full of chance and meaninglessness and providing room for meaningfulness; 4) the *blend-mug* image suggesting the union of opposites in affirmation of the sequence of time; 5) the *seafarer* image expressing novelties to be passionately discovered or created; 6) the image of the *laughing* will willing all things; and 7) the *bird* image of lightness and affirmation attained through union with eternity. The imagerial complex comprising three natural images (cloud, wind, bird), two human(-related) images (seafarer and laughing), one cultural (blend-mug) and one divine (gods) generally communicates Zarathustra’s adventurous self’s attunement to nature and culture in the great dice game of existence. Overall, optimism, playfulness, and love of eternity come forward in this imagery – all underscored and encompassed by the ring symbol on both the contextual and the narrative level, symbolising the moment (same meaningfulness) and sequence (meaningful differences) of eternal recurrence through its roundness and continuity, respectively, in the first case and, through repetitive invocation (see my discussion of Hatab on repetition as eternal return in section 3 of Chapter 4) constituting its own return – the return of the ring symbol, signifying at once the (same meaningful) moment and (same meaningfully variable) sequence of eternal recurrence by way of contextual occurrence and narrative recurrence, respectively, in the second case, the latter representing the eternal recurrence (the nuptial ring) comprising the eternal recurrences (cf.

“round every Here rolls the sphere There”, III “The Convalescent” 2: 330) (rings) as suggested by the ring symbol on the contextual level – the nuptial ring of rings, the ring of recurrence, as a double (even triple – circular symbolic) affirmation of existence.

### 15. The Ring and the Ball in “At Noon”

In “At Noon”, Zarathustra finds rest under a knotty tree entwined by a grapevine at around the hour of noon. He falls half asleep, conversing with himself about what he is experiencing at the moment in his half-conscious state. He realises that: „Das Wenigste gerade, das Leiseste, Leichteste, einer Eidechse Rascheln, ein Hauch, ein Husch, ein Augen-Blick — *Wenig* macht die Art des *besten* Glücks“ (IV „Mittags“, *KGW* VI 1, 340: 4 – 6), or: “Precisely the least, the softest, lightest, a lizard’s rustling, a breath, a breeze, a moment’s glance – it is *little* that makes the *best* happiness” (IV “At Noon” 389). At this moment of bliss he wonders at his feeling that time has flown away, that he is falling endlessly in eternity and that the world has become perfect:

— Was geschah mir: Horch! Flog die Zeit wohl davon? Falle ich nicht? Fiel ich nicht — horch! in den *Brunnen* der Ewigkeit? — Was geschieht mir? Still! Es sticht mich — wehe — in’s Herz? In’s Herz! Oh zerbrich, zerbrich, Herz, nach solchem Gluecke, nach solchem Stiche! — Wie? Ward die Welt nicht eben vollkommen? *Rund* und *reif*? Oh des goldenen *runden Reifs* — wohin fliegt er wohl? Laufe ich ihm nach! Husch! Still — — (und hier dehnte sich Zarathustra und fühlte, dass er schlafe.) — (IV „Mittags“, *KGW* VI 1, 340: 7 – 17),

or:

What happened to me? Listen! Did time perhaps fly away? Do I not fall? Did I not fall – listen! – into the *well* of eternity? What is happening to me? Still! I have been stung, alas – in the heart? In the heart! Oh, break, break, heart, after such happiness, after such a sting. How? Did not the world become perfect just now? *Round* and *ripe*? Oh, the golden *round ring* – where may it fly? Shall I run after it? Quick! Still! (And here Zarathustra stretched and felt that he was asleep.) (IV “At Noon” 389, all italics mine in both quotes).

He tries to wake himself and get up as he is aware that it is high time he continued on his road, for perhaps half an eternity has elapsed since his lapse into the moment of sleep. But he cannot resist sleeping and is still experiencing the perfection of the world:

Auf! sprach er zu sich selber, du Schläfer! Du Mittagsschläfer! Wohlan, wohlauf, ihr alten Beine! Zeit ist's und Überzeit, manch gut Stück Wegs blieb euch noch zurück — Nun schließt ihr euch aus, wie lange doch? Eine halbe Ewigkeit! Wohlan, wohlauf nun, mein altes Herz! Wie lange erst darfst du nach solchem Schlaf — dich auswachen? (Aber da schlief er schon von Neuem ein, und seine Seele sprach gegen ihn und wehrte sich und legte sich wieder hin) — „Lass mich doch! Still! Ward nicht die Welt eben vollkommen? Oh des goldnen *runden Balls!*“ — (IV „Mittags“, *KGW* VI 1, 340: 18 – 27),

or:

“Up!” he said to himself; “you sleeper! You noon napper! Well, get up, old legs! It is time and overtime; many a good stretch of road still lies ahead of you. Now you have slept out – how long? Half an eternity! Well! Up with you now, my old heart! After such a sleep, how long will it take you to – wake it off?” (But then he fell asleep again, and his soul spoke against him and resisted and lay down again.) “Leave me alone! Still! Did not the world become perfect just now? Oh, the golden *round ball!*” (IV “At Noon” 389, 390, all italics mine in both quotes).

He exerts himself to get up for the last time as he realises that he has stolen time just about the time when „ein Sonnenstrahl fiel vom Himmel herunter auf sein Gesicht“ (IV „Mittags“, *KGW* VI 1, 340: 32, 33), or: “a sunbeam fell from the sky onto his face” (IV “At Noon” 390). So he addresses the heavens by asking: „, Wann trinkst du diesen Tropfen Thau's, der auf alle Erden-Dinge niederfiel, — wann trinkst du diese wunderliche Seele — — wann, Brunnen der Ewigkeit! du heiterer schauerlicher Mittags-Abgrund! wann trinkst du meine Seele in dich zurück?“ (IV „Mittags“, *KGW* VI 1, 341: 3 – 6), or: “When will you drink this drop of dew which has fallen upon earthly things? When will you drink this strange soul? When, well of eternity? Cheerful, dreadful abyss of noon! When will you drink my soul back into yourself?” (IV “At Noon” 390). He finally gets up as from a drunkenness; the sun is at its zenith, symbolic of his having just

experienced the eternal recurrence. He has not slept for long. His desire to remain forever engrossed in the joyful moment goes unfulfilled.

Here we have at work images that all signify eternal recurrence: sleep, the well, the ring, and the ball image. As for the *sleep* symbol, Zarathustra's intermittent half-sleep, half-waking state indicates his experience of the reconciliation of time and eternity that he attains by lapsing into the endless moment of joy, though a short moment, the *Augen-Blick* or the 'blink of an eye' (as already mentioned). Nietzsche's play on words emphasises the power of a little happiness making the best happiness and prefigures Zarathustra's short cheerful sleep. On the one hand, Zarathustra feels time passing; on the other, it is as though it has stopped for a moment, the moment and the sequence of time combined in affirmation of existence through the eternal recurrence of the same triggered by one little moment of euphoria. As for the *well* image, Zarathustra's falling down the well of eternity (den *Brunnen* der Ewigkeit) suggests the abysmal profundity of time and existence. He experiences himself shooting down in time endlessly – the sequence of time. Yet this process unfolds within the fleeting moment of happiness, of forgetfulness (which only seems to provide a firm footing when in reality there is none) – the moment of time, with sleep and waking, motion and rest, time and eternity reconciled by affirmation of existence through a tiny bit of joy. As for the *ring* symbol, Zarathustra's experience of the perfection of the world – of the world being *round* and *ripe* (i.e., circular) (*rund* und *reif*) and his appeal to it as the golden *round ring* (des goldenen *runden Reifs*) play on the words *reif* (ripe) and *Reif* (circle). The world that is ripe is the world that is circular, or made circular, i.e., whole, or complete (profound and tranquil, as added by the well and the sleep symbol, respectively), through the will willing all things – the will of eternal recurrence. As for the *ball* symbol, Zarathustra once again refers to the world being perfect when he addresses it as

the golden *round ball* (des goldnen *runden Balls*), thereby taking the image of the world being circular (ripe) to the next level. Here the world's perfection – ripeness, or *reif*-ness, if I may, i.e., circularity – gets full expression as the circle now becomes a complete ball symbolising life's plenitude and wholeness (depth and calm, as added by the well and the sleep symbol, respectively) as experienced at the moment of joy. Both the ball and the ring simultaneously capture the moment of time – by way of their holistic roundness expressing same meaningfulness, and the sequence of time – by dint of their continuities expressing meaningful differences, thereby symbolising the eternal recurrence of the same countering the eternal return of meaningless existence.

On the narrative level, the *reif* symbol re-invokes the nuptial *ring of rings* symbol of eternity from „Die sieben Siegel (Oder: das Ja- und Amen-Lied)“ (KGW VI 1, III, 1 – 7: 283 – 287), or “The Seven Seals (Or: the Yes and Amen Song)” (III, 1 – 7: 340 – 343), while the *ball* symbol of the perfection of the world echoes back to the *ball* symbol of Zarathustra's goal to have a meaningful existence in “On Free Death”. Through the accrual of meaning, the former now communicates a ripe, fruitful marriage to (or love of) eternity, while the latter expresses a perfectly meaningful existence – deep love and a happy life, respectively. The return of both the ring and the ball symbol through repetitive invocation represents the sequence of eternal recurrence, with their meaning accrual expressing meaningful differences, while their contextual occurrence, reflecting same meaningfulness, symbolises the moment of the doctrine – thereby creatively responding to the return of meaningless existence. The eternal recurrence represented by the return of the ring and the ball symbol (on the narrative and the contextual level simultaneously) comprises the symbolisation of the doctrine by means of said symbols on the contextual level, thereby forming the ring of rings – the eternal return of eternal recurrence, i.e.,

affirmation of affirmation, as implicit in the will willing itself. Zarathustra's lapse into the moment of joy, the moment of the affirmation of existence, occurs as though in a drunken state. The theme of drunken affirmation is taken up by the final employment of the ring symbol in the penultimate chapter of the book.

## 16. The Ring in "The Drunken Song"

In "The Drunken Song", Zarathustra finally reveals his idea of eternal recurrence, using the joy-versus-woe argument. He speaks of the necessary interrelation of all things and the experience of a single joy amid woe. Since woe does not want itself (IV "The Drunken Song" 9: 434), whereas joy wants to experience itself again and again, joy, once experienced, draws all that has been into itself (*ibid.* 10: 435). But in doing so, it draws all woe back again as well (*ibid.* 10: 435; 11: 435, 436):

Sagtet ihr jemals ja zu Einer Lust? Oh, meine Freunde, so sagtet ihr Ja auch zu *allem* Wehe. Alle Dinge sind verkettet, verfädel, verliebt, — — wolltet ihr jemals Ein Mal Zwei Mal, spracht ihr jemals "du gefällst mir, Glück! Husch! Augenblick!" so wolltet ihr *Alles* zurück! — Alles von neuem, Alles ewig, Alles verkettet, verfädel, verliebt, oh so *liebtet* ihr die Welt, — — ihr Ewigen, liebt sie ewig und allezeit: und auch zum Weh sprecht ihr: vergeh, aber *komm zurück! Denn alle Lust will — Ewigkeit!* (IV „Das Nachtwandler-Lied“ 10, *KGW* VI 1, 398: 19 – 29)

Alle Lust will aller Dinge Ewigkeit... — *was* will nicht Lust! sie ist durstiger, herzlicher, hungriger, schrecklicher, heimlicher als alles Weh, sie will *sich*, sie beisst in *sich*, des *Ringes Wille* ringt in ihr, — — sie will Liebe, sie will Hass... Nach *Missrathenem* sehnt sich alle ewige Lust. Denn alle Lust will sich selber, drum will sie auch *Herzeleid!* (IV „Das Nachtwandler-Lied“ 11, *KGW* VI 1, 399: 2, 5 – 8, 15 – 17),

or:

Have you ever said Yes to a single joy? O my friends, then you said Yes too to *all* woe. All things are entangled, ensnared, enamored; if ever you wanted one thing twice, if ever you said, "You please me, happiness! Abide, moment!" then you wanted *all* back. All anew, all eternally, all entangled, ensnared, enamored – oh, then you *loved* the world. Eternal ones, love it eternally and evermore; and to woe too, you say: go, but *return!* *For all joy wants – eternity.* (IV "The Drunken Song" 10: 435)

All joy wants the eternity of all things.... *What* does joy not want? It is thirstier, more cordial, hungrier, more terrible, more secret than all woe; it wants *itself*, it bites into *itself*, the *ring's will* strives in it; it wants love, it wants hatred.... All eternal joy longs for



failures. For all joy wants itself, hence it also wants agony (IV “The Drunken Song” 11: 435, 436, all italics in the original except *komm zurück* and *Ringes Wille, return and ring’s will*).

As is clear, woe does not will itself whereas joy does. But, since what exists in the present (the joyful present moment) has been necessarily preceded by what is past (the woeful past moment) – i.e., the past has given rise to the present – without also willing woe, joy cannot will itself. Therefore, joy must willy-nilly – but better gladly – will woe. Thus, by willing itself, joy necessarily wills pain associated with joy through the knots of causes within existence. The eternal recurrence should therefore be understood as being incorporated into the will – as the will’s joy willing itself. In this sense, Nietzsche’s *ring* symbol comes to the fore. The will’s drunken joy has the ring’s will in itself; the term ring “contain[ing] the element of struggle (‘ringen’— to wrestle)” (Jappinen 228), emphasising the intractableness of the euphoric will: just as the ring thirstily strives and reaches itself in a circle, as described also in “On the Virtuous”, so also the will’s joy extends and circles back on itself, while absorbing all woe on its way. The roundness of the ring represents the *moment* of the will’s thirsty joy drinking the bottomless well of eternity (both past and future), into which Zarathustra has fallen in “At Noon”, back into itself, while its continuity indicates the *sequence* of what has transpired – has flowed – into the present joyful moment (past), as well as what will transpire – will flow – after this moment, well into all eternity (future), with the return of meaningful variations within the well of eternal time (sequence) and the holistic desire of the circular will to bring that well into unity countering both the same meaninglessness and the chaos of variable meanings in existence. The will’s time is now a joyful ring or *circle*. Such is the revelation of the eternal recurrence represented exclusively by the Zarathustran ring or circle.

The repetition of the ring symbol throughout the narrative symbolises the sequence of eternal return: 1) the rolling together in circles (*ringen*) of the world (“On Love of the Neighbor”); 2) the thirst of the *ring* (“On the Virtuous”); 3) the *ring* of being (“The Convalescent”); 4) the nuptial *ring* of *rings* and the *ring* of recurrence – repeated seven times (“The Seven Seals (Or: the Yes and Amen Song)”); and 5) the golden round *ring* (“At Noon”), in augmenting its meaning from the possibility of enamoured coalescence (1) to the desire for union (2) to the acknowledgment of total existence (3) to love of and marriage to eternity (4) to the actual experience of the union (5), while their contextual occurrences signify the moment of eternal recurrence. The return of the meaningful variations (sequence) and the same desire for meaningful unity (moment) of the ring symbol counter the return of both the same meaninglessness and the chaotic quasi-meaningful variabilities of existence. The eternal recurrence, represented by the return of the ring symbol throughout the text, comprises the eternal recurrences symbolised by said symbols on the contextual level, thereby creating a ring of rings – the eternal return of eternal recurrence, i.e., affirmation of affirmation – as implicit in the will willing itself.

Last but not least, the entire meaning of Nietzsche’s idea of eternal recurrence is contained in his intoxicating *roundelay* (*Rundgesang* – the name itself symbolic of eternal return through the circle image being implicit in it: the roundness of the circle expressing the moment, while its continuity indicating the sequence of time) entitled „,Noch ein Mal’, dess Sinn ist ,in alle Ewigkeit!’ “ (IV „Das Nachtwandler-Lied“ 12, *KGW* VI 1, 399: 26, 27), or: “ ‘Once More’ and whose meaning is ‘into all eternity’ ” (IV “The Drunken Song” 12: 436):

<i>Oh Mensch! Gieb Acht!</i>	O man, take care!
<i>Was spricht die tiefe Mitternacht?</i>	What does the deep midnight declare?
„ <i>Ich schlief, ich schlief</i> —,	“I was asleep –
„ <i>Aus tiefem Traum bin ich erwacht:</i> —	From a deep dream I woke and swear:
„ <i>Die Welt ist tief,</i>	The world is deep,
„ <i>Und tiefer als der Tag gedacht.</i>	Deeper than day had been aware.
„ <i>Tief ist ihr Weh</i> —,	Deep is its woe;
„ <i>Lust — tiefer noch als Herzeleid:</i>	Joy – deeper yet than agony:
„ <i>Weh spricht: Vergeh!</i>	Woe implores: Go!
„ <i>Doch alle Lust will Ewigkeit</i> —,	But all joy wants eternity –
„ <i>— will tiefe, tiefe Ewigkeit!</i> “	Wants deep, wants deeps eternity.”
(IV „Das Nachtwandler-Lied“ 12) <sup>124</sup>	(IV “The Drunken Song” 12: 436)

This is what Zarathustra’s round means, if paraphrased: listen to what my lapse into the moment of joy (in “At Noon”) would say: “I have experienced the reconciliation of the moment and sequence of time when I was asleep, i.e., embraced by joy. I and my slumbering feeling have found that being and time are deeper than wakeful, sober reason has been aware. Their woe is deep, but their joy is even deeper, for woe does not want itself, whereas joy wants itself eternally (thereby wanting woe as well).” Thus, the world is made deep, whole and perfect only by ring-like joy, not by woe. Woe is drunk by the moment of the thirsty, self-willing joy back into the flowing sequence of eternity. In this, then, consists the idea of eternal recurrence.

In summary, the analysis of the circular symbols in both *The Gay Science* and *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* in connection with the idea of eternal recurrence understood as the return of the moment has established that there is a close relation between the two and that Nietzsche is really fond of employing this literary device in communicating his doctrine. The circular images utilised in *The Gay Science* serve as preparation for taking in the abundance of circular images brought into *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*. All of Nietzsche’s circular images, indicating the return of same meaningfulness and meaningful differences within the sequence of time, function as an

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<sup>124</sup> *KGW* VI 1, 400: 11.

affirmative response to the recurrent meaninglessness of existence. In other words, Zarathustra provides a creative answer to the question posed by Nietzsche in GS 341. It has been also shown that the circle image expresses Zarathustra's doctrine not only contextually but also on a narrative level. The repetition of some circular symbols not only represents the eternal return but also constitutes its own recurrence in the text – the recurrence of circular symbols in itself indicates the doctrine of eternal return so that the latter comprises the contextual symbolisations of the doctrine, thereby creating the ring of rings, i.e., affirmation of affirmation, as implicit in the circular image of the will willing itself. Finally, the representation of Zarathustra's teaching by means of the image of the ring or circle striving and reaching itself has been found to be closely related to the image of the intractable will willing itself through the moment of joy within what Zarathustra calls the well of eternity. With the static, so to speak, 'eye-catching' or visually (geometrically) conspicuous, circular symbols proper having now been considered, it is time to turn to the less noticeable, at times implicit, dynamic cyclical diurnal symbols of eternal recurrence in *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* and in what manifests itself as its prequel entitled "How the 'True World' Finally Became a Fable", or "*The History of an Error*", in *Twilight of the Idols*.

## Chapter 7: Analysis of the Diurnal Symbols in *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*

In this chapter it is shown that the image of the circle is hidden within an almost perfect explicit/implicit sequence of diurnal cycles running throughout the text from beginning to end – an extensive image for the eternal recurrence in *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*. This sequence of cycles becomes the structure of the work itself. The diurnal cyclical symbols will be shown to return to themselves through repetitive invocation in a chronological sequence of diurnal cycles, while the singularity of a diurnal symbol within the eternal return of its singularities will be shown to return to itself, just as the *singularity* of the moment returns to itself within the eternal return of singularities.

It is worth keeping in mind that the *circle* is merely a symbol for the diurnal *cycle*, which in its turn is a metaphor for the eternal *recurrence* (of singularities). The diurnal cycle would be a genuine, literary symbol for the eternal recurrence only if one looks, as Zarathustra does, at the *singularity* of the moment that repeats itself through an act of will, and not, as the dwarf does (in “On the Vision and the Riddle” 2), as from an external perspective, at time *itself* as a circle (at time as meaningless).

The diurnal cycle returns meaninglessly the same every day: same dull morning, afternoon, evening, and night. Yet one may choose to inaugurate meaningful singularities into each moment of the day cycle. What will return, therefore, as if in a circle, is the *singularity* of each particular morning-moment, noon-moment, evening-moment, and midnight-moment. If, however, one gives meaning to every moment of the day cycle, then both the tediousness and singularity of the latter seem to disappear. Given the three types of eternal recurrence outlined in Chapter 2 above, it is possible to speak of three types of the eternal recurrence of diurnal symbols:

- (1) the ER of same meaningless mornings, noons, evenings, and midnights;
- (2) the ER of same different meaningful mornings, noons, evenings, and midnights;<sup>125</sup>
- (3) the ER of the same meaningful mornings, noons, evenings, and midnights, or the same meaningful Morning (Ascent) or Evening (Descent), Noon (Experience of ER) or Midnight (Revelation of ER).<sup>126</sup>

It remains to be shown that Zarathustra experiences differently every moment of the day cycle (i.e., each of the times of the day), as befits the second type of eternal recurrence, and that his different experiences are symbolised by different mornings, noons, evenings, and midnights – that, generally, noon symbolises his maturity; evening, his decline; (mid)night, his death; and morning, his (re)birth. The four major moments of the day cycle share one feature in common: singularity. Although every such moment repeats itself every day, as if in a circle – same *morning*, same *noon*, same *evening*, and same *midnight* – this repetition itself is ordinary and conventional. The day cycle is an invention, for each moment of the “cycle” is *singular*, so that there is no day cycle as such. Nietzsche, I believe, creates this illusion of day cycles only to cast a veil over the text while portraying the dwarfish view of time. It is a veil covering the truth of the singular moment: Zarathustra’s singular experience of every moment of the diurnal “cycle” – a veil that I first discovered in the text and have removed here (i.e., by disclosing its arbitrariness).

According to the third type of eternal recurrence, however, Zarathustra experiences the midnight moment (in “The Drunken Song”) just as equally as the noon moment (in “At Noon”). When he lapses into the moment at the midnight hour, he says that midnight and noon are the *same now*, meaning that every moment of existence (both joyful and woeful) is equally valuable

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<sup>125</sup> Emphasis on the differences inaugurated by the same moment.

<sup>126</sup> Emphasis on the same moment (inaugurating differences).

for him and that he gives meaning to each, thereby affirming both his existence and the first type of eternal recurrence: the meaningless sequence of diurnal times and cycles, to the point that time and day cycles disappear for him altogether and his life is eternalised.

This extensive chapter will analyse the sequence of diurnal cycles, which will be divided into 12 sections and discuss each particular day cycle in the text. *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, I show, has twelve day cycles, the sixth being implicit and having to be supplied through the recollections and communication of the eternal recurrence in the seventh. It is symbolic of the missing, sixth day cycle and of the seventh one, which helps to restore it, to stand in the middle of the sequence of the twelve day cycles. The sixth day cycle represents the crucial role of humanity standing in the middle of its way between beast and Overhuman to surpass itself. If Zarathustra lives through the sixth day cycle (his battle with the dwarf and the snake on the mountain at night), that is, if he *overcomes* it, like the hump of a mountain, he will be *over the hump*, on his way to the Overhuman who can will the eternal recurrence of the same, thus overcoming the human self. The twelve day cycles are symbolic of the twelve bell strokes in Zarathustra's roundelay "Once More!", which in turn are symbolic of the noon(midday)-to-midnight cycle, which in turn, finally, is symbolic of the eternal recurrence as the merger of opposites – day and night. Furthermore, it will be shown that the work circles back upon itself with its last day cycle, which implies having to begin from its very beginning: as if Zarathustra, in affirmation of existence, were again to appear before the sun and then go down to people to teach them the Overhuman and the eternal return, and to become himself the Overhuman and to will the eternal recurrence of the same. That is, he is to return to his same and self-same life. The fact that there is no correspondence between parts and full cycles – each full cycle (with the

exception of the last two) includes noon through morning, and each previous part's ending engages each following part's beginning through incomplete cycles – shows the interconnectedness between all four parts. The fourth part is thus shown to be necessarily related to and therefore a continuation of the previous, third part (in contrast to Lampert and other scholars who consider Part III the end of the book). Rather, as I show, Part IV is the completion of the whole.

### **Pre-Cycle**

In chapter 6 of *Nietzsche's Existential Imperative*, entitled “Nietzsche's Eternalistic Countermyth”, Magnus views Nietzsche's doctrine of eternal recurrence as a countermyth to “what he took to be the dominant allegory: Platonism Christianized” (Magnus 165). He notes that “it is Zarathustra who teaches that doctrine, appropriately enough at *noon*, at the moment of the briefest shadow, when the distinction between the shadowy apparent world, a cave-world indeed, and a plenary realm of light and truth has been eclipsed” (*ibid.*, italics mine). “The true world – we have abolished: What world has remained? The apparent one perhaps? But no! *With the true world we have also abolished the apparent one!* (Noon; moment of the briefest shadow; end of the longest error; high point of humanity; INCIPIT ZARATHUSTRA<sup>127</sup>)” (TI 486). Thus Nietzsche finishes his “History of an Error” in *Twilight of the Idols*, where he explains “How the ‘True World’ Finally Became a Fable”. What is remarkable is that Zarathustra's tragedy begins at *noon*, a symbolic moment in his existence. I believe it is possible to draw a parallel between the history of an error as Nietzsche presented it in a *Twilight of the Idols* passage and a diurnal cycle. Every historical point outlined by the philosopher corresponds to a certain time of the day.

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<sup>127</sup> “ ‘Zarathustra begins.’ An echo of the conclusion of *The Gay Science* (1882): Nietzsche had used the first section of the Prologue of *Zarathustra*, his next work, as the final aphorism of Book Four, and given it the title of *Incipit tragoedia*” (Kaufmann's footnote, p. 486).



Some of the times of the day are merely implicit in the sections of the passage and could be inferred so that the history of an error will constitute a complete diurnal cycle, a preliminary one, one that precedes Zarathustra's first diurnal cycle in *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*. The diurnal symbolism contained in the following passage will confirm that the passage is indeed an introduction and a link to the diurnal cycles that structure the forthcoming Zarathustra narrative. In this sense, "How the 'True World' Finally Became a Fable" can be paraphrased as "How Reason Finally Became *Feeling*; *Day Night*; and *Night Day* Again".

*Noon*. 1. "The true world – attainable for the sage, the pious, the virtuous man; he lives in it, *he is it*. (The oldest form of the idea, relatively sensible, simple, and persuasive. A circumlocution for the sentence, 'I, Plato, *am* the truth.')" (TI 485). In other words, "the sage, the pious, the virtuous man" lives in the light of the true world; he lives in the light of the sun, the sun of reason (*ibid.*). This period of time is characterised by the clarity of reason as if at the bright *noon*, the symbol for rationality.

*Evening*. 2. "The true world – unattainable for now, but promised for the sage, the pious, the virtuous man ('for the sinner who repents'). (Progress of the idea: it becomes more subtle, insidious, incomprehensible – *it becomes female*, it becomes Christian.)" (TI 485) Symbolically speaking, the snake-like shadows of the promising *evening* writhe over the surface of the earth as the twilight of reason sets in.

*Night*. 3. "The true world – unattainable, indemonstrable, unpromisable; but the very thought of it – a consolation, an obligation, an imperative. (At bottom, the old sun ["die alte Sonne", *KGW* VI 3, 74: 16], but seen through mist and skepticism. The idea has become elusive, pale, Nordic, Königsbergian.<sup>128</sup>)" (TI 485) Here Nietzsche's imagery of mist, being pale and Nordic, i.e., cold, suggests the picture of a cold mist and pale shadows now rolling in on a cold

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<sup>128</sup> "That is, Kantian" (Kaufmann's footnote, p. 485).

*night*, the night of reason. The ‘old sun’ image, although a phraseological unit, retroactively suggests that the true world in section 1 is characterised by the sunlight – at noon.

*Morning*. 4. “The true world – unattainable? At any rate, unattained. And being unattained, also *unknown*. Consequently, not consoling, redeeming, or obligating: how could something unknown obligate us? (Gray morning [“Grauer Morgen”, *KGW* VI 3, 74: 23]. The first yawn of reason. The cockrow of positivism.)” (TI 485) This is Nietzsche’s first explicit reference to the historical period as corresponding to a certain time of the day: the first ray of dawn on a cold *morning*. The dawn of a new perspective on existence, of a new reason, that of the unconscious, in the world of feelings and passions.

*Day*. 5. “The ‘true’ world – an idea which is no longer good for anything, not even obligating – an idea which has become useless and superfluous – consequently, a refuted idea: let us abolish it! (Bright day [“Heller Tag”, *KGW* VI 3, 75: 5]; breakfast; return of *bon sens* and cheerfulness; Plato’s embarrassed blush; pandemonium of all free spirits.)” (TI 485, 486) Here is Nietzsche’s second direct reference to a historical period as corresponding to a certain time of the day, namely, *day* proper. Indeed, with the heavens now blushing at dawn, the gray morning gradually yields to a bright day – the beginning of the bright day of feelings and passions.

*Noon*. 6. “The true world – we have abolished: What world has remained? The apparent one perhaps? But no! *With the true world we have also abolished the apparent one!* (Noon [“Mittags”, *KGW* VI 3, 75: 12]; moment of the briefest shadow; end of the longest error; high point of humanity; INCIPIT ZARATHUSTRA.)” (TI 486) This is finally the moment of the great noon that Nietzsche identifies with the human decision to become wholly self-responsible, the image for that being the Overhuman, who is capable of affirming existence by willing the eternal return of the same. The opposites are united: reason and passion merge together. The

diurnal cycle is now completed. The serpent bites its tail – the serpent of eternal recurrence. Thus the revaluation of all values begins at a point in life symbolised by the noon imagery. The outpouring of the most intense emotions needs a reasonable channel – a goal – to become truly creative.

The above breakdown shows that the doctrine of eternal recurrence as a countermyth to the Platonic-Christian mythical world is expressed by the symbol of *noon*. According to Nietzsche, the Platonic-Christian mythical world is represented by the Platonic allegory of the cave (the shadows) vs. the sun imagery (the light) as split opposites: the *true world* (ideas) symbolised by the sun on high vs. the *apparent world* (things) symbolised by the shadows in the cave. Nietzsche's solution to the dichotomy of the true world and the apparent world is the merger of the two into One in section 6 above. The same union of opposites (time and eternity) takes place in "At Noon" of *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* at the moment of the great noon, moment of the briefest shadow, when there is no distinction between the shadow and the light, i.e., between the shadow and the wanderer (Zarathustra) that casts it, for they are one now. The union of diurnal opposites also transpires in "The Drunken Song": „Eben ward meine Welt vollkommen, *Mitternacht ist auch Mittag*, – Schmerz ist auch eine Lust, Fluch ist auch ein Segen, *Nacht ist auch eine Sonne*, – geht davon oder ihr lernt: ein Weiser ist auch ein Narr“ (IV „Das Nachtwandler-Lied“ 10, *KGW* VI 1, 398: 14 – 18), or: “Just now my world became perfect; *midnight too is noon*; pain too is a joy; curses too are a blessing; *night too is a sun* – go away or you will learn: a sage too is a fool” (IV “The Drunken Song” 10: 435, all italics mine).

### **1<sup>st</sup> Day Cycle**

In the above manner, Nietzsche attempts to have Zarathustra bring the opposites together for Zoroaster, the historical Zarathustra, who was born circa 660 B.C., the founder of the ancient

Persian religion Zoroastrianism, whose adherents, Zoroastrians, worship fire and revere the elements.<sup>129</sup> He “taught that the world is divided into two opposing realms of good and evil, or light and dark (personified as Ormuzd and Ahriman, respectively): he exhorted his followers to do good and to fight evil” (Diethe 303, 304). Nietzsche’s Zarathustra invokes and reverses Zoroaster’s dogma “by implying that we must first discover what is good and what is evil” (Diethe 304). In particular, on the level of diurnal symbolism, Nietzsche’s Zarathustra challenges the opposition of light and dark, day and night, through the symbolic cyclical return of day, evening, night, and morning. Zarathustra values every moment of his diurnal cycle, and all diurnal constituents are indispensable for the alternation of day and night.

Additionally, not only are “fire” and light, represented by the symbol of *day*, what is now to be revered, but also the ashes, the dark, symbolised by the *night* of ten years he spent in his mountain cave. Taking his ashes to the mountain in the evening, Zarathustra returns, bringing the fire with him – his spirit – in the morning. The ashes symbolise the extinguishing of Zoroaster’s fire and the kindling of Zarathustra’s fire, that is, death (at night) and rebirth (in the morning) of Zarathustra himself. Thus his ashes prove to be indispensable in striking a new fire. His fire now symbolises the rebirth of a new brightened day on his part, but, at the same time (as in the case of the madman looking for God with a torch lit in broad daylight (GS 125)), on the part of humanity, also the forthcoming decline and falling of the sun, the afterglow, the evening, i.e., the shadows of nihilism, and the inevitable advent of pitch-black night, i.e, the death of God.

According to “The History of an Error”, *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* should begin at the time of noon. In this regard, the book does not begin with Zarathustra’s appearance before the sun, i.e., in the morning – with his descent, as Naomi Ritter believes it does. In *Art as Spectacle*:

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<sup>129</sup> For Nietzsche, Zarathustra is Zoroaster, who realises his own error (the transposition of the morality of good and evil into the metaphysical realm) and wants to make up for it: “Zarathustra created this most calamitous error, morality; consequently, he must also be the first to recognize it” (EH “Why I am a Destiny” 3: 327, 328).

*Images of the Entertainer since Romanticism* (1989), Ritter states that “*Untergang* is a notion pervading [Nietzsche’s] book written as a protest against decadence. Accordingly, the true transcendence it preaches must start with descent. The work begins when Zarathustra goes down from his mountain, abandoning ten years of solitude to rejoin mankind” (Ritter 100, 101). From the perspective of diurnal symbolism, however, the work starts with Zarathustra’s ascent, when he abandons the lake and goes into the mountains, rather than descent, which follows ten years later, after his ascent. In this sense, Zarathustra echoes the human ascent from the realm of nature into the spiritual realm of transcendence shown as historically prior to the human descent into the world of the irrational, the source of all knowledge and being, the importance of which must be acknowledged by intelligent humanity. So, narratively, the book begins with Zarathustra’s ascent into the mountains. There is a temporal period in the text that needs to be described accordingly. The structure of the first day cycle is as follows: Zarathustra attains middle-age maturity, realising the necessity of ascent at *noon*. Tentatively, he leaves the lake in the *evening*, carrying his ashes to the mountain in decline, and ascends the mountain toward midnight. He then spends the *night* of ten years in solitude in the mountain cave, experiencing death and destruction, and, upon awakening transformed, through rebirth, he speaks to the sun and descends to people in the *morning*. The first diurnal cycle, then, takes place before, or, more precisely, concludes on, Zarathustra’s address to the heavenly body. Let us follow it through in more detail.

*Noon*. In “Zarathustra’s Prologue” 1, when Zarathustra turns thirty years old, he is at his life’s prime, standing in a kind of the middle of the way between his past and future. He is pressed to make a decision at this psychologically significant age of his. What he realises is that life needs to be affirmed in its entirety, meaning what seem to be opposites or contradictory should be embraced as a unity. In “The History of an Error”, Nietzsche briefly outlines the nature

of human error – the division of the world into good and evil. Precisely because the historical Zoroaster was the inventor of this moral machinery, he (Zarathustra) must be the first to recognise this historical error. The literary character, Zarathustra, realises that error at the moment of *noon*, the symbol of the highest reason and *maturity*. He has to make a decision as to how to go on living so that the whole of existence is justified. He decides to affirm it in its totality. But the hallmark of his affirmation is his ability to will the recurrence of the same: he must desire to live his life again an infinite number of times, a desire which brings the moment and sequence of time into unity. Zarathustra, therefore, must will the recurrence of every moment of his existence, every moment or *time* of the day, in the same order and sequence. To reflect his protagonist's desire to relive the chronological succession of events/moments, Nietzsche resorts to the use of diurnal symbols that he makes occur chronologically throughout the narrative. The repetition of the diurnal symbols becomes a figural representation of the eternal recurrence, a doctrine of affirmation.

*Evening.* As soon as Zarathustra realises the historical error of humanity, he makes a decision to leave his home, the valley and the lake. He leaves people and withdraws into complete solitude, where he can give much thought to himself without any external interference. One imagines the picture of Zarathustra desperately carrying his ashes to the mountain, bidding farewell to his native parts: the setting of the sun, the afterglow of the sunset, the yearning for the good old day that has just passed, as if he has to break with his past way of living forever and go forward, in search of a new day and a new sun and a new fire. So, it is suggested, he leaves his lake and goes into the mountains in the *evening*. The image of evening creates the sense of *decay* (cf. Zarathustra's ashes): evening is characterised by the departure of the sun – by the departure of the human being into the unknown; by the flowers closing their petals for sleep – by one

feeling the heaviness of drowsiness on one's eye-lids; by the birds' singing subsiding at the oozing sunlight – by someone garrulous becoming more reticent and taciturn. Such is the emotional atmosphere, in metaphorical terms, that Zarathustra experiences after the disappearance of the sunlight of reason – the loss of the firm ground that the Christian-Platonic values have served to provide.

*Night.* The long and difficult trip high up the mountains – Zarathustra's ascent to the spiritual realm of existence – takes up the whole evening before he finally reaches the desired destination. Upon his arrival in the mountain cave, Zarathustra begins to enjoy his spirit in solitude. Symbolically speaking, he spends the *night* of ten years in the mountain cave. Only occasionally does the sun climb into his cave. He has two animal friends, the eagle and the serpent, but no human ones. In this sense, his solitude is expressed through solar animal symbolism. The snake is always on its own, as is the eagle. These together represent his ultimate loneliness. It is understandable that ten years cannot run in one night, but if night is treated as a symbol of solitude and nihilism, destruction and *death*, then it is a perfect image for the time period described. Nights are cold, silent, and thoughtful, and so is Zarathustra, who enjoys being lonely, being together with his self. The productive night of ten years, itself a symbolic round number referring to a long period of time, yields a revaluation of all values in Zarathustra's heart. His accumulation of wisdom within himself needs a vent. He is bursting, feeling pressured to ease his mind. He needs an interlocutor.

*Morning.* As the night draws to a close, he makes another decision, this time to return to his native land. He wakes up one morning and speaks to the rising sun about happiness. The scene takes place in the *morning*, symbolic of Zarathustra's revelation of a new *truth*: „,Du grosses Gestirn! Was wäre dein Glück, wenn du nicht Die hättest, welchen du leuchtest!“ (I

„Zarathustra’s Vorrede“ 1 *KGW* VI 1, 5: 8, 9), or: “ ‘You great star, what would your happiness be had you not those for whom you shine?’ ” (I “Zarathustra’s Prologue” 1: 121). The answer is none, as both Zarathustra and the sun, full of hope and *promise*, need those for whom they would shine, as opposed to the Platonic sun that does not (see my discussion of Parkes in section 6 of Chapter 4). Zarathustra experiences the *rebirth* of his whole essence (the old man he meets in the valley notices that Zarathustra has altered, I “Zarathustra’s Prologue” 2: 122, 123) as he envisions the bright future of humanity purged from oppositional rationalistic blemishes: a mutual interdependence of all things is grounds for the affirmation of total existence through a single experience of joy. Zarathustra’s sun enjoys giving away its light to people, just as Zarathustra’s wild wisdom needs hands outstretched to take its honey. The sun distributes its golden light, while Zarathustra is to disseminate his golden wisdom among people. The sun is a silent interlocutor of Zarathustra, who learns from it his solar destiny, his solar cyclical course. Like the sun, Zarathustra must go down, giving away his light, and then rise again – only to promise and distribute “quiet wealth” in falling (Nazirov *Zarathustra* 45). Only the will’s bliss, not woe, can sacrifice itself for the sake of experiencing itself again and again as it bestows itself. The will enjoys giving away its joy, but this is the joy-versus-woe argument for the eternal recurrence that will be revealed much later, in “The Drunken Song” 10 in Part IV. Nietzsche’s introduction of the celestial body in the beginning of the book beckons to the importance of the use of diurnal symbols throughout the narrative.

It has been shown above that Zarathustra begins his journey by following the cycle of the sun. From “The History of an Error” we know that Zarathustra begins it at noon. In its sequel, *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, Zarathustra is observed addressing the sun and descending the mountain in the morning. The provision of the missing, yet implicit, diurnal symbols that well



match the descriptions of the scenes of Zarathustra turning thirty years old, i.e., his *maturity* (noon), leaving his lake and carrying his ashes to the mountain in *decline* (evening), and spending ten years in the mountain cave in solitude, i.e., his *death* (night), bring the symbolic diurnal cycle to completion at his awakening hour in the *morning*, his *rebirth* through the truth of the interdependence of all things. It has also thus been seen, through the diurnal symbols, that Zarathustra's identity has accordingly changed meaningfully through the cycle, expressing the variable sequence of eternal return, while he has remained the same creative individual throughout, as he has experienced the intensity of the same meaningful moment through every particular diurnal symbol, suggesting the moment of time, the meaningful differences exhibited by the diurnal symbols within the day cycle creatively and affirmatively countering the return of diurnal meaninglessness. The return of the diurnal symbols, therefore, has been shown to represent the eternal recurrence of the same.

## **2<sup>nd</sup> Day Cycle**

Zarathustra's further diurnal journey in the book unfolds within the framework of his communication with the people in the market place. He teaches them the Overhuman, a human being who creates beyond itself (I "Zarathustra's Prologue" 3 – 5: 124 – 131). The marketplace people, however, are deaf to his teachings, confusing the Overhuman with the ropedancer, who is about to perform for the crowd. The main event of the new day is the ropedancer scene (*ibid.* 6 – 8: 131 – 135), and the structure of the day cycle includes the following key happenings: the failure of Zarathustra's teaching, symbolised by the ropedancer's fall at *noon*; his figural dying together with the ropedancer's literal death in the *evening*; the protagonist's death sleep symbolised by his burying the corpse in the *night*; finally, Zarathustra experiencing a rebirth as a

new truth concerning companions is revealed to him in the *morning* (*ibid.* 9, 10: 135 – 137). Elaboration on this will provide a deeper insight into the second day cycle.

*Noon.* After his encounter with the old man, Zarathustra continues along the way, wandering into town. He meets a crowd in the market place and begins teaching them the Overhuman: „*Ich lehre euch den Übermenschen. Der Mensch ist Etwas, das überwunden werden soll. Was habt ihr gethan, ihn zu überwinden?*“ (I „Zarathustra’s Vorrede“ 3, *KGW* VI 1, 8: 13 – 15), or: “*I teach you the overman. Man is something that shall be overcome. What have you done to overcome him?*” (I “Zarathustra’s Prologue” 3: 124). He speaks of creation and destruction beyond oneself, of the human species being in danger: „Der Mensch ist ein Seil, geknüpft zwischen Thier und Übermensch, — ein Seil über einem Abgrunde. Ein gefährliches Hinüber, ein gefährliches Auf-dem-Wege, ein gefährliches Zurückblicken, ein gefährliches Schaudern und Stehenbleiben“ (I „Zarathustra’s Vorrede“ 4, *KGW* VI 1, 10: 25 – 29), or: “Man is a rope, tied between beast and overman, a rope over an abyss. A dangerous across, a dangerous on-the-way, a dangerous looking-back, a dangerous shuddering and stopping” (I “Zarathustra’s Prologue” 4: 126). He also speaks of sacrificial love and the great contempt (*ibid.* 3, 4: 124 – 128), some of the main characteristics of the ideal type of human he envisions as capable of combining by willing the eternal recurrence. What happens is that the herd is unable to accept his teachings, as a speech made in public cannot be heard by the masses. It can only be apprehended from within by the individual. He decides to reverse his approach by speaking about the last man (*ibid.* 5: 128 – 131), hoping that a change in methodology or content will have an influence. All Zarathustra gets from the people, however, is hatred and „Eis in ihrem Lachen“ (I „Zarathustra’s Vorrede“ 5, *KGW* VI 1, 15: 5), or “ice in their laughter” (I “Zarathustra’s Prologue” 5: 131). At about this time the ropedancer begins his performance (*ibid.* 6: 131, 132).

In “Figures of *Funambule*: Nietzsche’s Parable of the Ropedancer” (1994), Francesca Cauchi reads the parable of the ropedancer as Nietzsche’s “commentary on, or more precisely, an allegorical rendering of, an aphoristic metaphor which precedes it: ‘Man is a rope, tied between beast and *Übermensch* – a rope over an abyss’ ” (Cauchi 42). Accordingly, “...the ropedancer appears to represent a being who, wisely or unwisely, endeavours to create something beyond himself or, in other words, who strives towards an exalted vision of human perfection” (Cauchi 43). She further notes that both Nietzsche and Zarathustra identify themselves with the ropedancer, who represents seriousness and gravity, and with the buffoon, who symbolises irony or self-mockery, lightness or levity (*ibid.*). She concludes that “...Zarathustra [in the guise of the rope-dancer] fails to advance one step towards the *Übermensch* precisely because he lacks the ability to be at one and the same time both within society and above it [elevation symbolised by the height of the ropeway]” (Cauchi 60). The buffoon (Nietzsche), however, transcends it ironically. While Cauchi’s reading may sound right, it does not question the relation of the ropedancer scene to the doctrine of eternal recurrence, which is not revealed until “On the Vision and the Riddle”. The teleological conception of time represented by the rope, the linear image of eternity, has been previously shown disproved by the ropedancer’s fall (see section 5 of Chapter 2, pp. 67, 68).

There is yet a different approach to the consideration of the ropedancer scene – as a failed occurrence incorporated into the diurnal symbolism of the text. In particular, the ropedancer’s performance is scheduled for the hour of *noon* in *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*. The ropedancer moves along the rope during the daytime; he moves away from himself, the buffoon, Dionysus, the real (Cauchi 50) – night – towards himself, the *Übermensch*, Apollo, the ideal (*ibid.*) – day – and is supposed to attain the *Übermensch* in broad daylight, at *noon*. He fails to do so. My

interpretation suggests that Nietzsche describes this action as transpiring around noon since, when it is over, he mentions the coming of the evening. Symbolically considered, this climactic event reflects Zarathustra's failure – precisely at the hour of his *maturity* – to get his ripe message across to humanity so that it learns to create beyond itself. Such creativity pertains only to the Overhuman, who is able to bring the self and the world into unity by willing the eternal recurrence of all events. That is, what Zarathustra's teaching requires of (over)humanity is to learn to appreciate every moment of existence, including those that are woeful (IV "The Drunken Song" 10, 11). Zarathustra's teaching fails, the ropedancer falls. The ropedancer's symbolic failure thus frustrates Zarathustra's hope for the *Übermensch* arising from humanity at the hour of noon, the moment of supposed life affirmation through the eternal recurrence of the same. In this regard, it may also be suggested that the ropedancer's fall anticipates Zarathustra's fall into the well of eternity in "At Noon", the moment at which Zarathustra experiences the affirmation of the world through the eternal recurrence of the same.

*Evening.* As the ropedancer falls to the ground, the crowd rushes apart. The body hits the ground near Zarathustra. The ropedancer regains his consciousness. Aware that he is dying, he fears that the devil will now take him to hell. It is noteworthy that the ropedancer is the only human being whom Zarathustra treats well in the entire narrative: he pays respect to the performer by appreciating the fact that he has made danger his vocation; by consoling the dying man lying on the ground, fearing to be dragged by the devil to hell, that there is neither devil nor hell and that his soul will be dead even before his body, for which the man extends his hand as if in gratitude to Zarathustra just before he passes; and, finally, by promising to bury him with his own hands (I "Zarathustra's Prologue" 6: 132) (and fulfilling his promise (*ibid.* 8: 135)). „Inzwischen kam der Abend, und der Markt barg sich in Dunkelheit“ (I „Zarathustra's Vorrede“

7, *KGW* VI 1, 16: 24, 25), or “Meanwhile the evening came, and the marketplace hid in darkness” (I “Zarathustra’s Prologue” 7: 132). People scatter. Darkness rolls in. Zarathustra sits on the ground near the body, absorbed in thought and forgetting the time.<sup>130</sup> The whole scene after the fall, as becomes clear, transpires in the *evening*. Zarathustra feels he begins to *decline* in vigour, so much moved by what has just happened, but he knows he has to keep his promise to bury the body.

*Night.* „Endlich aber wurde es Nacht, und ein kalter Wind blies über den Einsamen... Dunkel ist die Nacht, dunkel sind die Wege Zarathustra’s“ (I „Zarathustra’s Vorrede“ 7, *KGW* VI 1, 16: 28, 29; 17: 10), or “At last night came, and a cold wind blew over the lonely one.... Dark is the night, dark are Zarathustra’s ways” (I “Zarathustra’s Prologue” 7: 132, 133). Zarathustra is not satisfied with his catch today: the corpse. He feels that he has been misunderstood: „Eine Mitte bin ich noch den Menschen zwischen einem Narren und einem Leichnam“ (I „Zarathustra’s Vorrede“ 7, *KGW* VI 1, 17: 8, 9), or: “To men I am still the mean between a fool and a corpse” (I “Zarathustra’s Prologue” 7: 133). When night falls, Zarathustra hoists the body on his back and starts walking. A man jumps to him, advising him to leave their town. He says that Zarathustra has not been killed because he has lowered himself by having associated with „dem todtten Hunde“ (I „Zarathustra’s Vorrede“ 8, *KGW* VI 1, 17: 25), or “the dead dog” (I “Zarathustra’s Prologue” 8: 133). The gravediggers Zarathustra meets look at him askew while mocking him and his “dead dog”. Zarathustra ignores them and continues on. He experiences an attack of hunger. When he comes across a house in the woods, he knocks on the door. To the elder behind the door asking who comes to his sleep, he responds: „Ein Lebendiger und ein Todter“ (I „Zarathustra’s Vorrede“ 8, *KGW* VI 1, 18: 25), or: “A living and a dead man”

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<sup>130</sup> Possibly this sad moment is, paradoxically, a prequel to the joyful moment in which he loses track of the time in “At Noon”.

(I “Zarathustra’s Prologue” 8: 134), thereby underlining the difference between the two, continuing persuasively: “Gebt mir zu essen und zu trinken... Der, welcher den Hungrigen speiset, erquickt seine eigene Seele: so spricht die Weisheit“ (I „Zarathustra’s Vorrede“ 8, *KGW* VI 1, 18: 25 – 28), or: “give me something to eat and to drink... he who feeds the hungry refreshes his own soul: thus speaks wisdom” (I “Zarathustra’s Prologue” 8: 134). Thus he seeks nourishment from an old man in the woods to sustain his life. The elder wonders why Zarathustra’s companion does not want to eat or drink, to which Zarathustra replies, again quite persuasively: „,Todt ist mein Gefährte, ich werde ihn schwerlich dazu überreden’ “ (I „Zarathustra’s Vorrede“ 8, *KGW* VI 1, 18: 33, 34), or: “My companion is dead. I shall hardly be able to persuade him” (I “Zarathustra’s Prologue” 8: 134). Although Zarathustra is weary of his (early-night) journey, he never tires of being ironical, but keeps his spirits up. He then wanders away and keeps his promise to the ropedancer to bury him: he lays the corpse in a hollow tree late night, or early morning (*ibid.* 8: 134, 135). According to Ritter, “[a]lthough he explains this unconventional burial as protection against wolves, it has a deeper symbolic meaning. By enclosing the rope-dancer in a living organism, Zarathustra endows him with continuing life” (Ritter 103). After the burial Zarathustra feels completely exhausted and falls asleep under the tree; „müden Leibes, aber mit einer unbewegten Seele“ (I „Zarathustra’s Vorrede“ 8, *KGW* VI 1, 19: 11, 12), or “his body weary but his soul unmoved” (I “Zarathustra’s Prologue” 8: 135). Ritter suggests that “...the prophet absorbs the aerialist’s spirit when he sleeps through the night by the corpse” (Ritter 103). Yet Zarathustra’s sleep and the corpse together symbolise his *death*; the action taking place in the (late) *night* time symbolic of silence, impotence, and inactivity.

*Morning.* Zarathustra sleeps until late morning: „Lange schlief Zarathustra, und nicht nur die Morgenröthe gieng über sein Anlitz, sondern auch der Vormittag“ (I „Zarathustra’s Vorrede“

9, *KGW VI 1*, 19: 14, 15), or: “For a long time Zarathustra slept, and not only dawn passed over his face but the morning too” (I “Zarathustra’s Prologue” 9: 135). “On awakening, Zarathustra feels himself reborn” (Ritter 103), Ritter rightly notes, for he experiences a new truth: „Dann erhob er sich schnell, wie ein Seefahrer, der mit Einem Male Land sieht, und jauchzte: denn er sah eine neue Wahrheit“ (I „Zarathustra’s Vorrede“ 9, *KGW VI 1*, 19: 17 – 19), or: “Then he rose quickly, like a seafarer who suddenly sees land, and jubilated, for he saw a new truth” (I “Zarathustra’s Prologue” 9: 135). Zarathustra’s spiritual *rebirth*, then, is symbolised by him discovering a new *truth* upon awakening in the *morning*: now he needs living companions, ones who could follow on their own, while creating their own values, as opposed to those dead, immovable, and unproductive ones in the marketplace; the corpse symbolising the herd, the underhumans: „Gefährten brauche ich und lebendige... Sondern lebendige Gefährten brauche ich, die mir folgen, weil sie sich selber folgen wollen — und dorthin, wo ich will... Die Mitschaffenden sucht der Schaffende, Die, welche neue Werthe auf neue Tafeln schreiben“ (I „Zarathustra’s Vorrede“ 9, *KGW VI 1*, 19: 21, 24, 25; 20: 13, 14), or: “Companions I need, living ones.... Living companions I need, who follow me because they want to follow themselves – wherever I want.... Fellow creators, the creator seeks – those who write new values on new tablets” (I “Zarathustra’s Prologue” 9: 135, 136).

The whole ropedancer and Zarathustra scene may be seen as an exchange of life. The ropedancer gives away his life in accordance with the Overhuman principle of self-sacrifice for the sake of a higher self, while Zarathustra immortalises the ropedancer’s feat by enclosing him in the womb of living, life-giving nature, which in itself, being a valiant deed, breathes new life into Zarathustra’s soul overnight so that he is rejuvenated in the morning. “What Zarathustra has experienced through the ropedancer determines his later life. The ropedancer’s death brings

spiritual rebirth to Zarathustra,” Ritter explains (104). Some part of Zarathustra dies with the rope-dancer’s death and his other part is reborn.

It is noteworthy that Zarathustra, as he did a day cycle ago, again experiences rebirth through the revelation of a new truth in the morning, which Nietzsche himself points out: „Zwischen Morgenröthe und Morgenröthe kam mir eine neue Wahrheit“ (I „Zarathustra’s Vorrede“ 9, *KGW* VI 1, 20: 27, 28), or: “Between dawn and dawn a new truth has come to me” (I “Zarathustra’s Prologue” 9: 136). The diurnal symbols in the second day cycle establish that Zarathustra’s identity has dramatically altered again: addressing his speeches to the crowd in the marketplace he is full of hope before they fall dead on their ears, just prior to the ropedancer’s noon performance. The fall and the failure finally stop him from associating with the mass, the goal of teaching in public unfulfilled. But he feels it is his duty to pay last respects to the ropedancer, who has proved courageous throughout his life, until its end, by burying him with his own hands, which ultimately exhausts him to the point that he falls asleep immediately and, some time later, awakens again full of vigour and new hope. Zarathustra appreciates every time/moment of the day cycle: without the failure of his day speeches at *noon* – at the time of his *maturity*, and the emotional impact he experienced following the ropedancer accident in the *evening* – his *decline*, aggravated by the humiliation he suffered from the gravediggers and the like in the (early) night time and the hard labour of carrying and burying the corpse in the (late) *night* time – his *death*, he would not have discovered his new *truth* the next *morning* – his *rebirth*. The repetition of the diurnal symbols, measured by Zarathustra’s following the rising and setting sun, represents the eternal return. The return of meaningful differences inaugurated by each particular diurnal symbol signifying the intensity of the meaningful moment through the variability of said symbols within the day cycle indicating the sequence of time, counteracts the



return of the herd's diurnal meaninglessness. Zarathustra's creative diurnal experience of his existence and affirmation of the entire day cycle by jubilating in the morning upon discovering the new truth represents his desire for and his actual realisation of the reconciliation of time and eternity.

The diurnal symbols of the second cycle are also shown to have repeated themselves by echoing back to those of the first day cycle. The narrative repetition of the diurnal symbols, i.e., the return of diurnal cycles, in its turn, represents the eternal recurrence on the narrative level, with the cycle standing for the meaningful moment, while the meaningful variability of the cycles indicates the sequence of time. The first cycle is characterised by the recognition of the historical error and the decision to bring the self and the world into unity, and the second cycle by bringing the news of the Overhuman (capable of that unity) to humanity, its subsequent failure and the recognition of the new truth: to speak to living companions only – both day cycles countering the return of diurnal meaninglessness pertaining to human existence (as opposed to overhuman life). Thus, the return of the diurnal symbols represents the eternal recurrence on both the narrative cyclical and the cyclical narrative level; the latter encompassed by the former, representing the ring of rings, or the ring of recurrence, i.e., affirmation, as implicit in the will willing itself.<sup>131</sup>

### **3<sup>rd</sup> Day Cycle**

After the new truth dawns upon him in the morning, Zarathustra feels the pressure of loneliness but gets visited by his animals, the eagle and the serpent, before he begins to deliver his speeches, as though to keep himself company, while at the same time attracting pupils, whom he has to leave soon so that they find their own ways, thus repaying him as a teacher. The third

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<sup>131</sup> The narrative cyclical level refers to the narrative created by diurnal cycles, while the cyclical narrative level pertains to the narrative constituted by the symbols within a particular diurnal cycle.

day cycle includes the following key actions. Zarathustra's animals, eagle and serpent, appear in the sky at *noon*, looking for Zarathustra to see if he is still alive ("Zarathustra's Prologue" 10), which he is, thanks to his ability to overcome himself ("On the Three Metamorphoses"). Several happenings take place expressly in the *evening*: Zarathustra's critique of the preachers of sleep ("On the Teachers of Virtue") and life after death ("On the Afterworldly"), and of the despisers of the body ("On the Despisers of the Body"); his encounter with the little old woman and her little truth ("On Little Old and Young Women"); his speech on dying at the right time ("On Free Death"); and his abandonment of his disciples and his farewell gift ("On the Gift-Giving Virtue" 3) – all symbolic of decline in body and mind. The latter three (chapters) counteract the former three on grounds of bodily decay being of two types: positive and negative. Further, Zarathustra spends again the *night* of months and years in the mountain cave, undergoing death and destruction, while increasing his wisdom, before he finally awakens one *morning* – through rebirth and creative transformation – to a new truth: his teaching has been distorted ("The Child with the Mirror"). This complex, though chronological, succession of diurnal symbols needs an insightful elaboration.

*Noon.* Now that the new truth has come to Zarathustra upon his awakening in the morning, he begins expanding upon it, saying that he no longer wishes to be the shepherd of the dead but rather will find hermits to whom he will sing his songs (I "Zarathustra's Prologue" 9: 136). His thoughts and speech extend into the noon time: „Diess hatte Zarathustra zu seinem Herzen gesprochen, als die Sonne im Mittag stand: da blickte er fragend in die Höhe — denn er hörte über sich den scharfen Ruf eines Vogels. Und siehe! Ein Adler zog in weiten Kreisen durch die Luft, und an ihm hieng eine Schlange, nicht einer Beute gleich, sondern einer Freundin: denn sie hielt sich um seinen Hals geringelt“ (I „Zarathustra's Vorrede“ 10, *KGW* VI 1, 21: 8 – 13),

or: “This is what Zarathustra had told his heart when the sun stood high at noon; then he looked into the air, questioning, for overhead he heard the sharp call of a bird. And behold! An eagle soared through the sky in wide circles, and on him there hung a serpent, not like prey but like a friend: for she kept herself wound around his neck” (I “Zarathustra’s Prologue” 10: 136, 137). So we observe Zarathustra’s animals, the eagle and the serpent, appearing in the sky at *noon* to see if his creative existence has attained *fulfillment*. However, this, Zarathustra realises, is only possible if he is as wise as his serpent and as proud as his eagle. Wisdom makes his pride clever, while pride elevates wisdom. And if wisdom leaves him one day, he wishes his pride to fly with it too. But, in order to be wise and creative like a child, he has to have a strong camel and lion spirit to overcome himself (the old values in him) every moment of his life (“On the Three Metamorphoses”).<sup>132</sup> As is clear, the symbol of noon is related to Zarathustra’s meaningful existence and existential maturity. He is observed to be set firmly on keeping up with his creative, affirmative mode of living, as according to the eternal recurrence.

*Evening.* When Zarathustra has vented on the three metamorphoses of the spirit under the sun’s zenith, he hears something opposed to his philosophy of the noon, which affects him by virtue of the evening of its values. There are several incidents in the text, most of which take place explicitly in the evening time. A brief outline will help to gauge the meaning of this diurnal symbol. Zarathustra’s critique of the wise man’s sermon on waking in the day and sleeping in the night occurs, tentatively, in the *evening* – as an evening preparation for night sleep – symbolic of the sleepy *decline* of the teacher/preacher of virtue himself (“On the Teachers of Virtue”): „Seine Weisheit heisst: wachen, um gut zu schlafen“ (I „Von den Lehrstühlen der Tugend“, *KGW* VI 1, 30: 19), or: “His wisdom is: to wake in order to sleep well” (I “On the Teachers of

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<sup>132</sup> For the three metamorphoses of the spirit see my discussion of Gooding-Williams in my “Concluding Thoughts on the Diurnal Structure”, pp. 371 – 375.

Virtue” 142). Zarathustra finds the preacher’s teachings „mohnblumige Tugenden“ (I „Von den Lehrstühlen der Tugend“, *KGW* VI 1, 30: 24), or “opiate virtues” (I “On the Teachers of Virtue” 142) – unproductive virtues, ones that put the wakeful, creative mind to sleep: „Weisheit der Schlaf ohne Träume: sie kannten keinen bessern Sinn des Lebens“ (I „Von den Lehrstühlen der Tugend“, *KGW* VI 1, 30: 25, 26), or: “wisdom was the sleep without dreams: they knew no better meaning of life” (I “On the Teachers of Virtue” 142), whereas, according to Zarathustra, dreams are the source of genuine wisdom; and these preachers themselves are quite dreamy, and sickly dreamy, for it was they who created all afterworlds – due to their bodies being sick of themselves (I “On the Afterworldly” 144) – the result of which, according to Zarathustra’s healthy body that speaks of the meaning of life on earth (*ibid.* 145), and not in heaven, is that they are unable to create beyond themselves (I “On the Despisers of the Body” 147). Here the evening, during which the speeches take place, symbolises the decay of the body.

However, there is another evening and a different decline of the body – ones that are fruitful. From Zarathustra’s evening conversation with the questioner – „ ,Was schleichst du so scheu durch die Dämmerung, Zarathustra?’ “ (I „Von alten und jungen Weiblein“, *KGW* VI 1, 80: 2, 3), or: “ ‘Why do you steal so cautiously through the twilight, Zarathustra?’ ” (I “On Little Old and Young Women” 177), which takes the form of a reproduction of the conversation he has had earlier this evening with the old woman, „Als ich heute allein meines Weges gieng, zur Stunde, wo die Sonne sinkt, begegnete mir ein altes Weiblein und redete also zu meiner Seele...“ (I „Von alten und jungen Weiblein“, *KGW* VI 1, 80: 11 – 13), or: “ ‘When I went on my way today, alone, at the hour when the sun goes down, I met a little old woman who spoke thus to my soul...’ ” (I “On Little Old and Young Women” 177) – we learn that, although she is declining in age, she still gives him her little truth: „ ,Du gehst zu Frauen? Vergiss die Peitsche nicht!’ —“ (I

„Von alten und jungen Weiblein“, *KGW* VI 1, 82: 18), or: “ ‘You are going to women? Do not forget the whip!’ ” (I “On Little Old and Young Women” 179). The evening is thus symbolic here of the gift of a dying wise human being.

Furthermore, in contradistinction with (unfruitful living and) dying at the wrong time – with those of preachers of “sleep” virtue, declining in their bodies, about to drop off – Zarathustra compares fruitful (living and) dying with the (living and) dying of the setting sun: „In eurem Sterben soll noch euer Geist und eure Tugend glühn, gleich einem Abendroth um die Erde: oder aber das Sterben ist euch schlecht gerathen“ (I „Vom freien Tode“, *KGW* VI 1, 91: 25 – 27), or: “In your dying, your spirit and virtue should still glow like a sunset around the earth: else your dying has turned out badly” (I “On Free Death” 185). Zarathustra’s speech on dying at the right time in “On Free Death”, in the evening of one’s life, as the sun dies in the evening after giving away its light, works up to his own creative dying at the right time, indicated by his parting with his friends in “On the Gift-Giving Virtue” 3 as he gives them his farewell gift in the evening, his decline symbolic of the setting sun: „Nun heisse ich euch, mich verlieren und euch finden; und erst, wenn ihr mich Alle verleugnet habt, will ich euch wiederkehren“ (I „Von der schenkenden Tugend“ 3, *KGW* VI 1, 97: 28, 29), or: “Now I bid you lose me and find yourselves; and only when you have all denied me will I return to you” (I “On the Gift-Giving Virtue” 3: 190). Zarathustra has to leave but he will return to celebrate the great noon, which he explains in diurnal cyclical terms, while linking it to the idea of eternal recurrence (the sun associated, by extension, with the serpent of knowledge lying coiled in the sun – Nietzsche’s first notes on eternal return as noon and eternity – symbolising his abysmal thought<sup>133</sup>):

Und das ist der grosse Mittag, da der Mensch auf der Mitte seiner Bahn steht zwischen Thier und Übermensch und seinen Weg zum Abende als seine höchste Hoffnung feiert:

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<sup>133</sup> See my discussion of “At Noon” in section 15 of Chapter 6, pp. 245 – 249. See also my discussion of Jaspers and Thatcher in Chapter 3, pp. 90 – 93 and 100 – 104, respectively.

denn es ist der Weg zu einem neuen Morgen. Allda wird sich der Untergehende selber segnen, dass er ein Hinübergehender sei; und die Sonne seiner Erkenntniss wird ihm in Mittage stehn. „*Todt sind alle Götter: nun wollen wir, dass der Übermensch lebe.*“ — diess sei einst am grossen Mittage unser letzter Wille! — (I „Von der schenkenden Tugend“ 3, *KGW VI 1*, 98: 6 – 15),

or:

And that is the great noon when man stands in the middle of his way between beast and overman and celebrates his way to the evening as his highest hope: for it is the way to a new morning. Then will he who goes under bless himself for being one who goes over and beyond; and the sun of his knowledge will stand at high noon for him. “*Dead are all gods: now we want the overman to live*” – on that great noon, let this be our last will (I “On the Gift-Giving Virtue” 3: 190, 191).

While this passage sets the ground for the discussion of diurnal symbols in relation to the idea of eternal recurrence, its context, speaking in diurnal terms, is the evening time, when Zarathustra takes leave of his disciples, symbolic of his going-under – descent, or sunset – which is his going-over – ascent, or sunrise. Decline and decay, then, are associated with the evening, in both positive, productive and negative, unproductive ways.

*Night.* After abandoning his disciples, Zarathustra goes into the mountains a second time in “The Child with the Mirror”. He bears the image of a sower who, after scattering his seed in the hearts of his chosen ones, waits for their growth (II “The Child with the Mirror” 195). He feels he still has many gifts to give to his friends, finding it hard to restrain bestowing his love on his dear ones. As two day cycles ago, Zarathustra spends again „Monde und Jahre“ (II „Das Kind mit dem Spiegel“, *KGW VI 1*, 101: 9), or “months and years” (II “The Child with the Mirror” 195) in solitude in his mountain cave, and his wisdom increases and causes him pain with its overabundance (*ibid.*). Zarathustra clearly undergoes a transformation from one who has spoken only to a chosen few to one who feels the necessity to part with them to one who is in need of refilling on wisdom, the latter implying the state of emptiness, *death* and destruction experienced notably in the time characterised symbolically as the *night* of months and years. Pressed by the

weight of his own thoughts and constantly growing wisdom under lonely conditions, Zarathustra experiences a dream vision from which he wakes up to his sober interpretation of it. The latter, however, is characterised by the next diurnal symbol in sequence.

*Morning.* „Eines Morgens aber wachte er schon vor der Morgenröthe auf, besann sich lange auf seinem Lager und sprach endlich zu seinem Herzen“ (II „Das Kind mit dem Spiegel“, *KGW* VI 1, 101: 11 – 13), or “One morning, however, he woke even before the dawn, reflected long, lying on his bed, and at last spoke to his heart” (II “The Child with the Mirror” 195), wondering why he was startled in his dream. He speaks of a child with a mirror who approached him in his dream, asking him to look in it and recognise himself. What Zarathustra saw in the mirror was not himself but the devil. He interprets this sign as follows: „,meine *Lehre* ist in Gefahr, Unkraut will Weizen heissen! Meine Feinde sind mächtig worden und haben meiner Lehre Bildniss entstellt, also, dass meine Liebsten sich der Gaben schämen müssen, die ich ihnen gab. Verloren giengen mir meine Freunde; die Stunde kam mir, meine Verlorenen zu suchen!’ —“ (II „Das Kind mit dem Spiegel“, *KGW* VI 1, 101: 22, 23; 102: 1 – 5), or: “ ‘my *teaching* is in danger; weeds pose as wheat. My enemies have grown powerful and have distorted my teaching till those dearest to me must be ashamed of the gifts I gave them. I have lost my friends; the hour has come to seek my lost ones’ ” (II “The Child with the Mirror” 195). Zarathustra makes use of many images in connection with his transformation – images of transformation, passion, love, happiness, searching, wisdom, and giving. He is a seer and singer, the serpent and the eagle (symbols of eternal return) look at him in amazement, for dawn is reflected in his face, his happiness is foolish (*ibid.* 195), his love is overflowing in rivers, he has become the mouth of a roaring stream, he is a self-sufficient lake, he leaps into the chariot of a storm, he wants to sweep over seas in search of his friends on the blessed isles, he rides his wildest horse, he experiences

the tension of his violent cloud (*ibid.* 196), his happiness is stormy, and his lioness wisdom finally brings forth her young to be laid on the gentle turf of his beloved ones (*ibid.* 197). His *rebirth* is due to the new *truth* that has dawned upon him in the *morning*: „Neue Wege gehe ich, eine neue Rede kommt mir; müde wurde ich, gleich allen Schaffenden, der alten Zungen. Nicht will mein Geist mehr auf abgelaufenen Sohlen wandeln“ (II „Das Kind mit dem Spiegel“, *KGW* VI 1, 102: 34; 103: 1, 2), or: “New ways I go, a new speech comes to me; weary I grow, like all creators, of the old tongues. My spirit no longer wants to walk on worn soles” (II “The Child with the Mirror” 195). Apparently, Zarathustra prefers new ideas expressed in new words.<sup>134</sup> He should also protect his teachings from his enemies, while staying away from the old. This is the completion of the third diurnal cycle.

In this day cycle we have seen Zarathustra’s identity alter from one who finds his strength to stay alive at *noon* by overcoming himself, i.e., the frustration of his *maturity*, to one who knows how to live and die – die at the right time, i.e., meaningfully, or fruitfully, as in the evening of his life, glowing like the sunset after the sun has set – that is, one who knows the true meaning of life and life’s *decline* with death implications in the *evening* – to one who accumulates wisdom again through *death* and transformation at *night* in the mountain cave, as when in the dark, night-time seclusion of lonely existence, and finally, to one who is reborn through a new *truth* at dawn: always to protect the new and never to belong to the old – Zarathustra’s new *rebirth* in the *morning*. The repetition of the diurnal symbols that have spawned these various meaningful differences, therefore, represents the eternal recurrence of the same on the contextual, cyclical narrative level, i.e., on the level of the diurnal cycle. The variability of meanings expressed by said symbols indicates the sequence of eternal recurrence, while the meaningful diurnal symbol, taken alone, stands for the moment of time.

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<sup>134</sup> See my discussion of Nietzsche’s original language in Chapter 3, pp. 85 – 87.



On the narrative cyclical level, however, the first three diurnal cycles each have different meanings: the recognition of the historical error and the decision to unite the self and the world (1<sup>st</sup> day cycle); the failed communication of the news of the Overhuman who is capable of the properties of the first cycle, resulting in the decision to seek living companions (2<sup>nd</sup> day cycle); and the methodology of learning and teaching living companions self-overcoming and fruitful living and dying, including staying aware of the possibility that one's (Zarathustra's) teaching (or giving) may be distorted (3<sup>rd</sup> day cycle). Together they express the sequence of eternal recurrence, while each particular day cycle indicates the moment of endlessly recurrent eternity. The return of meaningful differences inaugurated by both the narrative cyclical and the cyclical narrative return of diurnal symbols counter the return of diurnal meaninglessness on both levels, the return of diurnal symbols contained within the return of symbolic diurnal cycles, thereby creating the ring of rings, the ring of recurrence, i.e., affirmation, as implicit in the will willing itself.

#### **4<sup>th</sup> Day Cycle**

After letting his wild wisdom overflow in rivers of happiness, Zarathustra's dream to reach the happy isles comes true: his teachings attain maturity around *noon* in "Upon the Blessed Isles". Later, in his recollections, the sadness of decay comes over him in the *evening*, right after the maidens' light dance is over in "The Dance Song". In "The Night Song", his melancholy turns overly solitary: Zarathustra speaks of his ultimate solitude and ultimate richness: the loneliness of the sun he brings death to him in the *night*, while the plenitude of his own sunlight burns him with impassioned love. In "On Immaculate Perception", he finally sees his solar counterpart – the sun – rising in the *morning* and bringing the sea up to its height, while

experiencing rebirth through a new truth: all day, solar love elevates all night-moon knowledge to its height. Let us follow through the fourth cycle of diurnal symbols in more detail.

*Noon.* In “Upon the Blessed Isles”, Zarathustra speaks of the *maturity*, fullness, and overabundance of his teachings, comparing them to ripe figs falling from the trees in the autumn, an action taking place around *noon* that is well matched by the characteristics of his ripe speeches: „Die Feigen fallen von den Bäumen, sie sind gut und süß; und indem sie fallen, reisst ihnen die rothe Haut. Ein Nordwind bin ich reifen Feigen. Also, gleich Feigen, fallen euch diese Lehren zu, meine Freunde: nun trinkt ihren Saft und ihr süßes Fleisch! Herbst ist es umher und reiner Himmel und Nachmittag. Seht, welche Fülle ist um uns!“ (II „Auf den glückseligen Inseln“, *KGW* VI 1, 105: 1 – 7), or: “The figs are falling from the trees; they are good and sweet; and as they fall, their red skin bursts. I am north wind to ripe figs. Thus, like figs, these teachings fall to you, my friends; now consume their juice and their sweet meat. It is autumn about us, and pure sky and afternoon. Behold what fullness about us!” (II “Upon the Blessed Isles” 197). Since „Gott ist eine Muthmaassung“, „Alles Unvergängliche — das ist nur ein Gleichniss! Und die Dichter lügen zuviel“ and „von Zeit und Werden sollen die besten Gleichnisse reden: ein Lob sollen sie sein und eine Rechtfertigung aller Vergänglichkeit!“ (II „Auf den glückseligen Inseln“, *KGW* VI 1, 106: 14, 27 – 31), or: “God is a conjecture”, “[all] the permanent – that is only a parable. And the poets lie too much” and “it is of time and becoming that the best parables should speak: let them be a praise and a justification of all impermanence” (II “Upon the Blessed Isles” 198, 199), the circular and, especially, the cyclical symbols Nietzsche has chosen for the eternal recurrence are a perfect parable, for both express creative impermanence. As impermanence causes suffering, Zarathustra’s creative “[w]illing liberates” [„*Wollen befreit*“] him from it, his will’s destiny being to will change (II „Auf den glückseligen Inseln“, *KGW* VI 1,

107: 16; II “Upon the Blessed Isles” 199). Yet suffering is needed for creation (*ibid.*). Here Zarathustra, being aware of his own willing transformation and change which engages his willing to make every moment or time of the day different, does not only experience his maturity at the hour of noon but also discloses the core of his idea of eternal recurrence: the will’s joy begets and becomes (*ibid.*) as it affirms all impermanence, all time and becoming, including everyday, diurnal existence.

*Evening.* Since the time of the day characterised by the diurnal symbol of evening is given as a recollection in “The Dancing Song”, following “The Night Song” sung in the nighttime, it would be plausible to suppose that this recollection takes place after the night; and the action in “The Dancing Song” before the chapter it follows. „Eines Abends gieng Zarathustra mit seinen Jüngern durch den Wald; und als er nach einem Brunnen suchte, siehe, da kam er auf eine grüne Wiese, die von Bäumen und Gebüsch still umstanden war: auf der tanzten Mädchen mit einander“ (II „Das Tanzlied“, *KGW* VI 1, 135: 1 – 5), or: “One evening Zarathustra walked through a forest with his disciples; and as he sought a well, behold, he came upon a green meadow, silently surrounded by trees and shrubs, and upon it girls were dancing with each other” (II “The Dancing Song” 219). He tells the maidens not to cease dancing as it keeps away the spirit of gravity, his arch-enemy, whom he fights in “On the Vision and the Riddle” – thereby invoking the idea of eternal recurrence as affirmation of life-enhancing, creative, light existence, one as revealed through dance.<sup>135</sup> In his song Zarathustra speaks with life, the changeable woman, whom he loves. He finds her very similar to wisdom: indeed, our wisdom reflects our existence, and our existence, our wisdom. When, however, the dance is over and the girls leave, Zarathustra grows as melancholy as the silent, thoughtful evening, for there is no light dancing to

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<sup>135</sup> See my discussion of Parkes on dance as the revelation of eternal recurrence in section 4 of Chapter 4, on pp. 119 – 121.

keep his spirits up. Therefore he asks forgiveness of his disciples: „Die Sonne ist lange schon hinunter, sagte er endlich; die Wiese ist feucht, von den Wäldern her kommt Kühle... Was! Du lebst noch, Zarathustra?... Ist es nicht Thorheit, noch zu leben? — Ach, meine Freunde, der Abend ist es, der so aus mir fragt. Vergebt mir meine Traurigkeit! Abend ward es: vergebt mir, dass es Abend ward!“ (II „Das Tanzlied“, *KGW* VI 1, 137: 22 – 30), or: “The sun has set long ago, he said at last; the meadow is moist, a chill comes from the woods... ‘What? Are you still alive, Zarathustra?... Is it not folly to be still alive? Alas, my friends, it is the evening that asks thus through me. Forgive me my sadness. Evening has come; forgive me that evening has come’” (II “The Dancing Song” 221, 222). Zarathustra’s melancholic *decline*, now that the dancing maidens of existence are gone, is thus symbolised by the *evening*. But he feels even lonelier come the night.

*Night*. In “The Night Song”, Zarathustra is overwhelmed by the love he experiences at night: „Nacht ist es: nun reden lauter alle springenden Brunnen. Und auch meine Seele ist ein springender Brunnen. Nacht ist es: nun erst erwachen alle Lieder der Liebenden. Und auch meine Seele ist das Lied eines Liebenden...“ (II „Das Nachtlid“, *KGW* VI 1, 132: 1 – 5), or: “Night has come; now all fountains speak more loudly. And my soul too is a fountain. Night has come; only now all the songs of lovers awaken. And my soul too is the song of a lover...” (II “The Night Song” 217). He wishes he had less light within himself, but he is aware that his overrichness bespeaks his solitude, and his solitude, the shortage of those capable of receiving his overexuberance: „Licht bin ich: ach, dass ich Nacht wäre! Aber diess ist meine Einsamkeit, dass ich von Licht umgürtet bin. Ach, dass ich dunkel wäre und nächtig! Wie wollte ich an den Brüsten des Lichts saugen!“ (II „Das Nachtlid“, *KGW* VI 1, 132: 9 – 12), or: “Light am I; ah, that I were night! But this is my loneliness that I am girt with light. Ah, that I were dark and

nocturnal! How I would suck at the breasts of light!” (II “The Night Song” 217). Zarathustra feels extremely lonely yet filled with light. He wants to crave another’s light, „[a]ber ich lebe in meinem eignen Lichte, ich trinke die Flammen in mich zurück, die aus mir brechen. Ich kenne das Glück des Nehmenden nicht“ (II „Das Nachtlid“, *KGW* VI 1, 132: 16, 17), or: “[b]ut I live in my own light; I drink back into myself the flames that break out of me. I do not know the happiness of those who receive...” (II “The Night Song” 218). For the only happiness he knows is of giving, of which he speaks by using a few examples of oxymoron to express the union of opposites through the affirmation of eternal return: „Das ist meine Armuth, dass meine Hand niemals ausruht vom Schenken; das ist mein Neid, dass ich wartende Augen sehe und die erhellten Nächte der Sehnsucht. Oh Unseligkeit aller Schenkenden! Oh Verfinsterung meiner Sonne! Oh Begierde nach Begehren! Oh Heisshunger in der Sättigung!“ (II „Das Nachtlid“, *KGW* VI 1, 132: 20 – 23; 133: 1, 2), or: “This is my poverty, that my hand never rests from giving; this is my envy, that I see waiting eyes and the lit-up nights of longing. Oh, wretchedness of all givers! Oh, darkening of my sun! Oh, craving to crave! Oh, ravenous hunger in satiation!” (II “The Night Song” 218).<sup>136</sup> He seems to lament it to the point that he begins to desire to take back his gifts: „Ein Hunger wächst aus meiner Schönheit: wehethun möchte ich Denen, welchen ich leuchte, berauben möchte ich meine Beschenkten: — also hungere ich nach Bosheit... Solche Rache sinnt meine Fülle aus; solche Tücke quillt aus meiner Einsamkeit“ (II „Das Nachtlid“, *KGW* VI 1, 133: 6 – 8, 12, 13), or: “A hunger grows out of my beauty: I should like to hurt those for whom I shine. I should like to rob those to whom I give. Thus do I hunger for malice... Such revenge my fullness plots: such spite wells up out of my loneliness” (II “The Night Song” 218). As he gives off his light, the bliss of the light source goes out, making him lonely and silent:

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<sup>136</sup> Implicit oxymorons: ‘rich poverty’, ‘envious richness’, ‘solar nights’, ‘the poor rich’, ‘dark sun’, ‘richness craving to become poor’, ‘hungry satiation’, and others.

„Mein Glück im Schenken erstarb im Schenken... Oh Einsamkeit aller Schenkenden! Oh Schweigsamkeit aller Leuchtenden!“ (II „Das Nachtlid“, *KGW* VI 1, 133: 14, 22, 23), or: “My happiness in giving died in giving... Oh, the loneliness of all givers! Oh, the taciturnity of all who shine!” (II “The Night Song” 218). But then again he accumulates his light only to give it away:

Nacht ist es: ach dass ich Licht sein muss! Und Durst nach Nächtigem! Und Einsamkeit!  
Nacht ist es: nun bricht wie ein Born aus mir mein Verlangen, — nach Rede verlangt mich. Nacht ist es: nun reden lauter alle springenden Brunnen. Und auch meine Seele ist ein springender Brunnen. Nacht ist es: nun erst erwachen alle Lieder der Liebenden. Und auch meine Seele ist das Lied eines Liebenden. — (II „Das Nachtlid“, *KGW* VI 1, 134: 5 – 12),

or: “Night has come: alas, that I must be light! And thirst for the nocturnal! And loneliness! Night has come: now my craving breaks out of me like a well; to speak I crave. Night has come; now all fountains speak more loudly. And my soul too is a fountain. Night has come; now all the songs of lovers awaken. And my soul too is the song of a lover” (II “The Night Song” 219).<sup>137</sup>

We have seen that, overall, Zarathustra is lonely and has himself for company, poor and overrich, hungry and sated, loving and malicious. While the union of these seeming opposites anticipates his experience of the reconciliation of time and sequence in “At Noon” and its subsequent revelation in “The Drunken Song” 10, it characterises Zarathustra as a complete individual: he experiences a valiant *death* at *night* through the noble giving of his light gift; but as soon as his happiness dies, it is brought back into existence by his will willing itself, in self-affirmation.

*Morning*. Even though the action in “On Immaculate Perception” also takes place during the night, and also as a recollection, it is viewed from the perspective of the morning, as is evident from the chapter’s ending. Zarathustra speaks of pure perception – an impossibility in itself – as receiving, represented by the moon reflecting the sunlight – as feigning light: „Als

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<sup>137</sup> Implicit oxymorons: ‘the light thirsting for darkness’, ‘craving for loneliness and to speak (to others)’, and ‘awakening to sing in the sleepy night’s silence’.

gestern der Mond aufgieng, währte ich, dass er eine Sonne gebären wolle: so breit und trüchtig lag er am Horizonte. Aber ein Lügner war er mir mit seiner Schwangerschaft; und eher noch will ich an den Mann im Monde glauben als an das Weib“ (II „Von der unbefleckten Erkenntniss“, *KGW* VI 1, 152: 1 – 6), or: “When the moon rose yesterday I fancied that she wanted to give birth to a sun: so broad and heavy she lay on the horizon. But she lied to me with her pregnancy; and I should sooner believe in the man in the moon than in the woman” (II “On Immaculate Perception” 233). While the moon scene occurs in the night throughout the chapter, the sun scene, which comes at the end, transpires in the morning. In contrast with the fake knowledge that the “pure” perceivers receive with their dead will (*ibid.* 234), Zarathustra speaks of genuine love and knowledge that the willing creators give, as symbolised by the sun’s love of the earth and the deep sea now that the moon has retired: „...da kam mir der Tag... zu Ende gieng des Mondes Liebschaft! Seht doch hin! Ertappt und bleich steht er da — vor der Morgenröthe! Denn schon kommt sie, die Glühende, — *ihre* Liebe zur Erde kommt! Unschuld und Schöpfer-Begier ist alle Sonnen-Liebe!“ (II „Von der unbefleckten Erkenntniss“, *KGW* VI 1, 154: 27 – 33), or: “...the day dawned on me... the moon’s love has come to an end. Look there! Caught and pale he stands there, confronted by the dawn. For already she approaches, glowing; her love for the earth approaches. All solar love is innocence and creative longing” (II “On Immaculate Perception” 236). Nietzsche’s love imagery is outstanding here: it marries the high sun and the low sea through the former’s passion: „Am Meere will sie saugen und seine Tiefe zu sich in die Höhe trinken: da hebt sich die Begierde des Meeres mit tausend Brüsten. Geküsst und gesaugt *will* es sein vom Durste der Sonne... Wahrlich, der Sonne gleich liebe ich das Leben und alle tiefen Meere. Und diess heisst *mir* Erkenntniss: alles Tiefe soll hinauf – zu meiner Höhe!“ (II „Von der unbefleckten Erkenntniss“, *KGW* VI 1, 155: 3 – 6, 9 – 12), or: “She would suck at the sea and

drink its depth into her heights; and the sea's desire rises toward her with a thousand breasts. It wants to be kissed and sucked by the thirst of the sun... Verily, like the sun I love life and all deep seas. And this is what perceptive knowledge means to me: all that is deep shall rise up to my heights" (II "On Immaculate Perception" 236). In this sense, the new *truth* that has caused Zarathustra's *rebirth* this morning is that only solar love is capable of bringing everything earthly and sea-like up into its heaven, i.e., only passionate affirmation and affirmation of all existence through the eternal return can bring forth genuine knowledge.

On the cyclical narrative level, the repetition of the diurnal symbols in the order outlined above, i.e., worked out to meet the natural sequence of a day cycle, but not without the grounds for such adjustments, symbolises the idea of eternal recurrence. The meaningful differences inaugurated by the same creative Zarathustra's ever-changing diurnal identity – from the *maturity* of his fig-ripe speeches around *noon* to his melancholic *decline* in the *evening* due to the oppressive spirit of gravity to his killing solitude bringing creative, light-(and life-)giving *death* at *night* to his solar *rebirth* through the *truth* of his impassioned love and knowledge in the *morning* – indicate the variable sequence of time, while a particular diurnal symbol signifies the same meaningful moment.

On the narrative cyclical level, however, the four diurnal cycles so far considered signify, through their meaningful plurality, the sequence of eternal return, while each particular day cycle, by expressing same meaningfulness, represents the moment, with each concerning a different topic: the historical error of splitting the world into opposites and the decision to rectify it (1<sup>st</sup> day cycle); the failed teaching of the Overhuman's unitary abilities to (dead) people (2<sup>nd</sup> day cycle); the methodology of learning and teaching (living) hermits through the meaningful dying in self-overcoming while being on guard against one's teachings being distorted by



enemies (3<sup>rd</sup> day cycle); and the mature teachings admixed with light jolly dance and intended to be given out of the plenitude of love and knowledge (4<sup>th</sup> day cycle). The return of meaningful differences and sameness inaugurated by both the narrative cyclical and the cyclical narrative recurrence of diurnal symbols counteract the return of diurnal meaninglessness on both levels. It is noteworthy, as always, that the return of diurnal symbols is comprised by the return of symbolic diurnal cycles, thereby forming the so-called ring of rings, the ring of recurrence, i.e., total affirmation of existence, as implicit in the will willing itself.

### **5<sup>th</sup> Day Cycle**

After relating, in the morning, the prospect of the height of the sun being joined with the depth of the sea, Zarathustra goes on to speak of his own reconciling the golden bowels of the earth with its muddy surface in “On Great Events”: his maturity is manifested through the flight of his own shadow into the volcano at *noon*. In “The Stillest Hour”, however, he experiences a spiritual decline when confronted by the Stillest Hour in the *evening* and now has to leave his disciples a second time. In “The Wanderer”, he finally summons all the courage he has to ascend the mountain ridge, and as he overcomes the peak he goes through emotional turmoil – through *death* and transformation, the content of which, I hold, is revealed in next the chapter. In “On the Vision and the Riddle”, after overcoming his own mountain in the previous chapter, Zarathustra is observed to have experienced a mysterious rebirth as he has reached the other shore of possibilities by *morning*. Elaboration on the setting for these diurnal symbols will shed more light on the fifth day cycle.

*Noon*. In “On Great Events” we learn that Zarathustra is staying on the blessed isles with his disciples. We hear the author relate that near the blessed isles there is an island with a fire-spewing mountain and that the seamen of a ship anchored at it observe Zarathustra’s shadow

flying into the volcano around the time of noon: „Gegen die Stunde des Mittags aber, da der Capitän und seine Leute wieder beisammen waren, sahen sie plötzlich durch die Luft einen Mann auf sich zukommen, und eine Stimme sagte deutlich: ‚es ist Zeit! Es ist die höchste Zeit!’... ‚...da fährt Zarathustra zur Hölle!’—“ (II „Von grossen Ereignissen“, *KGW* VI 1, 163: 12 – 16, 22, 23), or: “Around noon, however, when the captain and his men were together again, they suddenly saw a man approach through the air, and a voice said distinctly, ‘It is time! It is high time!’... It was Zarathustra... ‘...descending to hell!’ ” (II “On Great Events” 242). Zarathustra is said to appear five days after the incident to relate to his disciples what actually happened on the smoking mountain, which he calls the fire hound. He says he decided to get to the bottom of this mysterious monster. We find that its bellowing, smoke and the mud it takes from the surface symbolise the empty noise of the church and the state. To the fire hound Zarathustra opposes another fire hound that really speaks from the heart of the earth. It exhales gold and laughter, for „ ‚das Herz der Erde ist von Gold’ “ (II „Von grossen Ereignissen“, *KGW* VI 1, 166: 25, 26), or “*the heart of the earth is of gold*” (II “On Great Events” 244). Zarathustra’s meaning is that: „Die grössten Ereignisse — das sind nicht unsre lautesten, sondern unsre stillsten Stunden. Nicht um die Erfinder von neuem Lärme: um die Erfinder von neuen Werthen dreht sich die Welt; *unhörbar* dreht sie sich“ (II „Von grossen Ereignissen“, *KGW* VI 1, 165: 10 – 14), or: “the greatest events – they are not our loudest but our stillest hours. Not around the inventors of new noise, but around the inventors of new values does the world revolve; it revolves *inaudibly*” (II “On Great Events” 243). The reconciliation of silence and noise, high and low, deep and shallow is characterised by the symbolic hour of noon, when the shadow is shortest: the wanderer and his shadow become one reflects the unity of the apparent (shadowy) and the true (bright) world.<sup>138</sup> But this is symbolic of Zarathustra’s *maturity* at the hour of *noon*,

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<sup>138</sup> See my discussion of the pre-cycle to *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* on pp. 257 – 260.

when it is not the devil (the metaphor for disunity) that takes him, but rather Zarathustra (the symbol of unity) who takes the devil (*ibid.* 242) – by, I suggest, willing the eternal recurrence of the same.

*Evening.* There is no express indication of the chronologically defined evening in the text that follows, but the evening atmosphere of suspense and dreariness, sadness and melancholy, in short, of evening and decline, is ever present throughout the three chapters discussed below. In the last chapter of Part II, “The Stillest Hour”, the recollection of the action that took place explicitly yesterday evening transpires expressly in late evening and results in Zarathustra’s departure. At the closing of Part II one is left wondering where Zarathustra is heading and what is going to happen next.

In “The Soothsayer”, the soothsayer presents the most gruesome, most melancholy doctrine of all to Zarathustra, who later relates it to his disciples: „Alles ist leer, Alles ist gleich, Alles war!“ (II „Der Wahrsager“, *KGW* VI 1, 168: 4, 5), or: “ ‘All is empty, all is the same, all has been!’ ” (II “The Soothsayer” 245). This affects Zarathustra deeply – so when he falls asleep he has the coffin and laughter dream, from which he can hardly wake up. One of his disciples attempts to interpret the dream, saying that his dream is Zarathustra himself. Zarathustra, however, shakes his head, feeling that no one can know his destiny – what he is up to and what he must face.

In “On Redemption”, the soothsayer’s temporal doctrine is identified as revenge against the past being an irrevocable past: „Diess, ja diess allein ist *Rache* selber: des Willens Widerwille gegen die Zeit und ihr ‚Es war’ “ (II „Von der Erlösung“, *KGW* VI 1, 176: 17, 18), or: “This, indeed this alone, is what *revenge* is: “the will’s ill will against time and its ‘it was’ ” (II “On Redemption” 252). The stumbling block that the soothsayer’s doctrine has laid in

Zarathustra's way in "The Soothsayer" is redeemed by Zarathustra's doctrine of justification in "On Redemption": „Die Vergangnen zu erlösen und alles ‚Es war‘ umzuschaffen in ein ‚So wollte ich es!‘ — das hiesse mir erst Erlösung!“ (II „Von der Erlösung“, *KGW* VI 1, 175: 26, 27), or: “To redeem those who lived in the past and to recreate all ‘it was’ into a ‘thus I willed it’ – that alone should I call redemption” (II “On Redemption” 251). In this sense, the hunchback who asks Zarathustra to remove a little from behind his back must affirm his own hunch: for thanks to it, the hunchback has developed a sound feeling.

As always, to say the words of redemption is not to effect and live through them. Zarathustra attempts to come to terms with this idea in “The Stillest Hour”, the chapter containing the first explicit intimation of eternal recurrence, but, for the time being, he is unable to wrestle with it. The dramatic action, which took place the previous evening, is recollected the following evening, in the atmosphere of melancholy, silence, and voicelessness: „Gestern gen Abend sprach zu mir *meine stillste Stunde*: das ist der Name meiner furchtbaren Herrin... Gestern, zur stillsten Stunde, wich mir der Boden: der Traum begann. Der Zeiger rückte, die Uhr meines Lebens holte Athem —, nie hörte ich solche Stille um mich: also dass mein Herz erschrak“ (II „Die stillste Stunde“, *KGW* VI 1, 183: 10, 11, 17 – 21), or: “Yesterday, toward evening, there spoke to me *my stillest hour*.... Yesterday, in the stillest hour, the ground gave under me, the dream began. The hand moved, the clock of my life drew a breath; never had I heard such stillness around me: my heart took fright” (II “The Stillest Hour” 257).

Zarathustra speaks with the Stillest Hour, his mysterious mistress, admitting that he still has to await a worthier one, that: „ ‚Mir fehlt des Löwen Stimme zu allem Befehlen‘ “ (II „Die stillste Stunde“, *KGW* VI 1, 185: 14, 15), or: “ ‘I lack the lion's voice for commanding’ ” (II “The Stillest Hour” 258), and that he is ashamed. The Stillest Hour replies, as it always does,

without voice that: „Die stillsten Worte sind es, welche den Sturm bringen. Gedanken, die mit Taubenfüßen kommen, lenken die Welt“ (II „Die stillste Stunde“, *KGW* VI 1, 185: 16 – 18), or: “‘It is the stillest words that bring on the storm. Thoughts that come on doves’ feet guide the world’ ” (II “The Stillest Hour” 258) and that Zarathustra’s fruit is ripe but he is not ripe for his fruit. He has not yet overcome his youth to become a child without shame. The laughter of the Stillest Hour rends his heart with pain so he breaks out sobbing like a child. Weak and tired, Zarathustra must once again leave his disciples and return to his solitude. He admits that he does not know why he cannot give anything more to his disciples and begins to cry. „Als Zarathustra aber diese Worte gesprochen hatte, überfiel ihn die Gewalt des Schmerzes und die Nähe des Abschieds von seinen Freunden, also dass er laut weinte; und Niemand wusste ihn zu trösten. Des Nachts aber gieng er allein fort und verliess seine Freunde“ (II „Die stillste Stunde“, *KGW* VI 1, 186: 13 – 17), or: “But when Zarathustra had spoken these words he was overcome by the force of his pain and the nearness of his parting from his friends, and he wept loudly; and no one knew how to comfort him. At night, however, he went away alone and left his friends” (II “The Stillest Hour” 259). The aggravation of the evening atmosphere of the dialogue by its reproduction late evening creates the sense of total *evening* around and within Zarathustra, who is on the verge of a breakdown in his spiritual *decline* – a legitimate reason to depart and withdraw within himself.

*Night.* In “The Wanderer” we observe Zarathustra set out on his loneliest walk. He climbs his highest peak throughout the night and goes over the ridge of his own mountain. He sees the sea down below, to which he descends and goes aboard a ship: „Um Mitternacht war es, da nahm Zarathustra seinen Weg über den Rücken der Insel, dass er mit dem frühen Morgen an das andre Gestade käme: denn dort wollte er zu Schiff steigen“ (III „Der Wanderer“, *KGW* VI 1, 189: 2 –

4), or: “It was about midnight when Zarathustra started across the ridge of the island so that he might reach the other coast by early morning; for there he wanted to embark” (III “The Wanderer” 264). As he is climbing the mountain, he thinks to himself of his own self as a scattered thing that he anticipates will soon be made whole: „Es kehrt nur zurück, es kommt mir endlich heim — mein eigen Selbst, und was von ihm lange in der Fremde war und zerstreut unter alle Dinge und Zufälle“ (III „Der Wanderer“, *KGW* VI 1, 189: 20 – 22), or: “What returns, what finally comes home to me, is my own self and what of myself has long been in strange lands and scattered among all things and accidents” (III “The Wanderer” 264). He expresses his desire for this union through landscape imagery: „Gipfel und Abgrund — das ist jetzt in Eins beschlossen!“ (III „Der Wanderer“, *KGW* VI 1, 190: 5, 6), or: “Peak and abyss – they are now joined together” (III “The Wanderer” 264).

Miraculously, he reaches his ultimate peak and a new sea opens to his view, lit by stars: „Und als er auf die Höhe des Bergrückens kam, siehe, da lag das andere Meer vor ihm ausgebreitet: und er stand still und schwieg lange. Die Nacht aber war kalt in dieser Höhe und klar und hellgestirnt“ (III „Der Wanderer“, *KGW* VI 1, 191: 2 – 5), or: “And when he reached the height of the ridge, behold, the other sea lay spread out before him; and he stood still and remained silent a long time. But the night was cold at this height, and clear and starry bright” (III “The Wanderer” 265). To remain on top, Zarathustra knows he must descend: „Ach, Schicksal und See! Zu euch muss ich nun *hinab* steigen!“ (III „Der Wanderer“, *KGW* VI 1, 191: 9, 10), or: “Alas, destiny and sea! To you I must now go *down!*” (III “The Wanderer” 266), for the height owes the depth and the highest mountains come out of the sea: „Aus dem Tiefsten muss das Höchste zu seiner Höhe kommen —“ (III „Der Wanderer“, *KGW* VI 1, 191: 20, 21), or: “It is out of the deepest depth that the highest must come to its height” (III “The Wanderer” 266). As

Zarathustra converses with himself, he is overcome first by laughter and then by tears: „Und alsbald geschah es, dass der Lachende weinte: — vor Zorn und Sehnsucht weinte Zarathustra bitterlich“ (III „Der Wanderer“, *KGW* VI 1, 192: 18 – 20), or: “And soon it happened that he who had laughed wept: from wrath and longing Zarathustra wept bitterly” (III “The Wanderer” 267). Clearly, Zarathustra’s climbing his mountain in the night is characterised by his inexorable will to overcome himself as he would overcome the mountain peak, by the loneliness attending his every step of the way, by the fragmentation of his own self in need of integrity, and by the great desire for both the deepest sea and the highest peak. Solitude, self-overcoming, and disintegration befall Zarathustra precisely at *night* and midnight, symbolic of his *death* and transformation. This courageous mountain climbing of his will becomes the focus in the next chapter, “On the Vision and the Riddle”, where he finally exposes the idea of eternal recurrence.

*Morning.* From the opening lines of “On the Vision and the Riddle” we learn that Zarathustra descended the mountain and reached the other shore of the sea by morning as he planned. Does he experience rebirth? Does he experience a revelation? After he has embarked, the sailors are very curious, anticipating something extraordinary from Zarathustra’s appearance on board. „Aber Zarathustra schwieg zwei Tage und war kalt und taub vor Traurigkeit, also, dass er weder auf Blicke noch auf Fragen antwortete“ (III „Von Gesicht und Räthsel“ 1, *KGW* VI 1, 193: 6 – 8), or “But Zarathustra remained silent for two days and was cold and deaf from sadness and answered neither glances nor questions” (III “On the Vision and the Riddle” 1: 267). It is not until the evening of the second day on board that he discloses the vision of the loneliest one – the vision that he saw not long ago, presumably when he was climbing his mountain during the night of the diurnal cycle at hand. To return to the question of his rebirth and transformation, there is no direct reference to Zarathustra having experienced any at the time of embarking in the

morning. If, however, his having surpassed the mountain ridge is taken to mean his having overcome himself and the ship to refer to both the means to get to and the goal of his destination – as the roadstead taken to his own self – then, yes indeed, Zarathustra has experienced *rebirth* as he has ventured into the *morning* of a new day, one that opens for him a sea of possibilities. However, the nature of that rebirth remains undisclosed until further into the chapter. But its discussion is reserved for the next diurnal cycle, or, to be more precise, the one following it, in sequence.

We have seen Zarathustra's identity change tremendously within this diurnal cycle. He is the lightness and *maturity* of his own shadow flying into the bowels of the earth at *noon*; he is the heaviness and *decline* of his Stillest Hour in the *evening*; he is the hardest courage and self-overcoming of his own mountain ridge, in *death* and transformation, at *night* and midnight; and finally he is the self-embarking, in taciturnity and silence – an undisclosed *rebirth* – of his ship destined for distant seas. The noon of lightness, the evening of heaviness, the night of hardness, and the morning of reticence – this repetition of diurnal meaningful differences expresses the sequence of eternal recurrence, while the same creative character behind these manifestations, and each equally meaningful symbol in particular, symbolises the moment, thereby redeeming the return of diurnal meaninglessness.

On the narrative cyclical level, however, the five diurnal cycles are each characterised by a different thematic: the decision to rectify the historical error of splitting the world into opposites (1<sup>st</sup> day cycle); the failure in teaching the Overhuman's decision on unity to (dead) people (2<sup>nd</sup> day cycle); the methodology of learning and teaching (living) recluses through the meaningful decline in self-overcoming while protecting oneself from possible distortions of one's teachings (3<sup>rd</sup> day cycle); the giving of mature teachings coupled with the joy of dancing



out of love and knowledge abundance (4<sup>th</sup> day cycle); and the spiritual qualities of lightness, heaviness, hardness, and taciturnity (5<sup>th</sup> day cycle). Together they signify the meaningfully variable sequence of eternal return, while each particular day cycle represents the same meaningful moment of infinite time. The recurrence of existentially meaningful differences and holistic meaningful sameness inaugurated by both the narrative cyclical and the cyclical narrative (above) return of diurnal symbols redeem the return of diurnal meaninglessness, as well as the return of the fragments of meaning, as of Zarathustra's self (to be joined together into a meaningful whole) on both levels. The return of symbolic diurnal cycles, to be sure, comprises that of diurnal symbols, as symbolised by the ring of rings, the ring of recurrence, i.e., total affirmation of existence, as implicit in the will willing itself.

### **6<sup>th</sup> Day Cycle**

The sixth diurnal cycle is simultaneously present and absent from the diurnal narrative of *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*. There is no discussion of either noon, evening, night or morning in the text. All we know is that when Zarathustra boards the ship in the morning, he remains silent for two days, until the evening of the second day (III "On the Vision and the Riddle" 1: 267). The only reasonable explanation of this mysterious day cycle – if mysteries ever exist to be disclosed – is that Nietzsche decided to conceal it, making out of it a riddle in the spirit of the vision riddle presented in the most enigmatic chapter of the book, "On the Vision and the Riddle". Since by this point we have grown accustomed to the natural alternation of days and nights in the text, we are made to feel we are experiencing a lack, a gap, an abyss in the diurnal temporal book structure – possibly Nietzsche's attempt to create a sense of loss, of falling infinitely downward, upward, forward, backward, and sideways, in all directions, a sense of absorption by time, if time ever existed, as though all the times of the day have been melted into a single whole, a non-entity

at that. One feels one has to hold on to something firm, like Zarathustra's sailing ship tossed about in the open, uncertain sea, seeking to moor at the shore or cast anchor in shallow waters. Perhaps, therefore, one is called upon to create or construct diurnal symbols and put them into their slots within the empty diurnal cycle so as to preserve the natural sequence of days and nights. If so, one's memory of the past, of the previous day cycles, may perhaps restore or supply the missing links in the diurnal chain. After all, noon has been used customarily to mean maturity; evening, decline; night, death; and morning, rebirth – all to constitute the diurnal recurrence and to represent the eternal recurrence of the same. Where have these gone? Perhaps thrown into the sea? Many dangerous “perhapses” are always around the corner, waiting especially for those who try to avoid them. But we have not, for to look away from ourselves is to look away from life and the affirmation of life through the eternal recurrence. Perhaps Nietzsche's silence on this day cycle speaks more than his verbosity throughout the other cycles. Perhaps Zarathustra's silence throughout almost two days in a row will speak louder than his audible speeches have sounded so far. Silence is the backbone of this day cycle. The recurrence of resounding meaningful *silence* – this is what the mysteriousness of the sixth diurnal cycle means to one who has delicate ears. And let our going under in the temporal structure be our going over to the next diurnal cycle, which is as shaky as it can be, for it is no less enigmatic, and we must attempt to make sense of it too. But stop! The next diurnal cycle can be read as the fulfillment of the undisclosed one. I suggest that Zarathustra's climbing up his ultimate peak in the fifth day cycle has served as dream material for the vision riddle he has experienced in the sixth diurnal cycle and now relates in the seventh.

## 7<sup>th</sup> Day Cycle

The seventh diurnal cycle can be identified with the sixth one. It contains one explicit diurnal symbol: Zarathustra begins to relate „das Gesicht des Einsamsten“, or “the vision of the loneliest” (III „Von Gesicht und Räthsel“ 1, *KGW* VI 1, 193: 24, 25; III “On the Vision and the Riddle” 1: 268) after opening his ears in the evening (III „Von Gesicht und Räthsel“ 1, *KGW* VI 1, 193: 9 – 12, 14, 15; III “On the Vision and the Riddle” 1: 267). What about the remaining symbols? In consonance with Nietzsche’s principle of creativity – the art of reading – it is possible to construct quite a full diurnal cycle (or even two) out of the vision-riddle chapter.<sup>139</sup> Having carefully thought through the merger of the sixth and the seventh diurnal cycle, I readily submit that, from the perspective of this diurnal cycle, Zarathustra enjoys the maturity of his silence at *noon* in both cycles, he breaks his silence (causing its decline) in the *evening* by preparing to talk about how the circumstances of his dream vision actually began to develop a day cycle ago, he relates his vision-riddle in the *night*, when his silence is dead (in the seventh diurnal cycle) but the shepherd’s dead silence is alive (in the sixth diurnal cycle), and he finally falls silent when he experiences rebirth – in both cycles – through the death of the shepherd’s dead silence, i.e., through his laughter, in the *morning*, with a twenty-four-hour period between their respective experiences (though Zarathustra and the shepherd are identified as one individual). Let us look at it in more detail.

*Noon.* We remember that after Zarathustra has embarked in the morning, he remained, to the curiosity and anticipation of the seamen, silent for almost two days: „...Zarathustra schwieg zwei Tage und war kalt und taub vor Traurigkeit, also, dass er weder auf Blicke noch auf Fragen antwortete“ (III „Von Gesicht und Räthsel“ 1, *KGW* VI 1, 193: 6 – 8), or: “... Zarathustra

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<sup>139</sup> See my discussion of Gooding-Williams on the art of reading in my “Concluding Thoughts on the Diurnal Structure” on pp. 373 – 375. See also Nietzsche on art for the exceptional ones in *The Case of Wagner* and in *Nietzsche Contra Wagner*.

remained silent for two days and was cold and deaf from sadness and answered neither glances nor questions” (III “On the Vision and the Riddle” 1: 267). It may then be supposed that he remains silent around *noon* too, when, in fact, his silence, given that noon normally symbolises the climax of whatever state Zarathustra may be in, especially one related to his having to make a decision, attains fulfilment: the *maturity* of his silence, therefore, should fall at *noon*, with peace and tranquility reigning supreme within Zarathustra’s soul at this time – in both the sixth and the seventh diurnal cycle – tentatively and analogically. It may further be supposed that his silence in the sixth diurnal cycle occurs within the context of his dreaming, though this is unobservable to the sailors. From the perspective of Zarathustra’s experience, however, he lapses into pre-dreaming silence at the hour of noon, and his silence begins eventually to transform.

*Evening.* Zarathustra’s noon silence, however, did not last forever: „Am Abende aber des zweiten Tages that er seine Ohren wieder auf, ob er gleich noch schwieg: denn es gab viel Seltsames und Gefährliches auf diesem Schiffe anzuhören, welches weither kam und noch weiterhin wollte... Und siehe! zuletzt wurde ihm im Zuhören die eigne Zunge gelöst, und das Eis seines Herzens brach“ (III „Von Gesicht und Räthsel“ 1, *KGW* VI 1, 193: 9 – 12, 14, 15), or: “But on the evening of the second day he opened his ears again, although he still remained silent, for there was much that was strange and dangerous to be heard on this ship, which came from far away and wanted to sail even farther.... And behold, eventually his own tongue was loosened as he listened, and the ice of his heart broke” (III “On the Vision and the Riddle” 1: 267). So he opens his ears eventually as his silence begins to listen to the outer world, thereby vanishing and dying. The loosening of Zarathustra’s tongue is attended by the *decline* of his silence in the *evening*. Later, however, he breaks (kills) his silence and begins speaking full voice to the sailors about the conversation he recently had with the dwarf in the nighttime. (In parallel, in

overcoming his noon silence in his dream vision, around the evening of the sixth diurnal cycle, he eventually begins to actually dream speaking with the dwarf towards the night.) I suggest that his full-flowing speech is heard throughout the night, but the circumstances of the vision-riddle transpired a day cycle ago.

*Night.* By uniting the vision-riddle with Zarathustra's relation of it, it is viable to speak of the action taking place in the former's past (a day cycle ago) as transpiring in the latter's present (in this day cycle). In particular, Zarathustra brings the atmosphere of the night action in the vision-riddle back to reality so that one feels one is experiencing it live. Following the phenomenon of mimetic identification, he may be said to be relating the dwarf scene during the nighttime.<sup>140</sup> The night is as pallid and dead as it was then: „Düster gieng ich jüngst durch leichenfarbne Dämmerung, — düster und hart, mit gepressten Lippen. Nicht nur Eine Sonne war mir untergegangen“ (III „Von Gesicht und Räthsel“ 1, *KGW* VI 1, 194: 1 – 3), or: “Not long ago I walked gloomily through the deadly pallor of dusk – gloomy and hard, with lips pressed together. Not only one sun had set for me” (III “On the Vision and the Riddle” 1: 268). The expansive eerie environment is exacerbated by the presence of the small nightwatcher-spider and the cold dreary moonlight flooding the lonely mountain peak – now the ship – from above: „Und diese langsame Spinne, die im Mondscheine kriecht, und dieser Mondschein selber“ (III „Von Gesicht und Räthsel“ 2, *KGW* VI 1, 196: 27, 28), or: “And this slow spider, which crawls in the moonlight, and this moonlight itself” (III “On the Vision and the Riddle” 2: 270). The howling of a terrified dog in the dead silence of the midnight moon makes the night even more unbearable: „Und sah ihn [den Hund] auch, gesträubt, den Kopf nach Oben, zitternd, in stillster Mitternacht, wo auch Hunde an Gespenster glauben: — also dass es mich erbarmte. Eben nämlich gieng der

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<sup>140</sup> See my discussion of Hatab on mimetic identification in regards to the eternal recurrence in section 1 of Chapter 2, on pp. 48 – 51; see also section II of Chapter 5, on pp. 164 – 166.

volle Mond, todtschweigsam, über das Haus“ (III „Von Gesicht und Räthsel“ 2, *KGW* VI 1, 197: 5 – 9), or: “And I saw him [the dog] too, bristling, his head up, trembling, in the stillest midnight when even dogs believe in ghosts – and I took pity: for just then the full moon, silent as death, passed over the house...” (III “On the Vision and the Riddle” 2: 271). When Zarathustra realises that he is all alone on the cliffs, the bleakness of the night moon passes on to him: „Zwischen wilden Klippen stand ich mit Einem Male, allein, öde, im ödesten Mondscheine“ (III „Von Gesicht und Räthsel“ 2, *KGW* VI 1, 197: 16 – 18), or: “Among wild cliffs I stood suddenly alone, bleak, in the bleakest moonlight” (III “On the Vision and the Riddle” 2: 271). Thus, the night imagery must be experienced as actually present to Zarathustra and the seamen on the ship.

Zarathustra sees a young shepherd choking on a snake, silent and as if dead: „Einen jungen Hirten sah ich, sich windend, würgend, zuckend, verzerrten Antlitzes, dem eine schwarze schwere Schlange aus dem Munde hieng. Sah ich je so viel Ekel und bleiches Grauen auf Einem Antlitze?“ (III „Von Gesicht und Räthsel“ 2, *KGW* VI 1, 197: 23 – 28), or: “A young shepherd I saw, writhing, gagging, in spasms, his face distorted, and a heavy black snake hung out of his mouth. Had I ever seen so much nausea and pale dread on one face?” (III “On the Vision and the Riddle” 2: 272). The shepherd, obviously, cannot speak, even cry for help, as the dog cries, whereas Zarathustra’s mouth is full of words both at the time of giving counsel to the shepherd to bite the snake and when he is relating the story to the sailors. Both the dwarf scene (where Zarathustra speaks with the dwarf of eternally recurring things under dreary night conditions) and the shepherd scene create the sense of *night* in the present reality. While the sudden disappearance of the dwarf symbolises *death* to Zarathustra’s spirit of gravity, the silence of the convulsive shepherd (or Zarathustra) gagging on the snake of eternal recurrence represents death to Zarathustra’s ability to speak.

*Morning.* There is no express sign of morning in this chapter. But if morning is associated with transformation and rebirth and if transformation is present in the text, then this diurnal symbol may be said to lie buried in the solution of the shepherd scene: „— Der Hirt aber biss, wie mein Schrei ihm rieth; er biss mit gutem Bisse! Weit weg spie er den Kopf der Schlange—: und sprang empor. — Nicht mehr Hirt, nicht mehr Mensch, — ein Verwandelter, ein Umleuchteter, welcher *lachte!* (III „Von Gesicht und Räthsel“ 2, *KGW* VI 1, 198: 14 – 18), or: “The shepherd, however, bit, as my cry counseled him; he bit with a good bite. Far away he spewed the head of the snake – and he jumped up. No longer shepherd, no longer human – one changed, radiant, *laughing!*” (III “On the Vision and the Riddle” 2: 272). Zarathustra further admits to having never heard such a laughter: “Niemals noch auf Erden lachte je ein Mensch, wie er lachte! Oh meine Brüder, ich hörte ein Lachen, das keines Menschen Lachen war, —“ (III „Von Gesicht und Räthsel“ 2, *KGW* VI 1, 198: 18 – 21), or: “Never yet on earth has a human being laughed as he laughed! O my brothers, I heard a laughter that was no human laughter” (III “On the Vision and the Riddle” 2: 272).

The shepherd, or Zarathustra, has been transformed, at least in his vision. He laughs with not a human, but, one may suppose, a superhuman laughter, and he is as radiant as the morning sun. The final scene invites morning imagery: the shepherd’s laughter resounds with the soberness of a new day and his sudden radiance reflects the first sunrays in the morning. The shepherd’s silence has finally died and he is now able to laugh. Zarathustra, on the contrary, is at a loss for words, for he is overwhelmed with longing for the shepherd’s superhuman laughter: „— und nun frisst ein Durst an mir, eine Sehnsucht, die nimmer stille wird. Meine Sehnsucht nach diesem Lachen frisst an mir: oh wie ertrage ich noch zu leben! Und wie ertrüge ich’s, jetzt zu sterben! —“ (III „Von Gesicht und Räthsel“ 2, *KGW* VI 1, 198: 21 – 25), or: “...and now a

thirst gnaws at me, a longing that never grows still. My longing for this laughter gnaws at me; oh, how do I bear to go on living! And how could I bear to die now!” (III “On the Vision and the Riddle” 2: 272). Nevertheless, the shepherd’s biting the head off the snake and his immediate transformation into one who is radiant and laughing with a superhuman laughter represents his or Zarathustra’s triumphant *rebirth* in the *morning*, within both the undisclosed cycle and this one which discloses it.

Zarathustra’s identity has been observed to change throughout the last two enigmatic diurnal cycles, the one in question being a vision riddle in itself and serving as a solution to the preceding one. He has been shown to possess the *maturity* of his thoughtful silence at *noon*, to experience the *decline* of his overburdening silence in the *evening*, the *death* thereof at *night*, and, finally, the *rebirth* of his longing silence in the *morning*, while, as the protagonist of the dwarf scene in the undisclosed day cycle, he enjoys the *maturity* of his thoughtful silence at *noon* and the *decline* of his heavy silence in the *evening* – tentatively and analogically – and, as the shepherd, he experiences *death* and choking silence at *night* and the *rebirth* of laughter in the *morning*. The repetition of diurnal symbols in the sixth diurnal cycle reflects Zarathustra’s dynamic transitioning from silence to speaking to choking to laughter, while the repetition of diurnal symbols in the seventh diurnal cycle expresses his transformation from silence to quasi-silence (listening) to speaking to longing silence. Both represent the return of meaningful differences inaugurated by the decisive momentary courage Zarathustra summons before defying both the spirit of gravity in climbing his ultimate peak of eternal recurrence in the sixth diurnal cycle and his silence on the matter in the seventh.

On the narrative cyclical level, however, the seven diurnal cycles each propound a different topic: the decision to rectify the historical error of thinking in binaries (1<sup>st</sup> day cycle);



the failure in teaching to (dead) people the Overhuman's decision to think otherwise (2<sup>nd</sup> day cycle); the methodology of learning and teaching (living) companions through self-sacrifice in self-overcoming while ensuring the integrity of one's own teachings (3<sup>rd</sup> day cycle); the giving of mature ideas imparted with the joy of dancing out of love and knowledge abundance (4<sup>th</sup> day cycle); the spiritual properties of lightness, heaviness, hardness, and taciturnity (5<sup>th</sup> day cycle); the properties of visionary communication: silence, speaking, choking, and laughter (6<sup>th</sup> day cycle); and the properties of recollective communication: silence, quasi-silence (listening), speaking, and longing silence (7<sup>th</sup> day cycle). Together they signify the variable sequence of eternal recurrence, while each particular day cycle represents the same moment. The recurrence of meaningful differences inaugurated by both the narrative cyclical and the cyclical narrative return of diurnal symbols defy the return of (silent, as well as quasi-silent) diurnal meaninglessness on both said levels, where the return of symbolic diurnal cycles encompasses the return of diurnal symbols, as represented by the ring of rings, the ring of recurrence, i.e., total affirmation of existence, as implicit in the will willing itself.

### **8<sup>th</sup> Day Cycle**

The entire eighth day cycle is comprised within one chapter entitled "On Involuntary Bliss", with the meaning of the symbol of morning enlarged upon in the chapter following it – "Before Sunrise". The symbolism in this diurnal cycle unfolds through the theme of happiness. In "On Involuntary Bliss" Zarathustra possesses the (pre)maturity of his happiness around *noon*. He wishes his bliss would go away; it is supposed to decline or decay as the sun sinks in the *evening*, but it will not. On the contrary, it only approaches him ever more closely, and he begins to wonder why it has not receded. In the morning, however, Zarathustra realises that the *death* of his premature happiness takes place in the *night*, while the rebirth of his (genuine) happiness

transpires in the *morning*. In “Before Sunrise”, still early morning, Zarathustra experiences rebirth through the manifestation of his (genuine) happiness taking on the meaning of the innocence of the sky. Let us go through this wonderful imagery in more detail.

*Noon*. In “On Involuntary Bliss” Zarathustra drifts away from the blessed isles and from his friends and finds himself happy around noon: „Allein bin ich wieder und will es sein, allein mit reinem Himmel und freiem Meere; und wieder ist Nachmittag um mich. Des Nachmittags fand ich zum ersten Male einst meine Freunde, des Nachmittags auch zum anderen Male: — zur Stunde, da alles Licht stiller wird... *vor Glück* ist alles Licht jetzt stiller worden. Oh Nachmittag meines Lebens!“ (III „Von der Seligkeit wider Willen“, *KGW* VI 1, 199: 8 – 12, 15, 16), or: “I am alone again and I want to be so; alone with the pure sky and open sea; again it is afternoon around me. It was in the afternoon that I once found my friends for the first time; it was afternoon the second time too, at the hour when all light grows quieter.... [I]t is from happiness that all light has grown quieter. O afternoon of my life!” (III “On Involuntary Bliss” 272, 273). I have checked to see whether Nietzsche is precise about Zarathustra having found his friends twice around noon. Indeed, Zarathustra found them around the noon of the 3<sup>rd</sup> day cycle for the first time, when he began teaching the three metamorphoses of the spirit (how the spirit becomes a camel; the camel, a lion; and the lion, a child) in “On the Three Metamorphoses”, after his unsuccessful attempt to teach the Overhuman in the market place, and around the noon of the 4<sup>th</sup> day cycle for the second time, when he returned from his solitude to let his teachings (such as God is a conjecture, willing liberates, creativity justifies suffering, and the best parables should speak of time and becoming) fall like ripe figs to his disciples in “On the Blessed Isles”. From this it follows that Nietzsche is quite aware of the times of the day he has introduced in his text and that each is a significant, meaningful component of the diurnal structure.

Returning to “On Involuntary Bliss”, the action takes place around the hour of noon. Zarathustra enjoys his solitude and the happiness of the afternoon. However, he is aware that his happiness is premature, i.e., it may be gone any time, and that he must still work on himself to secure it so that his fellow creator and his celebrant will fulfill his will. In order to perfect himself for the sake of „ein[en] Solche[n], der mir meinen Willen auf meine Tafeln schreibt... weiche ich jetzt meinem Glücke aus und biete mich allem Unglücke an“ (III „Von der Seligkeit wider Willen“, *KGW* VI 1, 200: 25 – 27, 29, 30), or “one who writes my will on my tablets... I now evade my happiness and offer myself to all unhappiness” (III “On Involuntary Bliss” 274). Zarathustra’s desire to have children was great, but that meant to be lost to himself. But because „im eignen Saft kochte Zarathustra“ (III „Von der Seligkeit wider Willen“, *KGW* VI 1, 201: 9, 10), or: “Zarathustra was cooking in his own juice” (III “On Involuntary Bliss” 274) and did not want to be lost to his friends but belong to himself alone, he explains, he had to leave them, for he had received a sign – the call of the abysmal thought that he has always carried within himself without ever summoning, which he will one day. In the meantime he is at peace in the afternoon: „Inzwischen treibe ich noch auf ungewissen Meeren; der Zufall schmeichelt mir, der glattzüngige“ (III „Von der Seligkeit wider Willen“, *KGW* VI 1, 202: 3, 4), or: “Meanwhile I still drift on uncertain seas; smooth-tongued accident flatters me” (III “On Involuntary Bliss” 275). However, he is mistrustful of all that pleases him, especially in an untimely manner, around noon again, for the truly happy noon has not yet arrived (as he has not yet summoned his abysmal thought): „Oh Nachmittag meines Lebens! Oh Glück vor Abend! Oh Hafen auf hoher See! Oh Friede im Ungewissen! Wie misstraue ich euch Allen!... diese selige Stunde... Hinweg mit dir, du selige Stunde! Mit dir kam mir eine Seligkeit wider Willen!” (III „Von der Seligkeit wider Willen“, *KGW* VI 1, 202: 9 – 11, 16 – 19), or: “O afternoon of my life! O happiness before

evening! O haven on the high seas! O peace in uncertainty! How I mistrust all of you!... this blessed hour.... Away with you, blessed hour: with you bliss came to me against my will” (III “On Involuntary Bliss” 275). Thus, both enjoying and struggling against his own premature happiness, Zarathustra descends from the (pre)maturity of the happy *noon* of the day towards the unhappy evening, with his happiness gradually shrinking.

*Evening.* Continuing to banish his happiness away, Zarathustra would rather have it attend to the hearts of his children: „Willig zu meinem tiefsten Schmerze stehe ich hier: — zur Unzeit kamst du! Hinweg mit dir, du selige Stunde! Lieber nimm Herberge dort — bei meinen Kindern! Eile! und segne sie vor Abend noch mit *meinem* Glücke! Da naht schon der Abend: die Sonne sinkt. Dahin — mein Glück! —“ (III „Von der Seligkeit wider Willen“, *KGW* VI 1, 202: 19 – 25), or: “Willing to suffer my deepest pain, I stand here: you came at the wrong time. Away with you, blessed hour: rather seek shelter there – with my children. Hurry and bless them before evening with *my* happiness. There evening approaches even now: the sun sinks. Gone – my happiness!” (III “On Involuntary Bliss” 275). He makes clear that the disappearance of happiness is closely related to the approaching of the evening, and what this means is that unhappiness and evening make a good symbolic match within this day cycle: while the sunlight keeps us warm, cozy, and happy at noon, the bleak twilight of the evening makes us feel cold, uncomfortable, and melancholy. Both the sun and Zarathustra’s bliss are sinking, the setting sun taking it away from him. Thus the *evening* is coloured by the *decline* of Zarathustra’s noon happiness and its eventual withdrawal from the sunset scene.

*Night.* Gone be my happiness! „Also sprach Zarathustra. Und er wartete auf sein Unglück die ganze Nacht: aber er wartete umsonst. Die Nacht blieb hell und still, und das Glück selber kam ihm immer näher und näher“ (III „Von der Seligkeit wider Willen“, *KGW* VI 1, 202: 26 –

29), or “Thus spoke Zarathustra. And he waited for his unhappiness the entire night, but he waited in vain. The night remained bright and still, and happiness itself came closer and closer to him” (III “On Involuntary Bliss” 275). A strange thing happens at this point in the diurnal cycle. Zarathustra has not become any less blissful, though he has desired to have all the pain there is. The night turns out to be bright from the stars and still from lack of wind, and Zarathustra apparently remains cheerful and peaceful throughout the night. It would seem that he experiences a transformation from one who has desired happiness and lost his desire to one who no longer desires any bliss but regains it without actually attempting to do so. In this sense, Zarathustra may be said to have experienced the death of his happiness, one that he has desired, and that at night. This particular *night* symbolises the *death* of all that gives non-genuine pleasure to Zarathustra in the daytime. But what about the rebirth, and what is genuine happiness? That is something he only gets to know when the night draws to an end.

*Morning.* Zarathustra remains pensive and serious, wondering about the phenomenon of happiness all night. „Gegen Morgen aber lachte Zarathustra zu seinem Herzen und sagte spöttisch: ‚das Glück läuft mir nach. Das kommt davon, dass ich nicht den Weibern nachlaufe. Das Glück aber ist ein Weib’ “ (III „Von der Seligkeit wider Willen“, *KGW* VI 1, 202: 29 – 32), or: “Toward morning, however, Zarathustra laughed in his heart and said mockingly, ‘Happiness runs after me. That is because I do not run after women. For happiness is a woman’ ” (III “On Involuntary Bliss” 275). In the morning, as is clear, the light of a new truth dawns upon Zarathustra’s benighted mind. Genuine happiness is not something that he pursues, exerting himself full force, but that which *has* him and *is* him. Drawing an analogy between happiness and woman, Zarathustra emphasises the female traits of the former and the pleasure that the latter may bring to men. Generally, woman is happy and makes one happy and if one chases her one

never gets her, but if one does not, she will come and offer herself, while happiness is like a woman who comes and goes as she pleases, but it will come and stay only if one has never chased but has always possessed it (which seems to mean that Zarathustra was happy even when he did not know it). The bottom line is that genuine happiness is one that remains with Zarathustra always – one that makes him blessed in his creative work. It also means specifically in this context that the moment of bliss is rare, that it comes to him of its own free will and, by definition, only for a short period of time, for always to be happy, i.e., always satisfied with himself and his achievements, is to prove unproductive. Thus, upon recognising this truth as his own, Zarathustra experiences the *rebirth* of not merely happiness but genuine happiness in the *morning*, while at the same time staying cognizant of this revelation and its implications.

In “Before Sunrise”, Zarathustra’s wonderful ode to the beautiful, pure, deep, light, silent, innocent sky is heard in the morning, just before sunrise. As such, „[v]or der Sonne kamst du zu mir, dem Einsamsten“ (III „Vor Sonnen-Aufgang“, *KGW* VI 1, 203: 13, 14), or “[b]efore the sun you came to me, the loneliest of all” (III “Before Sunrise” 276), it came to him so tellingly that „*fliegen* allein will mein ganzer Wille, in *dich* hinein fliegen!“ (III „Vor Sonnen-Aufgang“, *KGW* VI 1, 204: 7, 8), or “what I want with all my will is to *fly*, to fly up into *you*” (III “Before Sunrise”, 276). He hates the mediating, silent, cat-like clouds – those stains upon the sky – because they can neither curse nor bless, but he wants to say his Yes and Amen to the heavenly innocence of the world (III “Before Sunrise” 277). So he has a solution as to how they (the clouds, or cloud-like people) should act: „Und ,wer nicht segnen kann, der soll fluchen *lernen!*’ — diese helle Lehre fiel mir aus hellem Himmel, dieser Stern steht auch noch in schwarzen Nächten an meinem Himmel“ (III „Vor Sonnen-Aufgang“, *KGW* VI 1, 204: 31 – 33), or: “And ‘whoever cannot bless should *learn* to curse’ – this bright doctrine fell to me from a bright

heaven; this star stands in my heaven even in black nights” (III “Before Sunrise” 277). The silent innocence of the sky is further compared with the innocence of the world, and the clouds with the values of good and evil. Zarathustra wants to stand above the cloud-values that stain his world: „Das aber ist mein Segnen: über jedwedem Ding als sein eigener Himmel stehn, als sein rundes Dach, seine azurne Glocke und ewige Sicherheit: und selig ist, wer also segnet! Denn alle Dinge sind getauft am Borne der Ewigkeit und jenseits von Gut und Böse; Gut und Böse selber aber sind nur Zwischenschatten und feuchte Trübsale und Zieh-Wolken“ (III „Vor Sonnen-Aufgang“, *KGW* VI 1, 205: 6 – 11), or: “But this is my blessing: to stand over every single thing as its own heaven, as its round roof, its azure bell, and eternal security; and blessed is he who blesses thus. For all things have been baptized in the well of eternity and are beyond good and evil; and good and evil themselves are but intervening shadows and damp depressions and drifting clouds” (III “Before Sunrise” 277, 278). What characterises the world for Zarathustra is accident, innocence, chance, and prankishness, the grounding for these being that there is no eternal will that wills (*ibid.* 278) and that: „bei Allem ist Eins unmöglich — Vernünftigkeit!“ (III „Vor Sonnen-Aufgang“, *KGW* VI 1, 205: 22, 23), or: “In everything one thing is impossible: rationality” (III “Before Sunrise” 278). In this sense, Zarathustra goes on to bless the sky with a few more similes, saying: „Das ist mir nun deine Reinheit, dass es keine ewige Vernunft-Spinne und -Spinnennetze giebt:— —dass du mir ein Tanzboden bist für göttliche Zufälle, dass du mir ein Göttertisch bist für göttliche Würfel und Würfelspieler! —“ (III „Vor Sonnen-Aufgang“, *KGW* VI 1, 205: 31 – 34; 206: 1, 2), or: “That is what your purity is to me now, that there is no eternal spider or spider web of reason; that you are to me a dance floor for divine accidents, that you are to me a divine table for divine dice and dice players” (III “Before Sunrise” 278).

All of a sudden, the dawn breaks, and the sky is presented in an emotionally coloured light: „Doch du erröthest? Sprach ich Unaussprechbares? Lästerte ich, indem ich dich segnen wollte? Oder ist es die Scham zu Zweien, welche dich erröthen machte? — Heissest du mich gehn und schweigen, weil nun — der *Tag* kommt?“ (III „Vor Sonnen-Aufgang“, *KGW* VI 1, 206: 3 – 7), or: “But you blush? Did I speak the unspeakable? Did I blaspheme, wishing to bless you? Or is it the shame of twosomeness that makes you blush? Do you bid me go and be silent because the *day* is coming now?” (III “Before Sunrise” 278). Here Zarathustra realises that he cannot keep on singing his ode to the sky forever, for there are things that cannot be said directly, especially in the presence of reason (symbolised by the day that is coming), for reason (operating by way of concepts) is the faltering mouth for feelings and emotions (that are best expressed by images): „Die Welt ist tief —: und tiefer als je der Tag gedacht hat. Nicht Alles darf vor dem Tage Worte haben. Aber der Tag kommt: so scheiden wir nun! Oh Himmel über mir, du Schamhafter! Glühender! Oh du mein Glück vor Sonnen-Aufgang! Der Tag kommt: so scheiden wir nun! —“ (III „Vor Sonnen-Aufgang“, *KGW* VI 1, 206: 8 – 13), or: “The world is deep – and deeper than day had ever been aware. Not everything may be put into words in the presence of the day. But the day is coming, so let us part. O heaven over me, bashful and glowing! O you, my happiness before sunrise! The day is coming, so let us part!” (III “Before Sunrise” 278, 279).<sup>141</sup>

As is evident, there is a slight tinge of innocent human bashfulness ascribed to the personified sky – as the culmination of the happiness Zarathustra has accumulated by early morning in “On Involuntary Bliss”. Zarathustra’s sincere ode to the innocent sky in “Before Sunrise” can therefore be read as a manifestation of the genuine happiness he realises in “On Involuntary Bliss” – as his *rebirth* through this manifestation in the *morning*. Thus two kinds of

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<sup>141</sup> See my discussion of concepts and images in section I of Chapter 5, on pp. 154, 155.



rebirth are observed in connection with the symbol of morning in this diurnal cycle: 1) the rebirth of Zarathustra's (genuine) happiness; and 2) his own rebirth through the revelation of his (genuine) happiness, where genuine happiness also acquires the meaning of the de-deification of the world, as implicit in the innocence and purity of the sky. Finally, Zarathustra is happy because happiness is *with* him and is twice as happy because the world is free from will and purpose. In both cases he feels reborn, while the sky is spotless and purged from cloud-blemishes by way of his blessing ode addressed to it.

On the cyclical narrative level, we have observed Zarathustra's identity alter throughout this day cycle: he has the (pre)maturity of happiness at *noon*; he desires his bliss to *decline* or decay in the *evening*; retroactively, he experiences the *death* of his premature happiness in the *night* and, finally, he recognises the *rebirth* of his genuine happiness, as well as his own *rebirth* through the latter's manifestation in the light of the innocent sky – both in the *morning* – while at the same time comprehending the female nature of happiness. The repetition of the diurnal symbols reflecting Zarathustra's varying experience of happiness represents the sequence of eternal recurrence, while each particular diurnal symbol, equally valuable and meaningful, indicates the moment.

On the narrative cyclical level, the eight diurnal cycles each elicit a different theme: the decision to reconsider binary thinking, thereby amending the historical error (1<sup>st</sup> day cycle); Zarathustra's failure in teaching to (dead) people the Overhuman's decision to think of the world as a whole (2<sup>nd</sup> day cycle); his methodology of learning and teaching his (living) companions through self-sacrifice in self-overcoming while keeping his own teachings protected from his enemies (3<sup>rd</sup> day cycle); his ability to offer mature ideas with the joy of dance and out of the abundance of love and knowledge (4<sup>th</sup> day cycle); his spiritual qualities of lightness, heaviness,

hardness, and taciturnity (5<sup>th</sup> day cycle); the properties of his visionary communication: silence, speaking, choking, and laughter (6<sup>th</sup> day cycle); the properties of his recollective communication: silence, quasi-silence (listening), speaking, and longing silence (7<sup>th</sup> day cycle); and his ambivalent experience of happiness (premature vs. genuine) (8<sup>th</sup> day cycle). Together they signify the meaningfully variable sequence of eternal return, while each particular day cycle symbolises the same meaningful moment of endless time. The return of meaningful differences inaugurated by both the narrative cyclical and the cyclical narrative recurrence of (genuinely happy) diurnal symbols respond creatively to the return of (“happy”) diurnal meaninglessness on both said levels, where the return of diurnal symbols is encompassed by the return of symbolic diurnal cycles, as symbolised by the happy ring of rings, the ring of recurrence, i.e., total affirmation of existence, as implicit in the will’s joy willing itself.

### **9<sup>th</sup> Day Cycle**

In “Upon the Mount of Olives”, we evidence a special case of a diurnal cycle. Zarathustra relates his day order in the wintertime. His actions are directed at mocking the winter and those who dislike it. This is incorporated into the structure of the ninth day cycle, which includes the last explicit and three implicit diurnal symbols. Zarathustra withdraws in his thoughts to the sunny nook of his mount of olives, where he enjoys the maturity of warmth, calm, sunlight, and fruitfulness at *noon*, he would rather his teeth chattered with cold, in decline, than he prayed to the fire idol in the *evening*, he prefers a simple bed to a rich one, thus choosing cold death, in the *night*, and he likes to take a cold bath to experience rebirth in the freshness of the *morning*. A closer look will enlarge the diurnal picture that Zarathustra draws as a reflection of his winter day cycle.

*Noon.* The chapter opens with the image of a cold winter, an unwelcomed guest, sitting in Zarathustra's house: „Der Winter, ein schlimmer Gast, sitzt bei mir zu Hause; blau sind meine Hände von seiner Freundschaft Händedruck“ (III „Auf dem Oelberge“, *KGW* VI 1, 214: 1, 2), or: “Winter, a wicked guest, is sitting at home with me; my hands are blue from the handshake of his friendship” (III “Upon the Mount of Olives” 284). The winter has found a friend in Zarathustra but he prefers solitude. The winter is cold and not alone, whereas Zarathustra is cold but lonely. All he has to keep him warm and company are his thoughts: „Ich ehre ihn, diesen schlimmen Gast, aber lasse gerne ihn allein sitzen. Gerne laufe ich ihm davon; und, läuft man *gut*, so entläuft man ihm! Mit warmen Füßen und warmen Gedanken laufe ich dorthin, wo der Wind stille steht, — zum Sonnen-Winkel meines Oelbergs“ (III „Auf dem Oelberge“, *KGW* VI 1, 214: 3 – 8), or: “I honor this wicked guest, but I like to let him sit alone. I like to run away from him; and if one runs *well*, one escapes him. With warm feet and warm thoughts I run where the wind stands still, to the sunny nook of my mount of olives” (III “Upon the Mount of Olives” 284). So Zarathustra leaves the winter cold and alone and escapes to the mount with the garden of olives, where the wind is calm and peaceful and the sun shines. The imagery of warmth, tranquility, sunlight, and fruitfulness invokes the *maturity* of Zarathustra's state of mind at the time of *noon*.

*Evening.* The escapee leaves his severe guest to its solitary confinement and laughs at it because it stoops down to everything small (III “On Virtue That Makes Small” 1: 279), but he is full of respect for it because it silences everything (for example, people or flies, as in I “On the Flies of the Market Place”) that makes “small noise” or frightens people to the point that even the nature around them is afraid: „Da lache ich meines gestrengen Gastes und bin ihm noch gut, dass er zu Hause mir die Fliegen wegfängt und vielen kleinen Lärm stille macht. Er leidet es nämlich nicht, wenn eine Mücke singen will, oder gar zwei; noch die Gasse macht er einsam,

dass der Mondschein drin Nachts sich fürchtet“ (III „Auf dem Oelberge“, *KGW* VI 1, 214: 10 – 15), or: “There I laugh at my severe guest and am still well disposed toward him for catching the flies at home and for silencing much small noise. For he does not suffer it when a mosquito would sing, or even two; he even makes the lane lonely till the moonlight in it is afraid at night” (III “Upon the Mount of Olives” 284, 285). Speaking from the perspective of the northern hemisphere, there are no mosquitoes in the winter. Mosquitoes are summer insects that normally begin to get very active in the evening. As the sun goes down, they are on the rise, thirsting to bite and drink the blood of humans. The frightened moonlight is another piece of evidence for the arrival of late evening. When twilight falls, it gets even colder, but Zarathustra abstains from warming his blue hands and feet by the fire (as do the cozy, warm, and comfortable ones). He is staunch and challenges his hard, worthy guest by not giving in to adoring the warm company of the fire: „Ein harter Gast ist er, — aber ich ehre ihn, und nicht bete ich, gleich den Zärtlingen, zum dickbäuchichten Feuer-Götzen. Lieber noch ein Wenig zähneklappern als Götzen anbeten! — so will’s meine Art. Und sonderlich bin ich allen brünstigen dampfenden dumpfigen Feuer-Götzen gram“ (III „Auf dem Oelberge“, *KGW* VI 1, 214: 16 – 20), or: “He is a hard guest, but I honor him, and I do not pray, like the pampered, to the potbellied fire idol. Even a little chattering of the teeth rather than adoring idols – thus my nature dictates. And I have a special grudge against all fire idols that are in heat, steaming and musty” (III “Upon the Mount of Olives” 285). He would prefer his teeth to chatter for a while than to succumb to the coziness of the small virtue: contentment (III “On Virtue That Makes Small” 2: 281).<sup>142</sup> Thus, Zarathustra chooses a temporary sacrifice, or *decline*, of warmth in the cold winter *evening*.

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<sup>142</sup> Worshipping false (or any) idols stems from contentment: the cozy ones are pleased with what they have or are given and do not make an effort to seek anything more or newer.

*Night.* Zarathustra mocks not only the winter's frost but also those who avoid it. In mocking he loves them too. His mocking the winter's cold stance and now also those summer-warm and winter-shy hearts whom he loves increases, with the evening changing into night, when it gets much colder and he has to get into his cold bed to sleep: „Wen ich liebe, den liebe ich Winters besser als Sommers; besser spotte ich jetzt meiner Feinde und herzhafter, seit der Winter mir im Hause sitzt. Herzhaft wahrlich, selbst dann noch, wenn ich zu Bett *krieche* —: da lacht und muthwillt noch mein verkrochenes Glück; es lacht noch mein Lügen-Traum“ (III „Auf dem Oelberge“, *KGW* VI 1, 214: 21 – 24; 215: 1, 2), or: “Whomever I love, I love better in winter than in summer; I mock my enemies better and more heartily since winter dwells in my home. Heartily, in truth, even when I crawl into bed; even then my hidden happiness still laughs and is full of pranks; even the dream that lies to me still laughs” (III “Upon the Mount of Olives” 285). Evidently, Zarathustra prefers mocking those warm-hearted ones when they suffer in winter rather than when they revel in the summer's heat. Now that Zarathustra is lying in his ice-cold bed, he is still happy and laughing, allowing even his false dream to laugh at his enemies whose lukewarm-hearts would shrink from cold and get goose bumps at the mere sight of it. While he may crawl like an insect – a mosquito? – into his cold, unwelcoming bed, he admits that he never crawls or cringes before the heat energy of the mighty ones: „Ich — ein Kriecher? Niemals kroch ich im Leben vor Mächtigen; und log ich je, so log ich aus Liebe. Desshalb bin ich froh auch im Winter-Bette. Ein geringes Bett wärmt mich mehr als ein reiches, denn ich bin eifersüchtig auf meine Armuth. Und im Winter ist sie mir am treuesten“ (III „Auf dem Oelberge“, *KGW* VI 1, 215: 3 – 8), or: “I – a crawler? Never in my life have I crawled before the mighty; and if ever I lied, I lied out of love. Therefore I am glad in the wintry bed too. A simple bed warms me better than a rich one, for I am jealous of my poverty, and in winter it is most

faithful to me” (III “Upon the Mount of Olives” 285). He may lie in a cold bed, i.e., withstand hardship and adversity, but he may also *lie* (tell lies) out of hot love too, i.e., crawl and cringe if justified by the enhancement of life.<sup>143</sup> So he is quite pleased with his cold wintry bed, and the simpler it is, the more coldness it offers. Zarathustra’s poverty only assists him in his asceticism, thereby promoting his spiritual wealth. Symbolically speaking, he willingly chooses his cold *death* in the dead cold of the wintry *night*.

*Morning.* It is a case of diamond cutting diamond when Zarathustra boldly faces the winter morning by taking a cold bath: „Mit einer Bosheit beginne ich jeden Tag, ich spotte des Winters mit einem kalten Bade: darob brummt mein gestrenger Hausfreund“ (III „Auf dem Oelberge“, *KGW* VI 1, 215: 9 – 11), or: “I begin every day with a bit of malice: I mock the winter with a cold bath; that makes my severe house guest grumble” (III “Upon the Mount of Olives” 285). Inspired by the prospect of seeing the morning sky soon, he gets frolicsome with the winter: „Auch kitzle ich ihn gerne mit einem Wachskerzlein: dass er mir endlich den Himmel herauslasse aus aschgrauer Dämmerung“ (III „Auf dem Oelberge“, *KGW* VI 1, 215: 12, 13), or: “Besides, I like to tickle him with a little wax candle to make him let the sky come out of the ashen grey twilight at last” (III “Upon the Mount of Olives” 285). For the more of the morning sounds he hears – the pail rattling and the horses whinnying – the more malicious he grows in defying the winter’s frost, while anticipating the rise of the silent, bright, snow-white sky: „Sonderlich boshaft bin ich nämlich des Morgens: zur frühen Stunde, da der Eimer am Brunnen klirrt und die Rosse warm durch graue Gassen wiehern: — Ungeduldig warte ich da, dass mir endlich der lichte Himmel aufgehe, der schneebärtige Winter-Himmel, der Greis und Weisskopf,— der Winter-Himmel, der schweigsame, der oft noch seine Sonne verschweigt!“ (III „Auf dem Oelberge“, *KGW* VI 1, 215: 14 – 21), or: “For I am especially malicious in the

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<sup>143</sup> Cf. German *liegen* (to lie) and *lügen* (to tell lies).

morning, in that early hour when the pail rattles at the well and the horses whinny warmly through gray lanes. Then I wait impatiently for the bright sky to rise before me at last, the snow-bearded winter sky, the old man with his white hair – the winter sky, so taciturn that it often tacitly hides even its sun” (III “Upon the Mount of Olives” 285). Zarathustra further wonders whether he learnt silence from the sky or the sky learnt it from him, or whether both invented it independently (*ibid.*). What he knows for certain, however, is that: „Aller guten Dinge Ursprung ist tausendfältig, — alle guten muthwilligen Dinge springen vor Lust in’s Dasein“ (III „Auf dem Oelberge“, *KGW* VI 1, 215: 25, 26), or: “The origin of all good things is thousandfold; all good prankish things leap into existence from sheer joy” (III “Upon the Mount of Olives” 287). Zarathustra’s silence is one begotten of hidden joy. It conceals his sun, as the winter sky does its own: „Ein gutes muthwilliges Ding ist auch das lange Schweigen und gleich dem Winter-Himmel blicken aus lichtem rundäugichten Antlitze: — — gleich ihm seine Sonne verschweigen und seinen unbeugsamen Sonnen-Willen: wahrlich, diese Kunst und diesen Winter-Muthwillen lernte ich *gut!*“ (III „Auf dem Oelberge“, *KGW* VI 1, 215: 28 – 33), or: “Long silence too is a good prankish thing – and to look out of a bright round-eyed face, like the winter sky, and tacitly to hide one’s sun and one’s indomitable solar will: verily, this art and this winter prank I have learned well” (III “Upon the Mount of Olives” 287). Zarathustra, then, knows how to keep silent, and he also knows how to keep his silence from bespeaking silence. He would rather show that he is silent and cold, thus concealing his happy inner sun and his radiant solar will and thereby invite pity from the warm-hearted, than get frozen in their warmth. And if not for his mercy on their pity, they would have been overheated with envy and anger (III “Upon the Mount of Olives” 287). So, on the one hand, he does not conceal his chilblains, but, on the other, he mocks their pity: „Inzwischen laufe ich mit warmen Füßen kreuz und quer auf meinem Oelberge: im

Sonnen-Winkel meines Oelberges singe und spotte ich alles Mitleids —“ (III „Auf dem Oelberge“, *KGW* VI 1, 217: 23 – 25), or: “Meanwhile I run crisscross on my mount of olives with warm feet; in the sunny nook of my mount of olives I sing and I mock all pity” (III “Upon the Mount of Olives” 287). Zarathustra re-invokes the maturity of warmth, sunlight, and fruitfulness, while adding the singing of birds to his noon experience. The moment of noon inaugurates the time-lane of evening, night, and morning moments within the winter diurnal cycle so that the theme of silence and coldness reflects Zarathustra’s daily response to others. In the *morning*, however, Zarathustra’s silence and coldness, mocking all pity, pushes his ability to withstand the winter to its limits by having him take a cold bath, a therapy that intensifies and reinforces his bodily warmth, bringing him a *rebirth* from his cold dead sleep in the night.

In “Upon the Mount of Olives”, we have seen Zarathustra’s identity change throughout his winter diurnal cycle from secretly enjoying the *maturity* of warmth and sunlight at *noon* to avoiding the warmth of the fire and willingly accepting the chattering of his teeth as a temporary sacrifice or *decline* of warmth in the *evening* to sleeping in a simple, cold bed, as in cold *death*, in the dead cold of the winter *night* to taking a cold bath in the *morning* as a means of *rebirth* from cold death in the night. As is clear, he grows colder and harder toward himself as the day cycle unfolds. The repetition of the diurnal symbols reflecting Zarathustra’s ever hardening experience of the cold winter symbolises the sequence of eternal recurrence, while each particular diurnal symbol of the winter day cycle indicates the moment. He remains staunch and steadfast throughout the diurnal cycle – that is his creative constancy.

On the narrative cyclical level, the nine diurnal cycles are each dedicated to a different topic: the decision to correct the historical error by reconsidering thinking in opposites (1<sup>st</sup> day cycle); Zarathustra’s affirmed failure in teaching to (dead) people the Overhuman’s decision to



bring the world into unity (2<sup>nd</sup> day cycle); his methodology of learning and teaching his (living) recluses through sacrificial self-overcoming, ensuring the integrity of his own teachings, as protected from distortion by his enemies (3<sup>rd</sup> day cycle); his art of giving mature ideas with the joy of light dance and out of the plenitude of love and knowledge (4<sup>th</sup> day cycle); his intellectual qualities of lightness, heaviness, hardness, and taciturnity (5<sup>th</sup> day cycle); the features of his visionary communication: silence, speaking, choking, and laughter (6<sup>th</sup> day cycle); the characteristics of his recollective communication: silence, quasi-silence (listening), speaking, and longing silence (7<sup>th</sup> day cycle); his uncertain, ambivalent experience of happiness (premature vs. genuine) (8<sup>th</sup> day cycle); and the silence and coldness of his ability to mock both winter and the pity of the warm-hearted (9<sup>th</sup> day cycle). Together they symbolise the meaningfully variable sequence of eternal recurrence, while each particular day cycle represents the same meaningful moment of eternity. The recurrence of meaningful differences inaugurated by both the narrative cyclical and the cyclical narrative recurrence of (silent, taciturn) diurnal symbols withstand creatively the return of (silent, dead) diurnal meaninglessness on both said levels, where the return of symbolic diurnal cycles envelopes the return of diurnal symbols, as represented by the ring of rings, the ring of recurrence, i.e., total affirmation of existence, as implicit in the indomitable will willing itself.<sup>144</sup>

### **10<sup>th</sup> Day Cycle**

In two of the four chapters of the tenth diurnal cycle – “On Passing By” and “The Return Home” – there is express reference to the time of the day. However, by drawing on the other two chapters – “On Apostates” 2 and “On the Three Evils” – it is possible to supply the missing diurnal symbols. In “On Passing By”, Zarathustra’s encounter on the way home with the foaming

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<sup>144</sup> For the silence of diurnal symbols see my discussion of Parkes’ mobility-based interpretation in section 4 of Chapter 4, pp. 119 – 121.

fool, Zarathustra's ape, tentatively occurs around *noon*, when he also feels the necessity and the maturity of the urgency that the fool's city should be burnt. In "Apostates" 2, Zarathustra vents his disgust – a reflection of his decline – with the pious, who get together to listen to the preachers at the hour of *evening*. Obviously, he cannot tolerate being among people for a long time and he returns home, tentatively, in the *night*, his solitude meaning his death in relation to both the believers and the doubters he has left. Later, in "On the Three Evils" 1, Zarathustra awakens one *morning* to a new truth: his rebirth is due to the discovery that the world is finite. Elaboration on these symbolic actions of the day cycle will give us a fuller picture of Zarathustra's diurnal experience.

*Noon.* In "On Passing By", Zarathustra is shown to have set out on his way to the mountain cave when he comes upon a great city and decides to enter it. Suddenly a man jumps up toward him, barring his way to the gates, and says that he should spit on this city and turn back, for there is much dirt and swamp and bad odour in it, much perversion of the soul and empty talk and flattery and service (III "On Passing By" 288, 289), and that „die Krämer auf dem Markte werden [eine Weisheit] mit Pfennigen überklingeln!“ (III „Die Heimkehr“, *KGW* VI 1, 229: 9, 10), or “the shopkeepers in the market place would outjingle [any wisdom] with their pennies” (III “The Return Home” 297) – in short, that this city is not the right place for Zarathustra and that he should therefore leave it immediately. After listening to the man everyone calls Zarathustra's ape, because he has picked up some of his nice phrasing and cadences – but whom Zarathustra himself calls „mein Grunze-Schwein“ (III „Vom Vorübergehen“, *KGW* VI 1, 220: 26), or “my grunting swine” (III “On Passing By” 290) – Zarathustra tells the man that he despises his despising and that he himself should have long ago left this city. However, he then explains that what has kept the fool here is his revenge for not

being flattered. At the end Zarathustra pronounces his judgement: „Wehe dieser grossen Stadt! — Und ich wollte, ich sähe schon die Feuersäule, in der sie verbrannt wird! Denn solche Feuersäulen müssen dem grossen Mittage vorangehn“ (III „Vom Vorübergehen“, *KGW* VI 1, 221: 9 – 12), or: “Woe unto this great city! And I wish I already saw the pillar of fire in which it will be burned. For such pillars of fire must precede the great noon” (III “On Passing By” 290). He then gives the fool his doctrine as a parting present, saying: „wo man nicht mehr lieben kann, da soll man — *vorübergehn!* — Also sprach Zarathustra und gieng an dem Narren und der grossen Stadt vorüber“ (III „Vom Vorübergehen“, *KGW* VI 1, 221: 13 – 17), or: “ ‘where one can no longer love, there one should *pass by.*’ Thus spoke Zarathustra and he passed by the fool and the great city” (III “On Passing By” 290). The great noon that must follow the fire re-invokes the noon of the day, suggesting that the dialogue may be taking place in the daytime, specifically around noon. Although the time of the day is not explicitly mentioned, the reference to the great noon associates well with the diurnal symbol, inclining one to think that Zarathustra’s doctrine on passing by falls to the fool precisely from the *maturity* of the hour of *noon*.

*Evening.* In “Apostates” 2, Zarathustra makes clear what time of the day it is now and that it is well-matched by the topic of piety Nietzsche has chosen to address: „Du weisst es wohl: dein feiger Teufel in dir, der gerne Hände-falten und Hände-in-den-Schooss-legen und es bequemer haben möchte: — dieser feige Teufel redet dir zu „es *gibt* einen Gott!“ *Damit* aber gehörst du zur lichtscheuen Art, denen Licht nimmer Ruhe lässt; nun musst du täglich deinen Kopf tiefer in Nacht und Dunst stecken!“ (III „Von den Abtrünnigen“, *KGW* VI 1, 223: 30; 224: 1 – 6), or: “You know it well: your cowardly devil within you, who would like to fold his hands and rest his hands in his lap and be comfortable – this cowardly devil urges you, ‘There *is* a

God.’ With this, however, you belong to the light-shunning kind who cannot rest where there is light; now you must daily bury your head deeper in night and haze” (III “On Apostates” 2: 292). Pious people, because they are pious and believe in God’s light being given to them, need no light, or daylight, to see through things: they do not want to search and therefore shun all light and truth. The best time of the day for them is evening, when rest and tranquility sets in after the bright day is gone. The evening, then, is associated with the lack of light and the unwillingness to search for truth. Ironically, the evening is characterised by sitting by the fireplace, but even that does not make them light up enough so as to see into what abysmal darkness their minds have sunken. Apparently, what they see in such a fire is rest (respite) from day(-light), but they do not celebrate it: „Und wahrlich, du wähltest die Stunde gut: denn eben wieder fliegen die Nachtvögel aus. Die Stunde kam allem lichtscheuen Volke, die Abend- und Feierstunde, wo es nicht — ‚feiert’ “ (III „Von den Abtrünnigen“, *KGW* VI 1, 224: 7 – 10), or: “And verily, you chose the hour well, for just now the nocturnal birds are flying again. The hour has come for all light-shunning folk, the hour of evening and rest, when they do not rest” (III “On Apostates” 2: 292). Instead, the pious pray and – prey: „Sie sitzen lange Abende bei einander und sprechen: ‚lasset uns wieder werden wie die Kindlein und „lieber Gott“ sagen!’ — an Mund und Magen verdorben durch die frommen Zuckerbäcker. Oder sie sehen lange Abende einer listigen lauenden Kreuzspinne zu, welche den Spinnen selber Klugheit predigt und also lehrt: ‚unter Kreuzen is gut spinnen!’ “ (III „Von den Abtrünnigen“, *KGW* VI 1, 224: 21 – 27), or: “They sit together long evenings and say, ‘Let us become as little children again and say “dear God” ’ – their mouths and stomachs upset by pious confectioners. Or they spend long evenings watching a cunning, ambushing, cross-marked spider, which preaches cleverness to the other spiders and teaches thus: ‘Under crosses one can spin well’ ” (III “On Apostates” 2: 292, 293). The time of

the pious' day is clear, and the nausea and *decline* of the spirit Zarathustra experiences through the believers in the *evening* is great.

*Night.* In "The Return Home", Zarathustra returns home to enjoy his solitude and the fresh air of the mountains again. Down there with people he has learned silence. Up here with himself and his animals he must now unlearn it. He has also learnt that: „,Ein Anderes ist Verlassenheit, ein Anderes Einsamkeit' " (III „Die Heimkehr“, *KGW VI 1*, 227: 12), or: “ ‘To be forsaken is one thing, to be lonely, another’ ” (III “The Return Home” 295), that is, he was forsaken when he was among people, but he has found himself now that he is lonely. What else he has learnt is that what people seek above all else is consideration and pity (III “The Return Home” 295, 297). But these are hard to come by for Zarathustra and he suffered to profess just those, for he had to remain silent and to pretend (or else be killed by the envious and the small). His jubilation upon his return to where he belongs is therefore understandable: „Oh selige Stille um mich! Oh reine Gerüche um mich! Oh wie aus tiefer Brust diese Stille reinen Athem holt! Oh wie sie horcht, diese selige Stille!“ (III „Die Heimkehr“, *KGW VI 1*, 229: 5 – 7), or: “O happy silence around me! O clean smells around me! Oh, how this silence draws deep breaths of clean air! Oh, how it listens, this happy silence!” (III “The Return Home” 298). The imagery of freedom and health derived from the view of the lonely mountains and fresh mountain air is germane to Zarathustra's ultimate solitude: „Mit seligen Nüstern athme ich wieder Berges-Freiheit! Erlöst ist endlich meine Nase vom Geruch alles Menschenwesens! Von scharfen Lüften gekitzelt, wie von schäumenden Weinen, *niest* meine Seele, — niest und jubelt sich zu: *Gesundheit!*“ (III „Die Heimkehr“, *KGW VI 1*, 230: 28 – 31), or: “With happy nostrils I again breathe mountain freedom. At last my nose is delivered from the smell of everything human. Tickled by the sharp air as by sparkling wines, my soul sneezes – sneezes and jubilates to itself:

*Gesundheit!*” (III “The Return Home” 298). One does not even wonder what time of the day it is now, now that Zarathustra has returned to his cave. For, after all, his return home has been previously associated with the night and nighttime, now of “ten years” (I “Zarathustra’s Prologue” 1: 121), now of “months and years” (II “The Child with the Mirror” 195). In this sense, in the very dead of the *night* and the night of loneliness at that, Zarathustra experiences *death* in relation to those abandoned down below.

*Morning.* Something else that attests to the fact that Zarathustra returns home in the night is that the following chapter, entitled “On the Three Evils”, begins with his awakening from his morning dream: „Im Traum, im letzten Morgentraume stand ich heut auf einem Vorgebirge, — jenseits der Welt, hielt eine Wage und wog die Welt. Oh dass zu früh mir die Morgenröthe kam: die glühte mich wach, die Eifersüchtige! Eifersüchtig ist sie immer auf meine Morgentraum- Gluthen“ (III „Von den drei Bösen“ 1, *KGW* VI 1, 231: 1 – 8), or: “In a dream, the last dream of the morning, I stood in the foothills today – beyond the world, held the scales, and weighed the world. Alas, the jealous dawn came too early and glowed me awake! She is always jealous of my glowing morning dreams” (III “On the Three Evils” 1: 298, 299). Zarathustra claims he has weighed the world in his morning dream and found it finite (*ibid.*), i.e., whole and complete. In light of his morning discovery he goes to re-evaluate the three evils – voluptuousness, the lust to rule, and selfishness (*ibid.* 300), into the three goods, procreation and creativity, the enhancement of life, and the stimulus for all, respectively.<sup>145</sup> All three well match the characteristics of the morning: the flooding in of energy and strength, as before making a fresh start, the hope, promise, and determination to wield and augment the new time allotted, and the holy interest in deriving the most out of it for oneself. The chapter concludes with Zarathustra re-invoking the

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<sup>145</sup> For the interpretation of Zarathustra’s dream see my discussion of circular symbols in sections 8 and 9 of Chapter 6, on pp. 217 – 221 and 221 – 224, respectively.

great noon, which promises to put an end to thinking these goods evils: „Aber denen Allen kommt nun der Tag, die Wandlung, das Richtschwert, *der grosse Mittag*: da soll Vieles offenbar werden! Und wer das Ich heil und heilig spricht und die Selbstsucht selig, wahrlich, der spricht auch, was er weiss, ein Weissager: ‚*Siehe, er kommt, er ist nahe, der grosse Mittag!*‘ “ (III „Von den drei Bösen“ 2, *KGW* VI 1, 236: 4 – 10), or: “But for all these the day is now at hand, the change, the sword of judgment, the *great noon*: much shall be revealed there. And whoever proclaims the ego wholesome and holy, and selfishness blessed, verily, he will also tell what he knows, foretelling: Verily, it is at hand, it is near, the great noon!” (III “On the Three Evils” 2: 303). Thus Zarathustra experiences *rebirth* upon awakening to a new *truth* – to the world being whole and holy – in the *morning*, as he has previously. In the first day cycle: the sun needs dependents (I “Zarathustra’s Prologue” 1: 121); in the second: Zarathustra needs living companions (I “Zarathustra’s Prologue” 9: 135, 136); in the third: his teachings may be distorted (II “The Child with the Mirror” 195); in the fourth: solar vs. lunar knowledge (II “On Immaculate Perception” 236); and in the eighth: happiness is a woman (III “On Involuntary Bliss” 275). Zarathustra’s morning, then, is associated mostly with his discovery of a new truth.

Throughout the above four chapters, each marked by a diurnal symbol, Zarathustra has been observed to alter his identity: from the *maturity* of his *noon* contempt for the great city that should be burnt before the great noon approaches (“On Passing By”) to the experience of a *decline* through his own nausea and disgust with the pious praying in the *evening* (“On Apostates” 2) to his return home, i.e., solitude, healthy and thriving, yet meaning *death* in relation to those sick (people) now abandoned (“The Return Home”) to the experience of *rebirth* through the discovery of a new *truth* – that the world is finite – early in the *morning* (“On the Three Evils” 1). This diurnal cycle has traced Zarathustra’s journey and return home – his getting

rid of noxious people. He has been seen to have regained himself, solitude and health. The repetition of the diurnal symbols representing Zarathustra's ever changing identity, from his withdrawal through his self-reclamatory experience, indicates the sequence of eternal recurrence, while each particular diurnal symbol of relation and self-relation signifies the moment. He remains faithful to himself throughout the diurnal cycle, obtaining ever more creative freedom the farther he withdraws from the inhabited land.

On the narrative cyclical level, the ten diurnal cycles each feature a different theme: the decision to make amends for the historical error by discarding oppositional thinking (1<sup>st</sup> day cycle); Zarathustra's recognised failure in teaching to (dead, unresponsive) people the Overhuman's decision to bring the world into one whole (2<sup>nd</sup> day cycle); his methodology of learning and teaching his (living) hermits through self-sacrifice and self-overcoming, while keeping his own teachings intact and well protected from tampering by his enemies (3<sup>rd</sup> day cycle); his artistic skill of presenting ripe, mature ideas with the joyful attitude of light dance and out of the profusion of love and knowledge (4<sup>th</sup> day cycle); his spiritual qualities of lightness, heaviness, hardness, and reticence (5<sup>th</sup> day cycle); the components of his visionary communication: silence, speaking, choking, and laughter (6<sup>th</sup> day cycle); the properties of his recollective communication: silence, quasi-silence (listening), speaking, and longing silence (7<sup>th</sup> day cycle); his uncertain, twofold experience of happiness (premature vs. genuine) (8<sup>th</sup> day cycle); the silence and coldness of his ability to deride both winter and the pity of the warm-hearted (9<sup>th</sup> day cycle); and his eventual withdrawal from the pious and doubters back into his solitude to weigh and re-evaluate the world (10<sup>th</sup> day cycle). Together they symbolise the versatile sequence of eternal return, while each particular day cycle, imbued with eternal meaningfulness, represents the permanent moment of temporal infinity. The recurrence of



meaningful variations inaugurated by both the narrative cyclical and the cyclical narrative return of (at times concealed and concealing) diurnal symbols despise creatively, out of love, the return of (contemptuous) diurnal meaninglessness on both said levels, where the return of diurnal symbols is encircled by the return of diurnal cycles, as symbolised by the ring of rings, the ring of recurrence, i.e., total affirmation of existence, as implicit in the resolute will willing and regaining itself through the return home.

### **11<sup>th</sup> Day Cycle**

In contrast with the preceding day cycles, Zarathustra's eleventh diurnal cycle does not begin at noon, nor does it end in the morning. Rather, its temporal symbolic structure goes counter to those of the prior ones. It starts in the morning and continues into the night, with noon apparently missing and having to be supplied – so there are three explicit diurnal symbols within this cycle. Perhaps Nietzsche wants to indicate in this way the arbitrariness of all symbolic language, while at the same time emphasising its artistic creativity. The overturning or overcoming of diurnal symbolism unfolds as follows: the morning is now characterised by death; noon by recovery (the opposite of decline, so to speak); evening by rebirth; and night by maturity. Strange as it may be, this is what happens: in the *morning* Zarathustra summons his abysmal thought and, as he does so, he swoons, experiencing death (III “The Convalescent” 1, 2: 327, 328). When he comes to his senses, his recovery (the reverse of decline) continues seven days, tentatively well into the *noon* of the seventh day, when he takes an apple into his hand (III “The Convalescent” 2: 328), i.e., when he has recuperated enough so as to be able to listen and respond to his animals, which begin to speak to him; their conversation continues well into the *evening*, till, basically, the end of Zarathustra's going under is announced; his recovery and rebirth being seen in his silent self-absorption (III “The Convalescent” 2: 333), further confirmed

by his conversation with his own soul in “On the Great Longing” and his dance with Life (III “The Other Dancing Song” 2: 338, 339), which also takes place in the evening. Lastly, in “The Other Dancing Song” 3, we hear the old bell strike the hour of *midnight* through Zarathustra’s song of life affirmation entitled “Once More”, which sounds his maturity, and his love for eternity is further sealed in “The Seven Seals (Or: the Yes and Amen Song)”. Let us dare to look at these in more detail.

*Morning.* Zarathustra’s weird, unusual behaviour is observed beginning early in the morning: „Eines Morgens, nicht lange nach seiner Rückkehr zur Höhle, sprang Zarathustra von seinem Lager auf wie ein Toller, schrie mit furchtbarer Stimme und gebärdete sich, als ob noch Einer auf dem Lager läge, der nicht davon aufstehn wolle“ (III „Der Genesende“ 1, *KGW* VI 1, 266: 3 – 6), or: “One morning, not long after his return to the cave, Zarathustra jumped up from his resting place like a madman, roared in a terrible voice, and acted as if somebody else were still lying on his resting place who refused to get up” (III “The Convalescent” 1: 327). He begins to shout at the top of his voice, calling up his most abysmal thought from the depth of his own heart till it awakens together with him: „Herauf, abgründlicher Gedanke, aus meiner Tiefe! Ich bin dein Hahn und Morgen-Grauen, verschlafener Wurm: auf! auf! Meine Stimme soll dich schon wach krähen!... Und bist du erst wach, sollst du mir ewig wach bleiben... Zarathustra ruft dich, der Gottlose!... Mein Abgrund *redet*, meine letzte Tiefe habe ich an’s Licht gestülpt!“ (III „Der Genesende“ 1, *KGW* VI 1, 266: 13 – 15, 22; 267: 2, 6, 7), or: “Up, abysmal thought, out of my depth! I am your cock and dawn, sleepy worm. Up! Up! My voice shall yet crow you awake!... And once you are awake, you shall remain awake eternally.... Zarathustra, the godless, summons you!... My abyss speaks, I have turned my ultimate depth inside out into the light” (III “The Convalescent” 1: 327, 328). As is clear, Zarathustra is the incarnation of the morning itself

since he is all the awakening of his own thought, but in order to be what he is, he has had to turn himself inside out so that what is dark and evil in him will become bright and good – the requirement of the eternal return, the doctrine of affirmation. Such a reversal of the whole self demands courage, hard work and dedication, and has consequences – demise. There is an express indication in the text that Zarathustra’s morning is related to his death: „Kaum aber hatte Zarathustra diese Worte gesprochen, da stürzte er nieder gleich einem Todten und blieb lange wie ein Todter“ (III „Der Genesende“ 2, *KGW* VI 1, 267: 11 – 13), or: “No sooner had Zarathustra spoken these words than he fell down as one dead and long remained as one dead” (III “The Convalescent” 2: 328). Thus, Zarathustra experiences *death* in the *morning* when he is up and summoning his most abysmal thought, which we later learn (III “The Convalescent” 2: 330) refers to his struggle to affirm the recurrence of the small human, the one that causes Zarathustra so much nausea and detriment, the foreseen actualisation of the vision which takes place in the undisclosed sixth diurnal cycle and is related in the seventh, the riddle vision where the young shepherd fights the heavy black snake that has bitten itself fast into his throat.

*Noon.* When, however, consciousness returns to Zarathustra, he is on the road to recovery, though a long road: „Als er aber wieder zu sich kam, da war er bleich und zitterte und blieb liegen und wollte lange nicht essen noch trinken. Solches Wesen dauerte an ihm sieben Tage“ (III „Der Genesende“ 1, *KGW* VI 1, 267: 13 – 15), or: “But when he regained his senses he was pale, and he trembled and remained lying there, and for a long time he wanted neither food nor drink. This behaviour lasted seven days” (III “The Convalescent” 2: 328). Mimicking the seven-day creation of the world, Zarathustra finally begins to savour his own fruits: „Endlich, nach sieben Tagen, richtete sich Zarathustra auf seinem Lager auf, nahm einen Rosenapfel in die Hand, roch daran und fand seinen Geruch lieblich“ (III „Der Genesende“ 1, *KGW* VI 1, 267: 23

– 25), or: “At last, after seven days, Zarathustra raised himself on his resting place, took a rose apple into his hand, smelled it, and found its fragrance lovely” (III “The Convalescent” 2: 328). Nietzsche is not explicit what time of day Zarathustra recovers his consciousness, nor does he say when exactly his protagonist takes a rose apple into his hand. It sounds as if Zarathustra comes to soon after he swoons, possibly at noon. But then, when after the seven days he takes the apple – a symbolic gesture in this context<sup>146</sup> – he seems to do so, tentatively, at the hour of noon, since the rose round apple symbolising the wholeness and maturity of the world invites hope for Zarathustra to recover, i.e., become *whole*, in both direct and symbolic senses (where wholeness and maturity would be normally associated with noon, as according to the day cycles previously considered). Given that his further conversation with his animals stretches into the evening, it may have commenced well before the sunset, i.e., around noon again. Thus, it does not seem like too much of a stretch to suggest that Zarathustra regains his wits around *noon* and that this noon is symbolically protracted well into the noon of the seventh day, thereby reflecting his slow, gradual recuperation or *recovery* (the opposite of decline) from his rendezvous with his *Grundgedanke*. The subject of Zarathustra’s conversation with his animals is multifold: the benefit of the existence of words and sounds; the eternal recurrence of the same, as his animals expound it to Zarathustra; his admission that he was the young shepherd biting the head off the snake in the vision which had to be fulfilled; silence versus speaking versus singing; and the courage to go on living, with the latter being discussed in the evening.

*Evening.* Zarathustra’s animals speak to him of the eternal recurrence as he would speak: „Nun sterbe und schwinde ich, würdest du sprechen, und im Nu bin ich ein Nichts. Die Seelen sind so sterblich wie die Leiber. Aber der Knoten von Ursachen kehrt wieder, in den ich verschlungen bin, — der wird mich wieder schaffen! Ich selber gehöre zu den Ursachen der

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<sup>146</sup> See my discussion of this in sections 11 and 13 of Chapter 6, on pp. 227 – 230 and 234, 235, respectively.

ewigen Wiederkunft’ “ (III “Der Genesende” 2, *KGW* VI 1, 272: 10 – 25), or: “ ‘ “Now I die and vanish,’ you would say, ‘and all at once I am nothing. The soul is as mortal as the body. But the knot of causes in which I am entangled recurs and will create me again. I myself belong to the causes of the eternal recurrence” ’ ” (III “The Convalescent” 2: 333). Their language turns more natural as they continue speaking and reflects Zarathustra’s belongingness to and love of nature: „Ich komme wieder, mit dieser Sonne, mit dieser Erde, mit diesem Adler, mit dieser Schlange – *nicht* zu einem neuen Leben oder besseren Leben oder ähnlichen Leben: – ich komme ewig wieder zu diesem gleichen und selbigen Leben, im Grössten und auch im Kleinsten, dass ich wieder aller Dinge ewige Wiederkunft lehre...“ (III “Der Genesende” 2, *KGW* VI 1, 272: 26 – 31), or: “ ‘ “I come again, with this sun, with this earth, with this eagle, with this serpent – *not* to a new life or a better life or a similar life: I come back eternally to this same, selfsame life, in what is greatest as in what is smallest, to teach again the eternal recurrence of all things” ’ ” (III “The Convalescent” 2: 333). Besides his doctrine, Zarathustra is also to teach the great noon and the Overhuman, but this is all followed by the sunset imagery to suggest Zarathustra’s evening – so he is to return: „ ,— dass ich wieder das Wort spreche vom grossen Erden- und Menschen-Mittage, dass ich wieder den Menschen den Übermenschen künde. Ich sprach mein Wort, ich zerbreche an meinem Wort: so will es mein ewiges Loos —, als Verkündiger gehe ich zu Grunde! Die Stunde kam nun, dass der Untergehende sich selber segnet. Also — *endet* Zarathustra’s Untergang’— — “ (III „Der Genesende“ 2, *KGW* VI 1, 272: 32 – 34; 273: 1 – 5), or: “ ‘ “ to speak again the word of the great noon of earth and man, to proclaim the overman again to men. I spoke my word, I break of my word: thus my eternal lot wants it; as a proclaimer I perish. The hour has now come when he who goes under should bless himself. Thus *ends* Zarathustra’s going under” ’ ” (III “The Convalescent” 2: 333).<sup>147</sup> The kinds of images that the

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<sup>147</sup> Such images as *zu Grunde gehen*, *der Untergehende*, and *Untergang* suggest the setting of the sun.

animals enumerate (sun, earth, eagle, serpent) are *solar* symbols and are those which particularly belong to Zarathustra's own existence and represent his own teaching, eternal recurrence, for he follows the cycle of the *sun* (the giver of light) upon the earth, the Overhuman is the meaning of the *earth* (the recipient of light), and his animal friends are the *eagle* and the *serpent* (symbols of day and night on earth, respectively).<sup>148</sup> Thus, eternal recurrence is spoken of as referring to Zarathustra, as a literary character, and to the other characters as engaged by Zarathustra, as well as to the entire diurnal setting of *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*. In this sense, Zarathustra is to continue affirming his existence and teaching others the affirmation of eternal recurrence. Since the images the animals enumerate are *solar* symbols and the claim of this work is that Nietzsche's book is structured as a symbolic diurnal cycle or a number of cycles, Zarathustra's return to himself with all those solar symbols may also symbolise his return to the beginning of his literary journey to teach the eternal recurrence all over again. In this respect, Nietzsche's point may be that: 1) Zarathustra affirms his life by wanting to relive it as he has lived it; and 2) his life as it has been wants to be re-read, i.e., relived and affirmed, by the reader.

With that being said, it becomes clear that Zarathustra's conversation with the serpent and the eagle takes an evening turn and colour as the sunset approaches. This is evidenced by Zarathustra's symbolic evening or going under as implicit in his descent – his consummation of existence: he perishes giving away his gifts just as the setting sun dies bestowing its oozing light to people as it slips over the horizon. However, this time the *evening* symbolises not Zarathustra's decline, paradoxically, but his full recuperation – his *rebirth*. He does not respond to the animals any more. The eagle and the serpent honour his silence and cautiously steal away. Zarathustra is left alone to converse with his own soul in “On the Great Longing”, where the

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<sup>148</sup> See my discussion of Thatcher and Pappas on these solar animal symbols in Chapter 3, on pp. 100 – 104 and 104 – 107, respectively.

sense of evening is present throughout their melancholy conversation, especially in his repetitive invocation „Oh meine Seele“ (III „Von der grossen Sehnsucht“, *KGW* VI 1, 274: 2), or “O my soul” (III “On the Great Longing” 335). Zarathustra tells his soul how generous he has been towards it, bestowing upon it all kinds of good things: cleanliness, nakedness, the right to say Yes and No, freedom of creation, loving contempt, persuasion, destiny, all wines of wisdom, sun, night, and silence, in short, everything – so that it will have grown into a ripe vine, the soul being melancholy, now smiling, now wanting to weep, but it should have no reason for weeping as it is full and overfull of gifts and that, to top it off, would have been an accusation of life. „Aber willst du nicht weinen, nicht ausweinen deine purpurne Schwermuth, so wirst du *singen* müssen, oh meine Seele!“ (III „Von der grossen Sehnsucht“, *KGW* VI 1, 276: 12, 13), or: “But if you will not weep, not weep out your crimson melancholy, then you will have to *sing*, O my soul” (III “On the Great Longing” 335). The last thing Zarathustra says he has given his soul is: „— *dass ich dich singen hiess...* sprich nun, sprich: *wer* von uns hat jetzt — zu danken? — Besser aber noch: *singe mir, singe, oh meine Seele! Und mich lass danken!* —“ (III „Von der grossen Sehnsucht“, *KGW* VI 1, 276: 33, 34; 277: 1 – 3), or: “*that I bade you sing....* [S]peak now, speak: which of us has to be thankful now? Better yet, however: *sing to me, sing, O my soul! And let me be thankful*” (III “On the Great Longing” 336). Thus Zarathustra chooses to be thankful to his soul because it has received everything, including the right to sing, from him. This, however, is his joy of giving to – but also of receiving from – himself. The crimson melancholy of Zarathustra’s soul, its melancholy as in the *evening*, is well-matched by its overripeness, which attests to Zarathustra’s own full recovery, hence *rebirth*, from the effects of his struggle with his most abysmal thought.

In “The Other Dancing Song” 1, Zarathustra is observed performing a kind of a chasing hide-and-seek dancing song together with Life: „Zu dir hin sprang ich: da flohst du zurück vor meinem Sprunge; und gegen mich züngelte deines fliehenden fliegenden Haars Zunge! Von dir weg sprang ich und von deinen Schlangen: da standst du schon, halbgewandt, das Auge voll Verlangen“ (III „Das andere Tanzlied“ 1, *KGW* VI 1, 278: 15 – 19), or: “I leaped toward you, but you fled back from my leap, and the tongue of your fleeing, flying hair licked me in its sweep. Away from you I leaped, and from your serpents’ ire; and already you stood there, half turned, your eyes full of desire” (III “The Other Dancing Song” 1: 336). Zarathustra and Life are like man and woman, where man’s philosophy – can’t live with woman, can’t live without woman – is incorporated into Zarathustra’s relationship with Life. He confesses his love for her but also the desire to leave her. Overall, there is an interplay between Zarathustra and Life, i.e., between Zarathustra, man, and Zarathustra, woman; the question being, as always, how to respond to Life or himself, and the answer implicit in the invigorating poetics of the text being – playfully and creatively.

In “The Other Dancing Song” 2, both Life and Zarathustra know that they are beyond good and evil and – what is more – Life confesses that she likes Zarathustra because she is jealous of his wisdom and that: „,Wenn dir deine Weisheit einmal davonliefe, ach! da liefe dir schnell auch meine Liebe noch davon’ —“ (III „Das andere Tanzlied“ 2, *KGW* VI 1, 280: 24, 25), or: “ ‘if your wisdom ever ran away from you, then my love would quickly run away from you too’ ” (III “The Other Dancing Song” 2: 338). Life further tells him that Zarathustra does not love her enough because when the old bell strikes the hour of midnight, then he thinks between one and twelve of how he wants to leave her. At this point Zarathustra whispers something into her ear that she knows. Life is surprised that Zarathustra knows it too. What do they know? That



the eternal recurrence will bring Zarathustra back to life (through cosmology) – or perhaps Life (through existence)? „Und wir sahen uns an und blickten auf die grüne Wiese, über welche eben der kühle Abend lief, und weinten mit einander. — Damals aber war mir das Leben lieber, als je alle meine Weisheit —“ (III „Das andere Tanzlied“ 2, *KGW* VI 1, 281: 14 – 17), or: “And we looked at each other and gazed on the green meadow over which the cool evening was running just then, and we wept together. But then life was dearer to me than all my wisdom ever was” (III “The Other Dancing Song” 2: 339). It is noteworthy that he chooses Life (existence) over wisdom (rationality) – so the question of leaving life (dying and being born again through cosmology with rational implications) is ruled out. Thus Zarathustra affirms his life as it is, and he does so precisely in the *evening*, when he has finally attained full *recovery* from having experienced the noxious eternal return of the small human and everything that impedes or prevents spiritual growth.

*Night.* What follows their lovely weeping together after the heartfelt conversation is over is the chiming of the old bell at the midnight hour: the twelve bell strokes that measure the pulsating rhythm of Zarathustra’s roundelay named “Once More” beat the following lines:

<i>Eins!</i>	<i>One!</i>
Oh Mensch! Gieb Acht!	O man, take care!
<i>Zwei!</i>	<i>Two!</i>
Was spricht die tiefe Mitternacht?	What does the deep midnight declare?
<i>Drei!</i>	<i>Three!</i>
„Ich schlief, ich schlief —,	“I was asleep —
<i>Vier!</i>	<i>Four!</i>
„Aus tiefem Traum bin ich erwacht: —	From a deep dream I woke and swear:
<i>Fünf!</i>	<i>Five!</i>
„Die Welt ist tief,	The world is deep,
<i>Sechs!</i>	<i>Six!</i>
„Und tiefer als der Tag gedacht.	Deeper than day had been aware.
<i>Sieben!</i>	<i>Seven!</i>
„Tief ist ihr Weh —,	Deep is its woe;
<i>Acht!</i>	<i>Eight!</i>
„Lust — tiefer noch als Herzeleid:	Joy – deeper yet than agony:

*Neun!*  
 „Weh spricht: Vergeh!  
*Zehn!*  
 „Doch alle Lust will Ewigkeit —,  
*Elf!*  
 „— will tiefe, tiefe Ewigkeit!  
*Zwölf!*  
 (III „Das andere Tanzlied“ 3)<sup>149</sup>

*Nine!*  
 Woe implores: Go!  
*Ten!*  
 But all joy wants eternity –  
*Eleven!*  
 Wants deep, wants deep eternity.”  
*Twelve!*  
 (III “The Other Dancing Song” 3: 339)<sup>150</sup>

What is evident about this poem is that the action takes place in the *night*, to be more precise, at midnight, the symbolic hour that separates the diurnal cycle in half. Midnight stands between evening and morning and twelve strokes, each equaling the passing of one hour, comprise the half day cycle – the time from noon, when Zarathustra begins his recovery, through the evening, when he fully recuperates, to the midnight hour itself, when he finally attains *maturity* in terms of life affirmation through the eternal recurrence, the clock hand having moved to make one full cycle, from noon to midnight. In the chapter that follows this poem, „Die sieben Siegel (Oder: das Ja- und Amen-Lied)“, or “The Seven Seals (Or: the Yes and Amen Song)”, Zarathustra confirms his love of eternity, the only woman with whom he would like to have children, by getting married to her through the ring of recurrence, tentatively in the nighttime.<sup>151</sup> In the morning, in Part IV, he begins his new journey and his last day cycle. Meanwhile the eleven-line “Once More” poem seems to have underscored the eleventh diurnal cycle while intending the twelfth by beating the last count: „*Zwölf!*“, or “*Twelve!*” I submit that each line of the poem corresponds to the main idea expressed by each of the diurnal cycles in the order and sequence considered, i.e., there is a numerical correspondence between the lines of the poem and the diurnal cycles.

<sup>149</sup> *KGW* VI 1, 281: 20 – 25; 282: 1 – 17.

<sup>150</sup> For the way the eternal recurrence is expressed in this poem see section 16 of Chapter 6, on pp. 249 – 252.

<sup>151</sup> For the discussion of this chapter see section 14 of Chapter 6, on pp. 239 – 245.

In the first line Zarathustra issues a warning, which corresponds with the decision he makes in regard to the rectification of the historical error: one must reconsider thinking of the world in binaries (1<sup>st</sup> day cycle). In the second line the deep midnight declares, rather proclaims, the Overhuman's decision to bring the world into unity (2<sup>nd</sup> day cycle). In the third line Zarathustra admits that he was asleep (and unaware) when the distortion of teachings in general and his teachings in particular happened (3<sup>rd</sup> day cycle). In the fourth line, however, he has awakened and swears that he has ripe ideas (of eternal return) to share out of the abundance of joy, love, and knowledge (4<sup>th</sup> day cycle). In the fifth line he reveals that the world, his world in particular, is deep so that seemingly contradictory spiritual qualities such as lightness, heaviness, hardness, and reticence are needed to enhance the world (5<sup>th</sup> day cycle). In the sixth line it is explained that day's reason could not comprehend the senses, e.g., such qualities of visionary communication as silence, speaking, choking, and laughter involved in the experience and enunciation of eternal recurrence (6<sup>th</sup> day cycle). In the seventh line it is specified that what is deep about the world is its woe and pain, which has been shown as deeply experienced yet overcome through the properties of Zarathustra's recollective communication: silence, quasi-silence (listening), speaking, and longing silence (7<sup>th</sup> day cycle). In the eighth line it is stated that joy is much deeper than agony, which corresponds to the topic of happiness (premature vs. genuine) invoked earlier by Zarathustra (8<sup>th</sup> day cycle). In the ninth line woe is shown not wanting itself, it implores: go, just like the woeful cold winter and the woe-based pity of the warm-hearted, which Zarathustra artfully counters by mocking it through silence and coldness – out of joy (9<sup>th</sup> day cycle). In the tenth line, however, joy wants the eternity of itself as opposed to woe or the woe-based pity of the pious and doubters, from whom Zarathustra eventually withdraws back into his loneliness – only to weigh and re-evaluate the world (10<sup>th</sup> day cycle) as

eternally justifying existence; so joy wants eternity and re-evaluation. In the eleventh line joy's desire for eternity is confirmed and sealed through Zarathustra's loss and recovery of his own self: he overcomes the nausea of the eternal recurrence of the small human and affirms healthy life through love and marriage to deep, deep eternity (11<sup>th</sup> day cycle). The twelfth beat remains open for now: it awaits its last day cycle.

We have seen that this diurnal cycle is a special one, i.e., it begins with the morning and ends at night, unlike the previously discussed cycles. The following three reasons for this may be suggested: 1) Nietzsche reminds his reader of the arbitrariness of language in general and his language in particular; 2) he wants to underline the importance of this day cycle as it is concerned directly with the idea of eternal recurrence and Zarathustra's coming to terms with his abysmal thought; and 3) this day cycle may serve as a kind of wrapping up of the day cycles that have up until the present lain buried in, but have now been unearthed from, the arable soil of the text. In terms of Zarathustra's subjectivity, we have seen that he experiences *death* upon summoning his *Grundgedanke* in the *morning*, as when he falls as one dead; that he begins his *recovery* at *noon* (as opposed to the decline he normally experiences in the evening for different reasons), when, as is wont with a recovering patient, he starts to touch, smell and possibly take food and perhaps drink too; that he experiences *rebirth* when he finally recovers in the *evening*, as evidenced by the ending of his down-going, paradoxically, like the sun ("The Convalescent" 1, 2), by his innermost conversation with his melancholy overrich soul ("On the Great Longing") and, finally, by the playful dance song he performs together with his life ("The Other Dancing Song" 2); at last, he attains maturity for the affirmation of existence through the eternal recurrence at the hour of *midnight* ("The Other Dancing Song" 3), which he confirms in "The Seven Seals (Or: the Yes and Amen Song)", also in the night. The repetition of the diurnal

symbols indicating Zarathustra's variable identity, from his swoon through recovery to accumulation of vigour, represents the sequence of eternal return, while each particular diurnal symbol of the recuperatory process symbolises the moment. He overcomes his most abysmal thought and is ready to get united with eternity.

On the narrative cyclical level, the eleven diurnal cycles each elicit a different topic: the decision to make up for the historical error by reconsidering the benefits of oppositional thinking (1<sup>st</sup> day cycle); Zarathustra's honest failure in teaching to (dead) people the Overhuman's decision to unite the world with one goal (2<sup>nd</sup> day cycle); his methodology of learning and teaching his (living) recluses through self-sacrifice and self-overcoming, while preserving his own teachings from his enemies (3<sup>rd</sup> day cycle); his ability to offer ripe, mature ideas with the cheerful attitude of light dance and out of the abundance of love and knowledge (4<sup>th</sup> day cycle); his spiritual qualities of lightness, heaviness, hardness, and reticence (5<sup>th</sup> day cycle); the features of his visionary communication: silence, speaking, choking, and laughter (6<sup>th</sup> day cycle); the properties of his recollective communication: silence, quasi-silence (listening), speaking, and longing silence (7<sup>th</sup> day cycle); his wavering, twofold experience of happiness (premature vs. genuine) (8<sup>th</sup> day cycle); his silence and coldness capable of deriding both winter and the pity of the warm-hearted (9<sup>th</sup> day cycle); his eventual withdrawal from the pious and doubters back into his loneliness to weigh and re-evaluate the world (10<sup>th</sup> day cycle); and his loss and recovery of the self in coming to terms with the nausea of the eternal recurrence of the small human, culminating in his affirmation of life and marriage to eternity (11<sup>th</sup> day cycle). Together they symbolise the meaningfully variable sequence of eternal return, while each particular day cycle represents the same meaningful moment of time without end, thereby communicating the idea of eternal recurrence. The recurrence of meaningful differences inaugurated by both the narrative

cyclical and the cyclical narrative recurrence of (arbitrary) diurnal symbols respond playfully and creatively to the return of (noxious) diurnal meaninglessness on both said levels, where the return of symbolic diurnal cycles encompasses the return of diurnal symbols, as represented, finally, by the ring of rings, the ring of recurrence, i.e., total affirmation of existence, as implicit in the healthy will willing and recovering itself through infirmity, recuperation, and immunity.

### **12<sup>th</sup> Day Cycle**

The last diurnal cycle is quite extensive, comprising the entire Part IV of *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*. If the day cycle is co-extensive with Part IV, then it is possible to speak of the five times of the day as holding twenty-four hours: from morning to noon to evening to midnight and back to morning. If noon is the departure point within the cycle, then the normal quadripartite division of the day is back in place in the last part. Following the customary scheme, however, will leave out the morning, which will launch all the other diurnal symbols into operation. It would therefore be expedient to suggest proceeding both chronologically and conceptually. After all, the first diurnal symbol in sequence in Part IV is the continuation of the diurnal chain of symbols: Part III ends at night, while Part IV (its second chapter) begins in the morning. The twelfth diurnal cycle, therefore, includes the following symbols: a long *morning* of Zarathustra's encounters with the higher people from all walks of life – his descent characterised by the necessity of the trial of pity, the point at which Zarathustra yields to his last sin and experiences rebirth in relation to the higher men and death in relation to himself (“The Cry of Distress” through “The Shadow”); the short or long, better timeless, *noon* of Zarathustra's solitude and experience of the eternal recurrence of the same, when the world becomes perfect – characterised by his longing for maturity (“At Noon”); a long *evening* of Zarathustra's meditation and festivity in the company of the higher men in his mountain cave – his condescension and decline (“The

Welcome” through “The Ass Festival”); the silent *midnight* hour of Zarathustra’s revelation of the eternal recurrence to himself and the higher men – his death in relation to the higher men (“The Drunken Song”); and, finally, a solitary *morning* of Zarathustra’s readiness and leave-taking in the company of his animals: the eagle and the serpent, the laughing lion and doves – his rebirth (“The Sign”). Let us now venture, together with Zarathustra, into his last temptation – the cycle of pity.

*Morning.* In “The Cry of Distress”, the old soothsayer, the character of pessimism, melancholy, sadness, and twilight, reappears to seduce Zarathustra sitting on his stone near the cave to his final sin: „*Mitleiden!*“ (IV „Der Nothschrei“, *KGW* VI 1, 297: 26), or: “*Pity!*” (IV “The Cry of Distress” 354). At this moment Zarathustra hears the higher man crying for his help. In the meantime the soothsayer repeats his formula of the world, that everything is the same, nothing is worthwhile and Zarathustra has no blessed isles, or happiness, any more. This Zarathustra negates by saying no three times and, in doing so, discloses the time of the day their conversation is taking place: „*Nein! Nein! Drei Mal Nein! rief er mit starker Stimme und strich sich den Bart — Das weiss ich besser! Es giebt noch glückselige Inseln! Stille davon, du seufzender Trauersack! Höre davon auf zu plätschern, du Regenwolke am Vormittag!*“ (IV „Der Nothschrei“, *KGW* VI 1, 298: 32, 33; 299: 1 – 4), or: “ ‘No! No! Three times no!’ he shouted with a strong voice and stroked his beard. ‘*That* I know better: there still are blessed isles. Be quiet about *that*, you sighing bag of sadness! Stop splashing about that, you raincloud in the morning!’ ” (IV “The Cry of Distress” 355). The German *Vormittag* means the time before noon, which is actually morning. No sooner is Zarathustra about to leave than the soothsayer tells him that he will not get away since already in the evening they will be sitting together in Zarathustra’s cave. This Zarathustra affirms out of joy: „*Am Abende nämlich wollen wir Beide*

guter Dinge sein, — guter Dinge und froh darob, dass dieser Tag zu Ende gieng!“ (IV „Der Nothschrei“, *KGW* VI 1, 299: 25 – 28), or: “For in the evening we should both be cheerful – cheerful and gay that this day has come to an end” (IV “The Cry of Distress” 356). Following the cry of distress, Zarathustra now goes around, collecting the higher men from various places, inviting them to his cave for a long evening (of talks and merry-making, drinking and dancing) and running away from them in a hurry, searching for those in need of help: the soothsayer (“The Cry of Distress”), the two kings (“Conversation with the Kings”), the penitent of the spirit (“The Leech”), the old magician (“The Magician”), the old pope (“Retired”), the ugliest man (“The Ugliest Man”), the voluntary beggar (“The Voluntary Beggar”), and the shadow (“The Shadow”), Zarathustra’s own shadow, from which he runs away last to experience noon in the next chapter, “At Noon”. Thus Zarathustra has been observed to have succumbed to the cry of distress. Giving in to the trial of pity, he willingly accepts its challenge, without, however, knowing that it is precisely from the higher men that he has been encountering around, and inviting over to, his cave that this pity is coming. But this accounts for his *death* in relation to his own true pitiless self and his coming into pitiful existence – his *rebirth* – in relation to the higher men, throughout his long *morning* of encounters.

*Noon.* In “At Noon”, now that Zarathustra runs and runs, he finds no one till he finally finds himself (IV “At Noon” 387). „Um die Stunde des Mittags aber, als die Sonne gerade über Zarathustra’s Haupte stand, kam er an einem alten krummen und knorrichten Baume vorbei“ (IV „Mittags“, *KGW* VI 1, 338: 5 – 7), or: “But around the hour of noon, when the sun stood straight over Zarathustra’s head, he came to an old crooked and knotty tree” (IV “At Noon” 387) entwined by a grapevine. He stretched his hand to reach for the grape but „da gelüstete ihn etwas Anderes noch mehr: nämlich sich neben den Baum niederzulegen, um die Stunde des



vollkommenen Mittags, und zu schlafen“ (IV „Mittags“, *KGW* VI 1, 338: 12 – 14), or: “felt a still greater desire for something else: namely, to lie down beside the tree at the perfect noon hour, and to sleep” (IV “At Noon” 388). Zarathustra feels that a tiny bit of happiness has made him and the world perfect just now, that he is falling down the well of eternity, and that the world has become round and ripe (*ibid.* 388, 389). In other words, he experiences the merger of time and eternity at the hour of noon.<sup>152</sup> It does not take long before he comes to reality, feeling that half an eternity has elapsed and longing to relive the same fleeting moment of bliss: „,Oh Himmel über mir... Wann trinkst du diesen Tropfen Thau’s, der auf alle Erden-Dinge niederfiel, — wann trinkst du diese wunderliche Seele — — wann, Brunnen der Ewigkeit! du heiterer schauerlicher Mittags-Abgrund! wann trinkst du meine Seele in dich zurück?“ (IV „Mittags“, *KGW* VI 1, 340: 34; 341: 3 – 6), or: “‘O heaven over me!’ ‘When will you drink this drop of dew which has fallen upon all earthly things? When will you drink this strange soul? When, well of eternity? Cheerful, dreadful abyss of noon! When will you drink my soul back into yourself?’ ” (IV “At Noon” 390). At this moment Zarathustra feels strangely drunk „und siehe, da stand die Sonne immer noch gerade über seinem Haupte“ (IV „Mittags“, *KGW* VI 1, 341: 8, 9), or: “and behold the sun still stood straight over his head” (IV “At Noon” 390). Zarathustra’s *noon*, therefore, signals the insatiable desire of his happiness for *maturity*. This is not to say that he lacks such happiness; it is just that he longs to augment it. „Am späten Nachmittage war es erst, dass Zarathustra, nach langem umsonstigen Suchen und Umherstreifen, wieder zu seiner Höhle heimkam“ (IV „Die Begrüssung“, *KGW* VI 1, 342: 2 – 4), or: “It was only late in the afternoon that Zarathustra, after much vain searching and roaming, returned to his cave again” (IV “The Welcome” 390) – only to find therein all of those higher men he has been collecting and to realise that it is from them that he has heard the cry of distress.

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<sup>152</sup> See my discussion of Zarathustra’s experience of noon in section 15 of Chapter 6, on pp. 245 – 249.

*Evening.* In “The Welcome”, in the evening, Zarathustra welcomes all of his guests, saying that it is their time tonight and that everyone will have fun in his domain: „,Diess hier ist mein Reich und meine Herrschaft: was aber mein ist, für diesen Abend und diese Nacht soll es euer sein... Bei mir zu Heim-und-Hause soll Keiner verzweifeln’ “ (IV „Die Begrüssung“, *KGW* VI 1, 343: 31, 32; 344: 1), or: “This is my realm and my dominion; but whatever is mine shall be yours for this evening and this night.... In my home and house nobody shall despair” (IV “The Welcome” 392). As they eat and drink (“The Last Supper”), Zarathustra gives a few discourses, among others: Zarathustra recollects his folly in going to speak in the market place, saying that as he spoke to all, he spoke to none and that there can be no equality among people because God died and now we want the Overhuman to live (IV “On the Highest Man” 1, 2); that he is concerned not with the preservation (as are people of today) but the overcoming of the human being (as is the human being of the future) (*ibid.* 3); that great evil is needed for the best in the human (*ibid.* 5); that today belongs to the herd (*ibid.* 9); that one should not be a burden on others (*ibid.* 10); that the creator is pregnant with his/her own child (*ibid.* 11); that one should cleanse one’s soul after giving birth to ideas, just as a woman should clean herself after pregnancy (*ibid.* 12); that fathers bearing vices do not make their sons holy (*ibid.* 13); that, again, most importantly, today belongs to the herd (*ibid.* 19) and that, therefore, the higher men should learn to dance and to laugh away over themselves (*ibid.* 20) (i.e., to treat big accidents as small). Soon follows the old magician’s melancholy song; he begins by attesting to the evening time: „,Der Tag klingt ab, allen Dingen kommt nun der Abend, auch den besten Dingen; hört nun und seht, ihr höheren Menschen, welcher Teufel, ob Mann, ob Weib, dieser Geist der Abend-Schwermuth ist!’ “ (IV „Das Lied der Schwermuth“ 2, *KGW* VI 1, 367: 1 – 4), or: “The day is fading away, evening is now coming to all things, even to the best things: hear then and see, you

higher men, what kind of devil, whether man or woman, this spirit of evening melancholy is!” (IV “The Song of Melancholy” 2: 409) and concludes by confessing that he himself once yielded to the twilight of melancholy:

<p>So sank ich selber einstmals          Aus meinem Wahrheits-Wahnsinne,          Aus meinen Tages-Sehnsüchten,          Des Tages müde, krank vom Lichte,          — sank abwärts, abendwärts, schattenwärts:          Von Einer Wahrheit          Verbrannt und durstig:          — gedenkst du noch, gedenkst du, heisses Herz,          Wie da du durstetest? —          Dass ich verbannt sei          Von <i>aller</i> Wahrheit,          Nur Narr!          Nur Dichter!          (IV „Das Lied der Schwermuth“ 3)<sup>153</sup></p>	<p>Thus I myself once sank          Out of my truth-madness,          Out of my day-longings,          Weary of day, sick from the light –          Sank downward, eveningward, shawdoward,          Burned by one truth,          And thirsty:          Do you remember still, remember, hot heart,          How you thirsted?  <i>That I be banished</i>  <i>From all truth,</i>  <i>Only fool!</i>  <i>Only poet!</i>          (IV “The Melancholy Song” 3: 412)</p>
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His description of the *evening* reflects well Zarathustra’s condescension to and *decline* among the higher men, for he has just now gone out of the cave to take a breath of fresh air, unable to tolerate their bad reeking smells (IV “The Melancholy Song” 1, 2: 408). The wanderer (who called himself Zarathustra’s shadow) implores Zarathustra not to leave them, for he alone makes this evening air breathable in here: „bleibe bei uns, oh Zarathustra! Hier ist viel verborgenes Elend, das reden will, viel Abend, viel Wolke, viel dumpfe Luft!... Du allein machst die Luft um dich herum stark und klar!“ (IV „Unter Töchtern der Wüste“ 1, *KGW* VI 1, 375: 17 – 19, 23), or: “Stay with us, O Zarathustra! There is much hidden misery here that desires to speak, much evening, much cloud, much musty air... You alone make the air around you strong and clear” (IV “Among Daughters of the Wilderness” 1: 416). It is clear, then, that the evening and the evening air in the cave take a toll on Zarathustra.

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<sup>153</sup> *KGW* VI 1, 370: 1 – 20.

In “The Awakening”, however, Zarathustra sees the first sign of the higher men’s convalescence and is happy that his „Krieger-Kost... Eroberer-Kost“ (IV „Die Erweckung“ 1, *KGW* VI 1, 383: 17), or “warriors’ nourishment, conquerers’ nourishment” (IV “The Awakening” 1: 423) has taken effect: they have begun making jubilating noises and the evening has turned ever crimson and lighter: „Dieser Tag ist ein Sieg: er weicht schon, er flieht, *der Geist der Schwere*, mein alter Erzfeind! Wie gut will dieser Tag enden, der so schlimm und schwer begann! Und enden *will* er. Schon kommt der Abend: über das Meer her reitet er, der gute Reiter! Wie er sich wiegt, der Selige, Heimkehrende, in seinen purpurnen Sätteln! “ (VI „Die Erweckung“ 1, *KGW* VI 1, 382: 24; 383: 1 – 5), or: “ ‘This day represents a triumph: he is even now retreating, he is fleeing, *the spirit of gravity*, my old arch-enemy. How happily this day wants to end after beginning so badly and gravely. And it *wants* to end. Even now evening is approaching: he is riding over the sea, this good rider. How the blessed one, returning home, sways in his crimson saddle’ ” (IV “The Awakening” 1: 422).

As their evening gradually rolls into the night, Zarathustra asks his guest to remember the good time they have spent together: „, Vergesst die Nacht und diess Eselsfest nicht, ihr höheren Menschen! *Das* erfandet ihr bei mir, Das nehme ich als gutes Wahrzeichen, — Solcherlei erfinden nur Genesende! Und feiert ihr es abermals, dieses Eselsfest, thut’s euch zu Liebe, thut’s auch mir zu Liebe! Und zu *meinem* Gedächtniss!’ “ (IV „Das Eselsfest“ 3, *KGW* VI 1, 390: 1 – 6), or: “Do not forget this night and this ass festival, you higher men. *This* you invented when you were with me and I take that for a good sign: such things are invented only by convalescents. And when you celebrate it again, this ass festival, do it for your own sakes, and also do it for my sake. And in remembrance of *me*” (IV “The Ass Festival” 3: 428, 429). Now that the evening melancholy is finally gone and the cheer of the evening has drawn to a close, there begins,

outside his cave, in the fresh open air, the night and midnight of Zarathustra's revelation of the eternal recurrence.

*Night.* The scene now takes place outside Zarathustra's abode and acquires a different shade, that of a mysterious night: „Inzwischen aber war Einer nach dem Andern hinaus getreten, in's Freie und in die kühle nachdenkliche Nacht; Zarathustra selber aber führte den hässlichsten Menschen an der Hand, dass er ihm seine Nacht-Welt und den grossen runden Mond und die silbernen Wasserstürze bei seiner Höhle zeige“ (IV „Das Nachtwandler-Lied“ 1, *KGW* VI 1, 391: 3 – 7), or: “Meanwhile one after the other had stepped out into the open and into the cool reflective night; but Zarathustra himself led the ugliest man by the hand to show him his night world and the big round moon and the silvery waterfalls near his cave” (IV “The Drunken Song” 1: 429). There they stand with comforted hearts; „die Heimlichkeit der Nacht aber kam ihnen näher und näher an's Herz“ (IV „Das Nachtwandler-Lied“ 1, *KGW* VI 1, 391: 10, 11), or: “but the secrecy of the night came closer and closer to their hearts” (IV “The Drunken Song” 1: 429). All of a sudden, an amazing thing happens: the ugliest man jumps out and says: „Um dieses Tags Willen — *ich* bin's zum ersten Male zufrieden, dass ich das ganze Leben lebte. Und dass ich so viel bezeuge, ist mir noch nicht genug. Es lohnt sich auf der Erde zu leben: Ein Tag, Ein Fest mit Zarathustra lehrte mich die Erde lieben. „War *Das* — das Leben?“ will ich zum Tode sprechen. „Wohlan! Noch Ein Mal!“ ’ “ (IV „Das Nachtwandler-Lied“ 1, *KGW* VI 1, 391: 23, 24; 392: 1 – 5), or: “For the sake of this day, *I* am for the first time satisfied that I have lived my whole life. And I attest so much is still not enough for me. Living on earth is worth while: one day, one festival with Zarathustra, taught me to love the earth. ‘Was *that* life?’ I want to say to death. Well then! Once more!’ ” (IV “The Drunken Song” 1: 429, 430). And everybody rushed to thank Zarathustra for the happy time they had had with him. Story has it, everyone danced

with joy that night, even the old soothsayer drunk with wine and with “the sweetness of life” and perhaps even the ass too (*ibid.* 430). The ugliest man’s confession works as an introduction to Zarathustra’s revelation of the eternal recurrence.

The atmosphere gets quieter and tenser as Zarathustra, now drifting in his thoughts into vast distances, puts one finger to his mouth and says: „*Kommt!*” “ (IV „Das Nachtwandler-Lied“ 2, *KGW* VI 1, 393: 12), or: “ ‘*Come!*’ ” (IV “The Drunken Song” 2: 431). He does the same another time and says: „*Kommt! Kommt! Es geht gen Mitternacht!*” “ (IV „Das Nachtwandler-Lied“ 2, *KGW* VI 1, 393: 17, 18), or: “ ‘*Come! Come! Midnight approaches!*’ ” (IV “The Drunken Song” 2: 431). When everything listens – the ass, the eagle and the serpent, Zarathustra’s cave, the moon and the night itself – he does the same again, for the third time and says: „*Kommt! Kommt! Kommt! Lasst uns jetzo wandeln! Es ist die Stunde: lasst uns in die Nacht wandeln!*” “ (IV „Das Nachtwandler-Lied“ 2, *KGW* VI 1, 393: 25 – 27), or: “ ‘*Come! Come! Let us wander now! The hour has come: let us wander into the night!*’ ” (IV “The Drunken Song” 2: 431).<sup>154</sup> In “The Drunken Song” 3, Zarathustra discloses his innermost desire to share with the higher men what the old deep night bell speaks to him in heartfelt beats: „—hörst du’s nicht, wie sie heimlich, schrecklich, herzlich zu *dir* redet, die alte tiefe tiefe Mitternacht? *Oh Mensch, gieb Acht!*” (IV „Das Nachtwandler-Lied“ 3, *KGW* VI 1, 394: 13 – 15), or: “Do you not hear how it speaks secretly, terribly, cordially to *you* – the old deep, deep midnight? *O man, take care!*” (IV “The Drunken Song” 3: 432). What follows is that each line of the roundelay named “Once More” is reiterated in each subsequent section of the chapter from 3 through 11. In section 12, however, the whole poem is recited once again as if to underscore the eternal recurrence based on the joy-versus-woe argument, the theme of night and midnight

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<sup>154</sup> The German *wandeln* also means ‘to change’ or ‘to transform’. It suggests that Zarathustra is going to metamorphose into the night, which indicates his ever-changeable identity represented by the circularity of diurnal symbols.

resounding in every section and throughout every line of the mysterious, jubilating, deep, profound midnight poem.<sup>155</sup>

Right at the start of his revelation, Zarathustra loses his sense of time, sinking into the deep well of eternity once again. No sooner does he lose orientation than he says that he will not disclose what he really thinks at the moment: „Wehe mir! Wo ist die Zeit hin? Sank ich nicht in tiefe Brunnen? Die Welt schläft – Ach! Ach! Der Hund heult, der Mond scheint. Lieber will ich sterben, sterben, als euch sagen, was mein Mitternachts-Herz eben denkt“ (IV „Das Nachtwandler-Lied“ 4, *KGW* VI 1, 394: 17 – 21), or: “Woe unto me! Where is time gone? Have I not sunk into deep wells? The world sleeps. Alas! Alas! The dog howls, the moon shines. Sooner would I die, die rather than tell you what my midnight heart thinks now” (IV “The Drunken Song” 4: 432). Thus overwhelmed and intoxicated with the profundity of his feelings, he finally experiences death – death in relation to the world of the higher men and the like: „Nun starb ich schon. Es ist dahin. Spinne, was spinnst du um mich?“ (IV „Das Nachtwandler-Lied“ 4, *KGW* VI 1, 394: 22, 23), or: “Now I have died. It is gone. Spider, what do you spin around me?” (IV “The Drunken Song” 4: 432). The hour that approaches worries him as who is going to be the lord of the earth – who has enough heart for it – now that the midnight is about to declare – but, for delicate ears: „was spricht die tiefe Mitternacht?“ (IV „Das Nachtwandler-Lied“ 4, *KGW* VI 1, 395: 1, 2), or: “*What does the deep midnight declare?*” (IV “The Drunken Song” 4: 432).

The silent night becomes as long as the world becomes deep, for the tombs (the past) seek to be redeemed, asking: „Warum ist so lange Nacht?“ (IV „Das Nachtwandler-Lied“ 5, *KGW* VI 1, 395: 11), or: “Why does the night last so long?” (IV “The Drunken Song” 5: 432), while the midnight responds as the hour approaches: „Die Welt ist tief!“ (IV „Das Nachtwandler-Lied“ 5, *KGW* VI 1, 395: 17, 18), or: “*The world is deep*” (IV “The Drunken Song” 5: 432).

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<sup>155</sup> See my discussion of the meaning of this poem in section 16 of Chapter 6, on pp. 249 – 252.

Deep being and long time merge into one commensurate whole. What this means is that realisation of time through the eternal recurrence entails the realisation of how deep the world is. One should remember that the presence of time ticking has been felt throughout every section of the chapter up until now: in section 3, it sighs and laughs and begins to speak; in section 4, it asks (who has courage); and in section 5, it stammers and hums. In “The Drunken Song” 6, however, it is a sweet lyre that croaks so that three temporal notions – ripeness/maturity, dying, and midnight – blend into one that has no time – eternal happiness, i.e., dying of ripe happiness at midnight: „die Welt selber ward reif, die Traube bräunt, — nun will sie sterben, vor Glück sterben... ein Duft und Geruch der Ewigkeit... von altem Glücke, von trunkenem Mitternachts-Sterbeglücke, welches singt: die Welt ist tief und *tiefer als der Tag gedacht!*“ (IV „Das Nachtwandler-Lied“ 6, *KGW* VI 1, 396: 1 – 3, 6 – 9), or: “the world itself has grown ripe, the grape is turning brown, now it would die, die of happiness... a fragrance and smell of eternity... of old happiness, of the drunken happiness of dying at midnight, that sings: the world is deep, *deeper than day had been aware*” (IV “The Drunken Song” 6: 433). Further, in “The Drunken Song” 7, the midnight is said to be brighter and deeper than day and world: „Lass mich, du dummer tölpischer dumpfer Tag! Ist die Mitternacht nicht heller?... die Mitternachts-Seelen, die heller und tiefer sind als jeder Tag“ (IV „Das Nachtwandler-Lied“ 7, *KGW* VI 1, 396: 13, 14, 16, 17), or: “Leave me, you stupid, boorish, dumb day! Is not the midnight brighter?... [T]he midnight souls... are brighter and deeper than any day” (IV “The Drunken Song” 7: 433). For both day and world are found too weighty: „Aber Tag und Welt, ihr seid zu plump —“ (IV „Das Nachtwandler-Lied“ 7, *KGW* VI 1, 396: 22, 23), or: “But day and world, you are too ponderous” (IV “The Drunken Song” 7: 433). Furthermore, the world’s woe is pronounced deep: „*tief ist ihr Weh*“ (IV „Das Nachtwandler-Lied“ 7, *KGW* VI 1, 396: 28, 29), or: “*deep is its woe*” (IV “The



Drunken Song” 7: 433). Given the above observations, it is possible to construct the following analogical argument: if the midnight is brighter and deeper than day and world, which are too ponderous, and if the world’s woe is pronounced deep, then the midnight’s woe, it is anticipated, is even deeper than day’s and world’s woe. In “The Drunken Song” 8, the same is true of midnight’s joy: „Lust nämlich, wenn schon Weh tief ist: *Lust ist tiefer noch als Herzeleid*“ (IV „Das Nachtwandler-Lied“ 8, *KGW VI 1*, 397: 18, 19), or: “For joy, even if woe is deep, *joy is deeper yet than agony*” (IV “The Drunken Song” 8: 434). In the previous section, Nietzsche implies that day or noon or world symbolises all that suffers: „Oh Tag, du tappst nach mir? Du tastest nach meinem Glücke?... mein Unglück, mein Glück ist tief, du wunderlicher Tag... *tief ist ihr [der Welt] Weh*“ (IV „Das Nachtwandler-Lied“ 7, *KGW VI 1*, 396: 18, 19, 27 – 29), or: “O day, you grope for me? You seek my happiness?... [M]y unhappiness, my happiness is deep, you strange day... *deep is its [world’s (day’s)] woe*” (IV “The Drunken Song” 7: 433). In the two sections that follow it, he makes further symbolic implications, namely, that night or midnight represents both joy and woe: „— ihr Weh kät sie zurück, im Traume, die alte tiefe Mitternacht, und mehr noch ihre Lust“ (IV „Das Nachtwandler-Lied“ 8, *KGW VI 1*, 17, 18), or: “Her woe she ruminates in a dream, the old deep midnight, and even more her joy” (IV “The Drunken Song” 8: 434), that, in “The Drunken Song” 9, „Alles, was leidet, will leben, dass es reif werde und lustig und sehnsüchtig“ (IV „Das Nachtwandler-Lied“ 9, *KGW VI 1*, 397: 27, 28), or: “all that suffers wants to live, that it may become ripe and joyous” (IV “The Drunken Song” 9: 434) and that all that is ripe, however, wants to die, i.e., joy wants to die of its ripe happiness: „, Was vollkommen ward, alles Reife — will sterben!’ “ (IV „Das Nachtwandler-Lied“ 9, *KGW VI 1*, 397: 24), or: “ ‘What has become perfect, all that is ripe – wants to die’ ” (IV “The Drunken Song” 9: 434). Given the above observations, it is possible to construct a hypothetico-deductive argument where

night's ripe joy and its deep woe are sufficient conditions for day's woe and its desire to live to become ripe and die of happiness, with the latter (day and its characteristics) being a *sine qua non*, i.e., the necessary condition for the former (night and its properties). The argument, then, is as follows: if day or noon or world symbolises all that suffers and night or midnight represents both joy and woe and if all that suffers wants to live to become ripe and joyous so as, paradoxically, to die of its ripe happiness – or, in other words, if it is true that what is ripe and perfect wants to die – then all that suffers in the *day* wants to live to become ripe and joyous and die in the *night* (the plausible assumption being that day (woe) runs out into night (joy and woe), or night is generated out of day. Cf. “Sorrow is born as pure spirit from filth”, Nazirov, *Zarathustra*, p. 67, my translation). In this sense, in “The Drunken Song” 10, when Zarathustra says: „Eben ward meine Welt vollkommen, Mitternacht ist auch Mittag, — Schmerz ist auch eine Lust, Fluch ist auch ein Segen, Nacht ist auch eine Sonne, — geht davon oder ihr lernt: ein Weiser ist auch ein Narr“ (IV „Das Nachtwandler-Lied“ 10, *KGW* VI 1, 398: 14 – 18), or: “Just now my world became perfect; midnight too is noon; pain too is a joy; curses too are a blessing; night too is a sun – go away or you will learn: a sage too is a fool” (IV “The Drunken Song” 10: 435), “midnight too is noon” means that the painful ripe midnight that is dying is joyous. But in order for its joy to maintain itself, it must want all woe back, for all things are interconnected: „Alle Dinge sind verkettet, verfädelt, verliebt, — — wolltet ihr jemals Ein Mal Zwei Mal, spracht ihr jemals ‚du gefällst mir, Glück! Husch! Augenblick!‘ so wolltet ihr *Alles* zurück!... oh so *liebtet* ihr die Welt, — — ihr Ewigen, liebt sie ewig und allezeit: und auch zum Weh sprecht ihr: vergeh, aber komm zurück! *Denn alle Lust will — Ewigkeit!*“ (IV „Das Nachtwandler-Lied“ 10, *KGW* VI 1, 398: 20 – 24, 26 – 29), or: “All things are entangled, ensnared, enamored; if ever you wanted one thing twice, if ever you said, ‘You please me, happiness! Abide, moment!’ then

you wanted *all* back.... [T]hen you *loved* the world. Eternal ones, love it eternally and evermore; and to woe too, you say: go, but return! *For all joy wants – eternity*” (IV “The Drunken Song” 10: 435). The reason joy desires eternity is that „sie ist durstiger, herzlicher, hungriger, schrecklicher, heimlicher als alles Weh, sie will *sich*, sie beisst in *sich*, des Ringes Wille ringt in ihr... so reich ist Lust, dass sie nach Wehe durstet... nach *Welt*, — denn diese Welt, oh ihr kennt sie ja!... Nach Missrathenem sehnt sich alle ewige Lust. Denn alle Lust will sich selber, drum will sie auch Herzeleid!... Lust will *aller* Dinge Ewigkeit, *will tiefe, tiefe Ewigkeit!*“ (IV „Das Nachtwandler-Lied“ 11, *KGW* VI 1, 399: 7, 11 – 13, 15 – 17, 20, 21), or: “It is thirstier, more cordial, hungrier, more terrible, more secret than all woe; it wants *itself*, it bites into itself, the ring’s will strives in it... so rich is joy that it thirsts for woe... for *world* – this world, oh, you know it!... All eternal joy longs for failures. For all joy wants itself, hence it also wants agony.... Joy wants the eternity of *all* things, *wants deep, wants deep eternity*” (IV “The Drunken Song” 11: 435, 436). Given the above analysis, in “The Drunken Song” 12, the “Once More” poem can be interpreted in terms of the recurrence of diurnal symbols. I cite it again:

<i>Oh Mensch! Gieb Acht!</i>	O man, take care!
<i>Was spricht die tiefe Mitternacht?</i>	What does the deep midnight declare?
„ <i>Ich schlief, ich schlief —</i>	“I was asleep –
„ <i>Aus tiefem Traum bin ich erwacht: —</i>	From a deep dream I woke and swear:
„ <i>Die Welt ist tief,</i>	The world is deep,
„ <i>Und tiefer als der Tag gedacht.</i>	Deeper than day had been aware.
„ <i>Tief ist ihr Weh —</i>	Deep is its woe;
„ <i>Lust — tiefer noch als Herzeleid:</i>	Joy – deeper yet than agony:
„ <i>Weh spricht: Vergeh!</i>	Woe implores: Go!
„ <i>Doch alle Lust will Ewigkeit —</i>	But all joy wants eternity –
„ <i>— will tiefe, tiefe Ewigkeit!</i> “	Wants deep, wants deeps eternity.”
(IV „Das Nachtwandler-Lied“ 12) <sup>156</sup>	(IV “The Drunken Song” 12: 436)

The midnight symbol (joy and woe) issues a warning to the whole diurnal cycle of human existence: What does the deepness of its symbolism declare? The midnight symbol was asleep,

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<sup>156</sup> *KGW* VI 1, 400: 1 – 11.

not realising itself, and has finally awakened to speak the following: the world (diurnal human existence: noon, evening, night, and morning) is deep with meaning, deeper than day (noon), or woe, has been aware; joy (midnight) is yet deeper than agony (morning, noon, and evening); woe (noon) does not want itself, whereas joy (midnight) wants itself eternally and in wanting itself, it also wants woe (morning, noon, and evening). Thus the joyous-painful night or midnight wants back all the other diurnal symbols: morning (rebirth of spirit and suffering), noon (maturity of spirit and suffering), and evening (decline of spirit and suffering) because it wills itself: midnight (death and rebirth of spirit and suffering through joy willing both itself and woe). Thus Nietzsche, or Zarathustra, intends the eternal recurrence of diurnal symbols as the representation of eternal recurrence.

In “The Drunken Song”, Zarathustra has been seen to affirm all of his past life – all of his eleven symbolic diurnal cycles, including especially his last day, his last symbolic diurnal cycle, and its temptation – pity for the higher men. He has proven strong enough to face the challenge head-on and, when the hour of ripe happiness has finally approached, i.e., when he has reaped enjoyment for himself and his guests, he has experienced *death* – at the hour of *midnight* – in relation to his earlier acquired pity for the higher men. Now that pity has been overcome, Zarathustra is ready to abandon the higher men and to set out upon his solitary way. His leave-taking, however, takes place at the concluding time of the twenty-four-hour day cycle – in the morning.

*Morning.* In the last chapter of the book, “The Sign”, Zarathustra wakes up in the morning and appears like a morning sun: „Des Morgens aber nach dieser Nacht sprang Zarathustra von seinem Lager auf, gürtete sich die Lenden und kam heraus aus seiner Höhle, glühend und stark, wie eine Morgensonne, die aus dunklen Bergen kommt“ (IV „Das Zeichen“,

*KGW* VI 1, 401: 2 – 5), or: “In the morning after this night, Zarathustra jumped up from his resting place, girded his loins, and came out of his cave glowing and strong as a morning sun that comes out of dark mountains” (IV “The Sign” 437). To affirm what he has gone through in the past, he addresses the rising sun with the same question as he did in the beginning of his journey (2<sup>nd</sup> day cycle): What would its happiness be if it had not those for whom it shines? In contrast to the higher men who are still sleeping, he finds himself well awake and ready to begin his new day, his new day cycle: „,Wohlan! sie schlafen noch, diese höheren Menschen, während *ich* wach bin: *das* sind nicht meine rechten Gefährten! Nicht auf sie warte ich hier in meinen Bergen. Zu meinem Werke will ich, zu meinem Tage: aber sie verstehen nicht, was die Zeichen meines Morgens sind, mein Schritt — ist für sie kein Weckruf...’ — Diess hatte Zarathustra zu seinem Herzen gesprochen, als die Sonne aufgieng“ (IV „Das Zeichen“, *KGW* VI 1, 401: 12 – 17, 21, 22), or: “ ‘Well then, they still sleep, these higher men, while *I* am awake: *these* are not my proper companions. It is not for them I wait here in my mountains. I want to go to my work, to my day: but they do not understand the signs of my morning; my stride is for them no summons to awaken’ .... Thus had Zarathustra spoken to his heart when the sun rose” (IV “The Sign” 437). He is very clear about his intent: he wants to continue his diurnal existence, making every moment meaningfully different. Three signs of a new day are revealed to Zarathustra at just this time. First, he hears the sharp cry of his eagle: „,Meine Thiere sind wach, denn ich bin wach. Mein Adler ist wach und ehrt gleich mir die Sonne’ “ (IV „Das Zeichen“, *KGW* VI 1, 402: 1 – 3), or: “My animals are awake, for I am awake. My eagle is awake and honors the sun as I do” (IV “The Sign” 437). Second, he finds himself surrounded by doves of love: „da aber geschah es, dass er sich plötzlich wie von unzähligen Vögeln umschwärmt und umflattert hörte... Die Tauben...“ (IV „Das Zeichen“, *KGW* VI 1, 402: 7 – 9, 28), or: “But then it happened that he

suddenly heard himself surrounded as by innumerable swarming and fluttering birds.... [T]he doves...” (IV “The Sign” 437, 438). Third, and most importantly, he comes to note the presence of a lion pressed against his knees: „*Das Zeichen kommt,*’ sprach Zarathustra und sein Herz verwandelte sich“ (IV „Das Zeichen“, *KGW* VI 1, 402: 23, 24), or: “ ‘*The sign is at hand,*’ said Zarathustra, and a change came over his heart” (IV “The Sign” 438). The laughing lion of love and the doves of love together with the eagle and the serpent are all here to betoken his integrity: „*meine Kinder sind nahe, meine Kinder*’ “ (IV „Das Zeichen“, *KGW* VI 1, 402: 32, 33), or: “*My children are near, my children*” (IV “The Sign” 438). A moving scene of the doves sitting on his shoulders and caressing him and the lion licking Zarathustra’s tears that drop on his hands eradicates time altogether: „Diess Alles dauerte eine lange Zeit, oder eine kurze Zeit: denn, recht gesprochen, giebt es für dergleichen Dinge auf Erden *keine* Zeit —“ (IV „Das Zeichen“, *KGW* VI 1, 403: 10 – 12), or: “All this lasted a long time, or a short time: for properly speaking, there is *no* time on earth for such things” (IV “The Sign” 438). This is the eternal time of genuine happiness, genuine joy that wills itself eternally, something that no one, except Zarathustra, can experience, to which attests the fact that, upon hearing noise coming from behind the door of the cave, the lion jumps forward and roars savagely so that the higher men who have just woken up quickly disappear, for they are deemed barred from Zarathustra’s way.

Thus transformed, Zarathustra begins to recall what has happened between yesterday and today and re-experiences the cry of distress, realising that his final temptation has been pity for the higher men and that he has overcome it now: „*Mitleiden! Das Mitleiden mit dem höheren Menschen!* schrie er auf, und sein Antlitz verwandelte sich in Erz. Wohlan! *Das* — hatte seine Zeit! Mein Leid und mein Mitleiden — was liegt daran! Trachte ich denn nach *Glücke?* Ich trachte nach meinem *Werke!*’ “ (IV „Das Zeichen“, *KGW* VI 1, 404: 12 – 16), or: “ ‘Pity! Pity

for the higher man!’ he cried out, and his face changed to bronze. ‘Well then, *that* has had its time! My suffering and my pity for suffering – what does it matter? Am I concerned with *happiness*? I am concerned with my *work*’ ” (IV “The Sign” 439). While Zarathustra is not concerned with making the higher or other men happy, he is still concerned with his own happiness, which is not the happiness of the old wise saint in the woods, of the herd in the market place, of the corpse, of the hermits (his disciples, doubters, as well as believers), or of the higher men. His happiness includes suffering, for there is no other way for genuine joy to exist. Thus, in order for Zarathustra to maintain his joy, now that he had attained ripe happiness, he must have wanted to die then, in the midnight hour, that he might be born again, in the morning, to be able to continue his work and suffering leading to new noons, new evenings, new nights, and new mornings. After all, he is concerned with *his* work.

Meanwhile, feeling at ease, while at the same time prepared for the unknown, Zarathustra summarises his life so far before he ventures into his new day, as the sun does into its new sky every morning: „ ,Wohlan! Der Löwe kam, meine Kinder sind nahe, Zarathustra ward reif, meine Stunde kam: — Dies ist *mein* Morgen, *mein* Tag hebt an: *herauf nun, herauf, du grosser Mittag!*’ — — Also sprach Zarathustra und verliess seine Höhle, glühend und stark, wie eine Morgensonne, die aus dunklen Bergen kommt“ (IV „Das Zeichen“, *KGW* VI 1, 404: 17 – 23), or: “ ‘Well then! The lion came, my children are near, Zarathustra has ripened, my hour has come: this is *my* morning, *my* day is breaking: *rise now, rise, thou great noon!*’ Thus spoke Zarathustra, and he left his cave, glowing and strong as a morning sun that comes out of dark mountains” (IV “The Sign” 439). Now that he is all set and ready to go, he recounts what he has achieved so far, laying a great emphasis on diurnal symbolism. He can command himself with a lion’s voice, for he has the will to unite what is fragmented within him: he has gathered together all of his

children – his different fragments and accidents thrown all over the place in his world; he has attained the full maturity of being able to will the eternal recurrence of the same; and his time has finally arrived as the realisation of his *own* meaningful diurnal existence. This is *his* diurnal cycle, *his* new morning is breaking and the great noon he has prophesied through his symbolic diurnal existence is coming soon. Indeed, *his* noon is to come after *his* morning is over, and after his ultimate *rebirth* into this *morning*, Zarathustra's diurnal life is to cycle on forever.

Zarathustra's identity has been seen to alter throughout the long last, twelfth diurnal cycle. As he is given to pity in the *morning* and starts looking for the higher men who need assistance, he experiences *rebirth* in relation to these higher men and *death* in relation to himself ("The Cry of Distress" through "The Shadow"). At the solitary hour of *noon* he experiences the eternal recurrence and now longs for the *maturity* of his happiness ("At Noon"). He willingly takes on the challenge of condescension and *decline* in the *evening*, as he deigns to associate, through meditative festivity, with the higher men, his guests, in his cave ("The Welcome" through "The Ass Festival"). He reveals the eternal recurrence to himself and the higher men through his *death* in relation to these higher men at the hour of *midnight* ("The Drunken Song"). Finally, he is completely alone with himself and his animals in the *morning*, having experienced transformation and *rebirth* through the realisation of what has just happened: defeat of pity for and repudiation of the higher men, and is ready to venture into his new day ("The Sign"). The repetition of the diurnal symbols representing Zarathustra's variable subjectivity, from becoming pitiful to rejecting this feeling to becoming himself, signifies the sequence of eternal recurrence, while each particular diurnal symbol of the repudiatory process symbolises the moment. He does overcome his last temptation – pity – and is now geared up, his loins girded, to continue his eternal diurnal existence.



On the narrative cyclical level, the twelve diurnal cycles each cover a different topic: the hard decision to rectify the historical error by challenging oppositional thinking (1<sup>st</sup> day cycle); Zarathustra's affirmed failure in teaching to (dead) people the Overhuman's downright decision to unite the world with one powerful goal (2<sup>nd</sup> day cycle); his methodology of learning and teaching his (living) hermits through self-sacrifice and self-overcoming, while protecting his own teachings from his enemies (3<sup>rd</sup> day cycle); his ability to share ripe, mature ideas with the joyous attitude of light dance and out of the superabundance of love and knowledge (4<sup>th</sup> day cycle); his spiritual qualities of lightness, heaviness, hardness, and reticence (5<sup>th</sup> day cycle); the properties of his visionary communication: silence, speaking, choking, and laughter (6<sup>th</sup> day cycle); the features of his recollective communication: silence, quasi-silence (listening), speaking, and longing silence (7<sup>th</sup> day cycle); his ambivalent experience of happiness (premature vs. genuine) (8<sup>th</sup> day cycle); his silence and coldness capable of mocking both winter and the pity of the warm-hearted (9<sup>th</sup> day cycle); his eventual withdrawal from the pious believers and hardcore doubters back into his solitary confinement to weigh and re-evaluate the world (10<sup>th</sup> day cycle); his loss and recovery of the self in coming to grips with the nausea of the eternal recurrence of the small human culminating in his affirmation of existence and marriage to eternity (11<sup>th</sup> day cycle); and, finally, his overcoming of pity for and repudiation of the higher men and becoming who he is (12<sup>th</sup> day cycle). Together they symbolise the meaningfully variable sequence of eternal return, while each particular day cycle, like each particular diurnal symbol within any of these symbolic diurnal cycles, represents the same meaningful moment of eternal recurrence. The return of meaningful differences inaugurated by both the narrative cyclical and the cyclical narrative return of (eternal) diurnal symbols repudiate pitilessly the return of (eternal) diurnal meaninglessness on both levels, where the return of diurnal symbols is encircled by the return of

symbolic diurnal cycles, as symbolised by the ring of rings, the ring of recurrence, i.e., total affirmation of existence, as implicit in the merciless will's deep joy willing and biting its own flesh: like the midnight symbol in the twelfth diurnal cycle which thirsts, through the merger of joy and woe, for a new morning and a new day and a new self.

In this chapter it was shown that Nietzsche employs diurnal symbols to communicate his idea of eternal recurrence in *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*. For this purpose, it was demonstrated that there are symbolic diurnal cycles that unfold chronologically throughout the entire text, from beginning to end, i.e., the recurrence of diurnal symbols within a diurnal cycle, as well as the recurrence of diurnal cycles within the diurnal narrative structure – where each diurnal symbol and each diurnal cycle has exposed Zarathustra's identity in a different light, thereby showing the repetition of meaningful differences countering the return of same diurnal meaninglessness – symbolising the eternal recurrence of the same on the cyclical narrative and the narrative cyclical level, respectively. Every day cycle has been shown to begin at noon (following the first one starting at noon, as also established by the pre-cycle in the “History of an Error”) and to end in the morning, except for the last two day cycles, which both begin in the morning. The penultimate one, however, ends at night, while the final one ends the next morning to complete the twenty-four-hour day cycle and to invoke the ending of the second day cycle, or the beginning of the work – without, however, disrupting the chronological chain of symbolic diurnal cycles. The latter suggests that Zarathustra's journey is diurnal in character. Recapitulation of the day cycles and their main ideas (see also the table) will help to hear his full diurnal story again.

The first day cycle has seen Zarathustra preparing, both spiritually and emotionally, for his long diurnal journey. The second day cycle has let him realise his extraordinary position amongst people and cautioned him against having naïve expectations and hope for the majority. The third day cycle has taught him that, although the elect are capable of learning from him, they are still prone to distorting his teachings. The fourth day cycle is quite diverse in content: it showcases Zarathustra's fresh attempt at teaching his disciples, his enjoyment of the life that dances, his wealth in loneliness and his distinction between solar and moon knowledge – if put together, his light-footed enjoyment of lonely, knowledgeable existence. The fifth day cycle discloses more of Zarathustra's personal experiences. It helps to see him collecting courage necessary to fight the spirit of gravity, first in his vision in the sixth day cycle, then in his recollection thereof in the seventh, and, finally, in reality in the eleventh. The sixth day cycle is enigmatic but has been penetrated through the seventh day cycle to unfold Zarathustra's ability to experience and communicate prophetic vision-riddles. The seventh day cycle has manifested Zarathustra's ability to communicate in visions his doctrine (the return of the moment) and his struggle with it (the return of the small human) while emphasising the difficulty of language to express his deep feelings and at the same time justifying Nietzsche's resort to the use of diurnal symbols to assist his protagonist in these his undertakings. The eighth day cycle has displayed Zarathustra's emotional state of mind and taught him to tell premature from genuine happiness, thereby cautioning him against widespread weakness (contentment). The ninth day cycle has exhibited his self-imposed asceticism and his warm, creative response to the winter of existence – as training in hardness and as a rejoinder to the (premature) happiness of the eighth day cycle. The tenth day cycle has forced Zarathustra to reject all the pious and doubters and return to his solitude for the last time before coming to terms with the eternal recurrence in the next diurnal

cycle. The eleventh day cycle has seen Zarathustra actually fighting the nausea of the eternal recurrence of the small human, and the symbolic diurnal recurrence has allowed Zarathustra's return to himself to be interpreted in existential rather than cosmological terms. The twelfth day cycle has shown Zarathustra vanquishing his last temptation – pity for the higher men, and departing into the new day to continue his mission, and, through the revelation of the eternal recurrence at night, has proven decisive in terms of confirmation that Nietzsche does mean his diurnal symbols to return to themselves and that this symbolic diurnal return incorporates the joy-based argument for the eternal recurrence, thereby underscoring the harmonious unity of the symbols and the doctrine. The twelve diurnal cycles have thus created a narrative structure of their own, whose perspective may compete with other views of the book's structure. It is proposed to look at these to conclude the diurnal argument.

**Table: 12 Day Cycles and Main Events:**

Cycle Number	Noon	Evening	Night	Morning
1 <sup>st</sup> Day Cycle	Realisation of the historical error	Ascent Carrying ashes to the mountain	Ten years in the cave	Descent New truth: sun dependence
2 <sup>nd</sup> Day Cycle	Failed teaching: ropedancer's fall	Frustration	Burial of corpse; Exhaustion	New truth: living companions
3 <sup>rd</sup> Day Cycle	Appearance of eagle and serpent	Sleep vs. creative dying	Months and years in the cave	New truth: distortion of teachings
4 <sup>th</sup> Day Cycle	Ripe teachings	Sadness after maidens' dance is over	Overrich night-song loneliness	New truth: solar vs. moon knowledge
5 <sup>th</sup> Day Cycle	Shadow flying into volcano	The Stillest Hour speaking	Courage: mountain climbing	Embarking for distant seas
6 <sup>th</sup> Day Cycle	Visionary communication: Silence	Speaking	Choking	Laughter
7 <sup>th</sup> Day Cycle	Recollective communication: Silence	Quasi-silence (listening)	Speaking	Longing silence
8 <sup>th</sup> Day Cycle	Premature happiness	Happiness will not recede	Death of premature happiness	New truth: happiness is a woman; genuine happiness
9 <sup>th</sup> Day Cycle	Mocking winter: warm thoughts	Rather chattering of teeth than fire	Going to a simple bed	Taking a cold bath
10 <sup>th</sup> Day Cycle	Foaming fool's city be burnt	Critique of the pious and doubters	Return home	New truth: finite world
11 <sup>th</sup> Day Cycle	2. Coming to senses: rebirth	3. Recuperation	4. Maturity of eternal recurrence; immunity	1. Summoning the most abysmal thought: death
12 <sup>th</sup> Day Cycle	2. Experiencing the moment of happiness	3. Condescension and pity	4. Revelation of eternal recurrence	1. Encounters with the higher men; 5. Repudiation of the higher men and leave-taking

*Concluding Thoughts on the Diurnal Structure.*

The unusual style of *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* has sparked a debate about the work's structure. Fink simply identifies it as a chain-like *fable* comprised of parables, whereas Aiken views it as a philosophical *poem* holding no philosophical system. Megill considers Nietzsche's images as *unsystematic*, while Gadamer takes the work as a kind of *drama* with a beginning and an end. Shapiro argues, instead, for a *rhetorical* arrangement of the text: symbolic (Prologue), metaphorical (Part I), metonymical (Part II), synecdochic (Part III), and ironic (Part IV). Gooding-Williams' creative *metamorphic* reading with *dramatic* implications relates the question of structure to the eternal recurrence and the three metamorphoses of the spirit, calling the four-part *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* "the 'thought-drama' of eternal recurrence" (Gooding-Williams 2001: 186), while Lampert's commentary on the formal structure excludes Part IV altogether, viewing Nietzsche's work as a *tripartite* composition. Seung's reading through the individual and the cosmic self restores the four-part unity of the text. With regard to the book's structure, the circularity of diurnal symbols in the text establishes that 1) *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* is a chain or cycle of diurnal symbols; 2) it has a diurnal narrative structure; 3) this structure circles back upon itself; and, of course, 4) this makes the book a quadripartite composition. Let us now look at the various structural perspectives or observations in more detail.

In *Nietzsche's Philosophy* (1960, tr. 2003), Fink identifies the structure of *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* as "a chain of parables" (Fink 55). He further states that "[t]he basic plot – in essence a short fable – is told quickly.... The book closes with the departure (of Zarathustra) into the unknown which is perhaps its strongest if least intended parable" (56). While Nietzsche's work may be a chain of fables, it may also be said to be held strongly together by a chain of recurrent circular symbols. These make the narrative circle back on itself, which allows one to

say that the book ends only to *begin* and Zarathustra, therefore, knows where he is headed, for he knows his *fate*: to affirm the eternal recurrence of the same every moment of his existence. In order to continue on his way, he has to return to where he began, and the recurrence of diurnal symbols throughout the text attests to it. In this regard, it is further observed that, on the one hand, Fink believes, as do most commentators, that “[t]he chapter *Of the vision and the riddle* contains the first metaphoric expression of the eternal return” (Fink 75). But this is quite inaccurate, though it is true that this chapter contains the first explicit, yet metaphorical, discussion of the doctrine. On the other hand, that Nietzsche employed the image of the circle to suggest the eternal recurrence is supported by the following remark Fink made in passing: “He (Nietzsche) expresses the eternal return through the image of the ring. But perhaps it is impossible to do otherwise since we have initially no concepts or representations which belong to time itself. All our concepts of time have an inner-worldly perspective” (Fink 77). If Fink excludes the possibility of other representations – other than the circle – of eternal recurrence, then it is viable to use this other point of his to counteract his previous assertion about the primacy of the vision-riddle chapter’s metaphorical expression of the doctrine. The poetic image of time being a circle is “an ordinary understanding of time” (*ibid.*). But it is worthwhile differentiating between *finitely circular* time, as expressed by the dwarf, meaning when time runs out, everything will begin again (the cosmological return), and *infinitely circular* time, as espoused by Zarathustra, meaning time never runs out but the structure of the moment repeats itself (the existential return). If the eternal return is imagined or represented as a circle, then the cycling or circularity of diurnal symbols (that suggests the image of a circle) comes metaphorically to express or to represent the doctrine beginning in the Prologue, continuing throughout the text and ending in the last chapter of the book. Thus, if the book’s structure is

imagined not as a chain of fables but as a chain of diurnal symbols and the first metaphorical expression of eternal recurrence is not confined to the first explicit discussion of the doctrine in “On the Vision and the Riddle” but to the diurnal narrative of the book, then one sure inference that may be drawn is that Nietzsche’s book betrays a symbolic diurnal cyclical structure.

In “An Introduction to *Zarathustra*” (1973), Henry David Aiken states that “*Thus Spoke Zarathustra* must be regarded as a philosophical poem... as a work of imaginative literature” (Aiken 114) and that it is unsystematic as a work of philosophy. “Some of Nietzsche’s commentators have tried to deduce a kind of philosophical system from his writings. Such an effort is even more misguided in the case of *Zarathustra* than in that of his other works. We have Nietzsche’s own word for it that he was radically opposed to any and all systems of philosophy” (Aiken 115). But does Nietzsche’s philosophical poem, as Aiken views his work, have a system as a work of art and what relation, if any, does it have to the eternal recurrence, the book’s main conception? I believe to have shown that Nietzsche’s work has a symbolic diurnal structure to it, which serves as a representation of his doctrine of eternal recurrence. Nietzsche knows where he is taking his character Zarathustra – he must go through the eternal recurrence of diurnal symbols. Nietzsche’s artistic genius does create a system in this work, whereas his philosophy does not, at least as according to Nietzsche himself. In particular, the eternal recurrence does not prescribe any certain action or system of actions of life affirmation, whereas the diurnal symbols constitute a symbolic structure calculatively imposed upon the body of the work that expounds the philosophical doctrine.<sup>157</sup> In this regard, by combining art with philosophy Nietzsche creates a symbolic representation of the idea of eternal recurrence in *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*.

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<sup>157</sup> Joyful affirmation of the whole of existence is an action only some are capable of – for example, Zarathustra. Nietzsche has Zarathustra show that even this action cannot be prescribed.



In *Prophets of Extremity: Nietzsche, Heidegger, Foucault, and Derrida* (1985), Allan Megill seems to confirm Aiken's statement about Nietzsche's work being an unsystematic piece of philosophy. He writes: "*Zarathustra* simply will not fit a critical or analytical framework.... Instead of reasons, Nietzsche gives us images; instead of arguments, allegories.... But Nietzsche fails to make these images part of any coherent argument.... *Zarathustra* is a work of literature..." (Megill 62, 63). First, Megill acknowledges the fact that Nietzsche employs various literary images in his work. Second, his doubt as to whether these images serve any coherent argument implies that they themselves are not used coherently, hence the literary fiction seems unsystematic. Contrary to Megill, the circularity of diurnal symbols has been shown to establish quite coherently the literary diurnal narrative structure of *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*.

There are, however, some commentators who rightly observe that *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* manifests a certain structure, though they have differing views as regards the type of structure the work seems to possess. According to Hans-Georg Gadamer, for example, *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* is "the drama that happens in the telling of this book" (Gadamer 1983: 349), and its action is much more philosophically important than are its biblically didactic or otherwise tone or allusions (Gooding-Williams 2001: 22).<sup>158</sup> Robert Gooding-Williams adds that "the action of *Zarathustra* also surpasses in philosophical importance its parodies, mythical qualities, and affinities to Wagner's *Gesamtkunstwerke*. This is... only to insist that the[se] derive their philosophical value from their connection to the book's plot. The plot of *Zarathustra*, the *patterning of its action*, organizes it as a unified whole" (*ibid.*), which, according to Gooding Williams, is Zarathustra's dramatic experience of the eternal recurrence (to be considered below).

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<sup>158</sup> Zygmunt Adamczewski's translation. Cf. Thomas Heilke's translation: "the drama whose events are recounted in this book" (Gadamer 1988: 221). The original runs as follows: "dem Drama..., dessen Geschehen in diesem Buche erzählt wird" (Gadamer 1987: 453).

In “The Rhetoric of Nietzsche’s *Zarathustra*” (1980), further developed in *Nietzschean Narratives* (1989), Gary Shapiro argues that Nietzsche’s work has a rhetorical, rather than dramatic, structure. “Relying on the analysis of tropes developed by Hayden White and Kenneth Burke”, Gooding-Williams observes,

[Shapiro] maintains that the main divisions of *Zarathustra*, proceeding from “Zarathustra’s Prologue” through Part 4, are successively symbolic, metaphorical, metonymical, synecdochic, and ironic. This reading of *Zarathustra* is not convincing, because Shapiro’s rhetorical scheme does not do justice to the text. For example, one finds numerous metaphors and at least one example of catechresis in “Zarathustra’s Prologue,” multiple instances of irony and parody (which Shapiro interprets as a form of irony) throughout the book, and an extensive use of simile in Part 4 (Gooding-Williams 2001: 315).

Thus, according to Gooding-Williams, “Shapiro never explains what makes a trope a ‘governing’ or ‘tone-setting’ trope in parts of the text wherein different tropes and rhetorical modes coexist. He needs some such explanation if he is to avoid the charge that his reading of *Zarathustra* oversimplifies a very complex use of rhetorical strategies” (*ibid.* 315, 316).

“Although other scholars have emphasized the dramatic aspects of [*Thus Spoke Zarathustra*], Gooding-Williams”, Loeb notes, “is the first to emphasize the dramatic aspects of the thought of eternal recurrence” (Loeb 2007: 79). Dissatisfied with Shapiro’s rhetorical approach, Gooding-Williams goes on to argue, first in “Zarathustra’s Three Metamorphoses” (1990) and then, in a more extensive manner, in *Zarathustra’s Dionysian Modernism* (2001), that Nietzsche’s work is structured as Zarathustra’s articulate (poetic) *stammering* that goes through the three modes of action represented by the three metamorphoses of the spirit: from the unproductive value-laden camel (Part II) to the defiant value-destroying lion (Part III) to the free value-creating child (Part IV).

Generally, the *camel*, a poor creature of asceticism having the will to nothingness (symbolised by the desert), is characterised by the Christian-Platonic values, the “thou shalt”

morality, and the herd mentality (Gooding-Williams 1990: 234; Nietzsche *On the Genealogy of Morals* 162, 163). The *lion* is characterised as a warrior against the Christian-Platonic values (morality coupled with rationality), by the power of the Christian God that he wants to possess, the “I will” morality he assumes, the reactive subject he becomes, the “No” he says to the old values, thus ending up in complete nihilism (Gooding-Williams 1990: 236 – 239, 242; also: footnote 29, p. 333; Deleuze 9, 10, 81, 82, *Nietzsche and Philosophy*; textual support: BGE 261). The *child*, finally, is the creator of new values, who wills his or her own will by the innocence of becoming, by viewing the world as having no *causa prima*, no God, by being no subject any more, no “I am”, but by saying “Yes” to life and by being the “will willing itself”, in short, by negating the old values unconsciously, through honest innocent oblivion, while creating new values consciously (Gooding-Williams 1990: 241 – 244). I add the Overhuman, ultimately, who is capable of willing the eternal recurrence of the same – the eternal return of the spiritual camel-lion-child metamorphosis.

Thus Gooding-Williams claims that “ ‘On the Three Metamorphoses’ describes the overall structure of *Zarathustra*” (Gooding-Williams 1990: 232). Specifically, “the three metamorphoses of which Zarathustra speaks specify modes of action, the repeated enactment of which enables Zarathustra to become a creator of new values” (*ibid.*). Gooding-Williams rightly notes that “the saint’s assertion that ‘Zarathustra has become a child’ suggests that Nietzsche’s protagonist possesses the child’s capacity for new beginnings, even at the outset of the book’s novel-like plot”, that, then, “as *Zarathustra* opens, Zarathustra is only potentially a new beginner, only potentially a child and value creator”, and that, therefore, “[t]he story narrated in *Zarathustra* is the story of how Zarathustra fulfills his destiny, or, more exactly, the story of how he *becomes* the child and the value creator *he is potentially*” (*ibid.*). In this sense, the literary

hero has a special task to accomplish. “In general, the plot of *Zarathustra* is shaped by an opposition between Zarathustra’s intention to fulfill his destiny and the obstacles which block his pursuit of his intention” (*ibid.*). In particular, he constantly battles the Christian-Platonic values symbolised by the dragon in “Zarathustra’s Speeches”. As a strong spirit, he has to undergo the camel-lion-child transformation. “Zarathustra enacts the first metamorphosis of the spirit, symbolized by the figure of a camel, whenever he encounters representations of repetition (for example, the Soothsayer’s prophecy, that all is the same, and the distortion of Zarathustra’s teaching) that discourage his desire to create new values” (*ibid.* 233). Zarathustra becomes the lion when he places himself “in defiant opposition to these representations of repetition” and the child “when he forsakes the defiant posture of the lion and attempts to be a value creator” (*ibid.*).

In this regard, Gooding-Williams relates the idea of eternal recurrence with the metamorphoses of the spirit: the strong spirit changes into the camel; the camel into the lion; the lion, finally, into the child, with Zarathustra’s final act of conquering the eternal recurrence corresponding to the child stage. Yet, Gooding-Williams seems to leave out Part I, which is on the Overhuman. In his “The Thought-Drama of Eternal Recurrence” review (Autumn, 2007) of Gooding-Williams’ *Zarathustra’s Dionysian Modernism* (2001), Loeb observes that “...the first dramatic situation does not take place until the end of part 2, and it is therefore not clear how the thought-drama of eternal recurrence is the unifying theme for the entire book” (Loeb 2007: 80), to which Gooding-Williams rightly responds by holding Loeb accountable for his unartful reading of *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*: “Loeb’s criticisms fall short of their mark, for notwithstanding their prima facie persuasiveness they betray an insufficient appreciation for, and practice of, what Nietzsche terms ‘reading as an art,’ a necessary condition of which, he insists,

is ‘ruminating [*wiederkauen*]’ (*GM P 8*)” (Gooding-Williams 2007: 96). In this way, Gooding-Williams accuses Loeb of being

...less interested in appreciating and cultivating the art of reading and interpreting Nietzsche’s texts – of ruminating over and making sense of the not always palpable connections among the various ideas they express and the many features they exhibit – than he is in treating them as manifolds of manifest facts (of explicitly mentioned or patently evident *Leitmotiven*, of themes that more or less ‘obviously’ unify one or another part of the text, and so on) that speak for themselves and can be straightforwardly adduced to confirm or refute competing interpretations (Gooding-Williams 2007: 98).

He further adds that “[l]ittle about [*Thus Spoke Zarathustra*] is obvious, which is why it demands interpretation. We would do well to remember, moreover, ‘that even the most obvious reading is the result of interpretation and can therefore be questioned, revised, or displaced’<sup>159</sup>” (Gooding-Williams 2007: 98, 99).

As is clear, Gooding-Williams defends his view of *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* as a drama of eternal recurrence. He considers the eternal recurrence “essentially a dramatic thought, a thought-in-the-mode-of-drama that I shall call the ‘thought-drama’ of eternal recurrence”, in which Zarathustra encounters difficulties in coming to terms with his abysmal thought (Gooding-Williams 2001: 186). The thought-drama unfolds as follows:

In developing the thought of recurrence, Zarathustra follows the path of the three metamorphoses of the spirit. First forming his thought in response to the soothsayer’s speech, he reverts to the posture of the camel. Thus, in the first act of the thought-drama of recurrence, Zarathustra endorses the view that no new values can be created. In the defiant, second act, he transforms his thought by becoming a lion who envisions his soul as the omnipresent incarnation of an eternal ‘now.’ In the third act of his thought-drama, Zarathustra again transforms his thought as he becomes a child who can create new values. (*ibid.*)

However, Gooding-Williams thinks of that drama and Zarathustra’s self-overcoming (for the purpose of “the creation of new values”, Gooding-Williams 2001: 4) in a *linear* fashion. Given

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<sup>159</sup> Gooding-Williams’ footnote 3, p. 110: “Alexander Nehamas, ‘The Postulated Author: Critical Monism as a Regulative Ideal,’ *Critical Inquiry* 8, no. 1 (Autumn 1981): 140. Nehamas attributes the proposition I cite, with which he explicitly concurs, to Derrida.”

the fact that Zarathustra follows the cycle of the sun, I believe that the drama of Zarathustra's encountering with his dramatic thought is presented as *circular*, i.e., Zarathustra will have to return to the beginning of his literary journey to continue or start his struggle all over again.

The question of structure also entails consideration of the formal structure of the book. Some commentators (Hollingdale, Loeb, Lampert) are of the opinion that *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* does not include Part IV. The Lampert case is an interesting one as using Lampert's own observations leads one to pay closer attention to the temporality in the text, proving the opposite and concluding that the book is of a diurnal structure. Discussing the drama and structure (4, 5) of Nietzsche's book and the education of Zarathustra (5 – 7) in the "Introduction" to *Nietzsche's Teaching: An Interpretation of Thus Spoke Zarathustra* (1986), Lampert states that "*Zarathustra* is the only book that Nietzsche ever wrote with a dramatic narrative" (Lampert 4). This is, by the way, in contrast to Danto's interpretation, mentioned earlier, that the book has "no ordered development... or... direction of argument or presentation. [It] may be entered at any point" (Danto 19, 20). By dramatic narrative Lampert means that the book, "a book of speeches" as identified by the title, includes "dramatic devices – characters, events, setting, and plot" (Lampert 4). In Part I Zarathustra teaches the Overhuman; in Part II, the will to power; in Part III he affirms (in solitude) and reveals (to the silent sky) the teaching of eternal recurrence (Lampert 5, 6). Lampert considers Part III "the end of the book. Part IV, added later as an afterthought, is an 'interlude' ", in Nietzsche's own terms (Lampert 7).<sup>160</sup> Furthermore, Lampert is of the opinion that Zarathustra fails as a teacher. "By having Zarathustra begin by addressing the people, pass of necessity to the making of disciples, and end by addressing only himself, the book appears to present his failure as a teacher.... By having Zarathustra end in solitude, the book focuses on what is preliminary for a teacher: success as a learner" (*ibid.*). In this regard, Lampert believes

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<sup>160</sup> "Interlude between the main acts" is Nietzsche's private description of Part IV (Lampert, footnote 8, p. 313).

that the book's emphasis is on creating the disciples for Zarathustra's failed teaching. "By moving from all to none, Nietzsche's book shows that there exists as yet no audience for the teaching that Zarathustra gradually learns (the eternal recurrence), but it is the aim of the book to create the audience that it shows Zarathustra failing to find" (*ibid.*).

Contrary to Lampert, I believe that, structurally, on the level of diurnal symbolism, Part IV (on Zarathustra's encounter with the higher men) is essential to the overall book structure and that, in this regard, Zarathustra does not fail as a teacher. These two points must be treated together. Since Nietzsche does not specify which main acts Part IV is an interlude between, I take it to be literally between the main acts in the book existentially. What this means to me is that the theme of pity and the action in Part IV are enfolded into Zarathustra's life-long experience of existence – that is, *pity* is always around the corner, wherever one may make a turn, and one is called upon to *act* on its account. Furthermore, the fact that Part IV is called "The *Fourth* and *Last* Part" (emphasis mine) suggests that it *must* come *after* Part III, both logically and formally, and that it is, indeed, the Last Part par excellence (meaning there is no other part appended to the book). Lastly, and most importantly, as the book's diurnal structure shows, this interlude is a continuation of Zarathustra's symbolic diurnal development since the beginning of the book, which, in addition, circles back upon itself, with Part IV calling back upon Part I. Irrespective of the fact that Nietzsche called the fourth part an "interlude between the main acts," I still believe that Part IV brings the book to completion given the logic of the consecutive cyclical journey Zarathustra makes from beginning to end, throughout all four parts. Following the sun's cycle, Zarathustra descends at the end of the book only to return to teach his teaching all over again at the beginning of the book. Zarathustra does not fail as a teacher as long as he teaches, but he would fail to teach only when he stopped teaching, and he would stop

teaching only when his teaching was mastered by his select disciples, or perhaps by all. Since, therefore, the incorporation of the eternal return into the will on the part of the people does not happen, Zarathustra is to *return eternally* as a teacher. Nietzsche's book is, to begin with, *for all* and, as a result, *for none*: Zarathustra passes from all to none and returns to all again. His journey is cyclical, and his existence is circular: from being to nothingness and from nothingness back to being, and so on, i.e., from promise in the morning to fulfilment in the day to decay or decline in the evening to death in the night and back to promise the next morning, and so on and so forth.

Although Lampert treats Part IV in an index (287 – 311) to his book, the subtitles of some of the subsections of the index chapter capture the meaningful points of Zarathustra's activities within what constitutes, in my reading, the twelfth and last day cycle of the book: "A Morning of Encounters (Chapters 2 – 9)," "Noontide Solitude (Chapter 10)," and "An Evening of Entertainment (Chapters 11 – 19)," with the latter implying night and midnight and with the exception of the symbolism of the morning (as concluding the book's narrative and also the day cycle) yet implicit in the last subsection entitled "Zarathustra's Work (Chapter 20)", as Zarathustra himself announces in the morning that he cares about his work. One of the tasks of the present study is to treat/include the Fourth and Last Part of *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* as constituting the symbolically meaningful twelfth diurnal cycle of Zarathustra's journey and return to the Prologue of Part I as an integral part of the overall diurnal book structure, thereby showing the integrity of Nietzsche's book as a whole.

While my interpretation differs from some, it may find a common feature with others. As regards the book structure, there are three relational commonalities between T.K. Seung's interpretation and mine: 1) solarly; 2) continuity; and 3) correspondence. The first one concerns Zarathustra's relation to the sun, his dependence on it; the second, the interrelation between the



parts which includes Part IV as a necessary, indeed, final, component of the book; the third, the convergence of the diurnal symbol, the part, and the self on the three levels: language, structure, and identity. Let us look at this in more detail.

Zarathustra's solar states of consciousness comprised by his individual self reflects the dependence of his cosmic self on the position of the sun. In *Nietzsche's Epic of the Soul*: Thus Spoke Zarathustra (2005), Seung views Zarathustra as both the Faustian and the Spinozan overhuman characterised by the individual self and the cosmic self, respectively. "The Faustian superman is the individual self (that acts upon the world); the Spinozan superman is the cosmic self (that is conditioned by the world). But they are not two separate entities", for the former is part of the latter (Seung xviii).

The cosmic self is a physical link in the cosmic chain of causation and interdependence. Such a physical link is the physical or animal self. Consider the consciousness of yourself as an individual. It is causally determined by your brain state, which is in turn determined by the condition of your body, which is in turn determined by the state of the solar system, which is in turn determined by the state of the cosmos (xix).

Furthermore, Seung argues that in Part IV Zarathustra achieves the Dionysian union of the individual self with the cosmic self "in a mystical union with Life.... Zarathustra emerges as the hero of Dionysian dynamism in 'The Sign' after his mystical intoxication in 'The Drunken Song'" (Seung xx). In this connection, if the will of the cosmic self is "an extension of cosmic necessity" (*ibid.*), i.e., if the individual self is included within the cosmic self and therefore dependent upon the solar system (which is in turn dependent on the cosmos), it may be possible to view Zarathustra's mind or self-identity as exhibiting different (solar) states (promise, fulfillment, decay, and death) following those of the cycle of the sun: rise, zenith, fall, and "lie". Hence the presence of diurnal cycles in the text and Zarathustra's dependence on them confirms Seung's conditioning interpretation.

Moreover, there is another commonality between Seung's research results and mine. While Seung advocates a quadripartite, as opposed to the conventional tripartite (R.J. Hollingdale, L. Lampert, P.S. Loeb), reading of *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* – “All four Parts are equally indispensable” (Seung xvi) – through Zarathustra's mystical union with Life in “The Drunken Song” of Part IV (Seung xx), I have shown the relation of Part IV to the preceding parts through the uninterrupted flow of the symbolic diurnal cycle(s) and the book cyclicality (see above).

Finally, there is a commonality – four points of correspondence – between my diurnal reading of the book structure and Seung's reading of the book parts as according to the types and activities of the self. Following “[Seung's] plotline for [his] unified reading of Nietzsche's complicated work” (Seung xxi) – that Part I exemplifies the individual self; Part II, the cosmic self; Part III, the battle between the individual and the cosmic self; and Part IV, the union of the two – it is possible to declare that there is a general correspondence between the four parts of *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* and the times of the day as those four philosophically significant points of the parts occur at a certain time of a day.

Part I is associated with the *day* time. Zarathustra's autonomous, creative will as that of the Faustian superman emerges like “the radiant sun” accompanied by “a soaring eagle in the sky” (Seung xxi) with a serpent coiled around its neck – solar symbols. This is the time of the day when Zarathustra is at his *prime*, delivering his speeches intended to change the world (“Zarathustra's Speeches”). Part II is characterised by *evening*. Zarathustra's cosmic self as that of the Spinozan superman is under “the crushing weight of cosmic necessity” (*ibid.*) in “On Redemption” and “The Stillest Hour”, experiencing *decline*. The action in “The Stillest Hour” takes place in the evening. Part III is associated with *night*. Zarathustra's symbolic climbing his

own mountain in “The Wanderer”, i.e., the “battle between the two protagonists” (*ibid.*), Zarathustra’s individual self and his cosmic self represented by the dwarf and snake in “On the Vision and the Riddle”, as well as Zarathustra’s poor, *dying* state in “The Convalescent” after the battle and his seven-day ordeal are over, occur towards the night. Specifically, the vision-riddle is both experienced and presented mostly during the nighttime (see sections 5, 6 and 7 of Chapter 7). Part IV is characterised by *morning*. Although Zarathustra’s mystical union with Eternity transpires in the night – symbolised by the union of noon and midnight – in “The Drunken Song”, Zarathustra, as a result of that union, is *reborn* in the morning in “The Sign”. So there are four key symbolic turning points in *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, with each of the four parts generally corresponding to a symbolic point in a four-part day cycle: Part I – Day – the individual self; Part II – Evening – the cosmic self; Part III – Night – the battle between the individual and the cosmic self; and Part IV – Morning – the union between the two.

It may be inferred from the above consideration that, despite our differing approaches to the same text, there is a real possibility that common results can be gathered, e.g., the relation of Part IV to the other parts. Moreover, my results can serve as confirmation of Seung’s, as in the case of solarity, while his reading can influence mine, as in the case of the relation between the parts and the times of the day. One perspective, therefore, should not be given liberty to exclude others.

All of the above approaches have been a valuable contribution to the literary structure of *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*. While some (e.g., Megill) view it as unsystematic, others (Gadamer, Shapiro, Gooding-Williams) attempt to impose a certain system upon it. Approaching Nietzsche’s book from a diurnal perspective has disproved Megill’s unsystematic view of it by confirming and/or slightly amending its structural characteristics as implicit in Fink’s chain of

parables, Gadamer's drama, Shapiro's rhetoric, and Gooding-Williams' thought-drama, while restoring Lampert's three-part division to a four-part whole and finding commonalities with Seung's interpretation through the individual and the cosmic self. If one seeks to grasp a work of literature, especially one as complex as Nietzsche's, it is necessary to come up with a certain system in approaching it. This will help the reader to survive as a reader and enhance his or her life through (self-)interpretation. Every interpretation has the right to existence. Mine is not intended to displace others; it only seeks to assert itself among the existing ones, hoping to effect a creative, life-enhancing and life-affirming influence.

### Summary

One thing is to justify life; another is to communicate that justification. This research has undertaken to argue that Nietzsche employs circular symbols to communicate his idea of eternal recurrence, the doctrine of affirmation, in *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*. For this purpose, it was necessary to examine various philosophical interpretations of eternal return in the first two chapters, the phenomenon of Nietzsche's original language, its relation to his doctrine, and, specifically, the nature of the relation between circular symbols and eternal return in the third, fourth, and fifth chapters, respectively; and, finally, the functioning of circular and diurnal symbols in the last two chapters.

In Chapter 1, it was shown that Nietzsche's doctrine is existential rather than cosmological in character. In Chapter 2, this found its confirmation within the context of the temporal argument for the eternal recurrence: the eternal return of the moment. In Chapter 3, it was shown that Nietzsche's original symbolic language is central to his philosophical self-expression. In Chapter 4, various aesthetic approaches to the doctrine of eternal return established the multifarious relation between the form and the meaning of his fundamental

conception, while revealing a lack in the study of his circular and diurnal symbols. In Chapter 5, it was confirmed that there is an intimate relation between (circular) symbols and eternal recurrence on affirmative existential grounds, in general, and through analogy and association, in particular – the bases for the analyses of circular and cyclical symbols in the following two chapters. In Chapter 6, the practical analysis of Nietzsche's circular symbols proper revealed their creative representation of the eternal recurrence in both *The Gay Science* and *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, both by referring to the doctrine on the contextual level and by suggesting it by way of their own recurrence on the narrative level. In Chapter 7, the practical analysis of the diurnal symbols in *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* excelled in manifesting its artistic representation and incorporation of the idea of eternal recurrence on both the narrative cyclical and the cyclical narrative level; the former suggesting the eternal return of diurnal symbols constituting a diurnal narrative book structure – a perfect combination of the diurnal symbols and the eternal return.

Besides examining the circular representation of the eternal recurrence, this work has discovered the recurrence of symbols in Nietzsche's *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*. The circularity of diurnal symbols in the text is this work's main original contribution to Nietzsche studies. What this proves is that the literary language of a poet-writer such as Nietzsche should not be taken for granted. Nietzsche was not out of his wits when he was crafting his *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, and his language surely merits special attention: if he says that his book is on eternal return, there must be something that returns within it. The author of this work, therefore, hopes that further research of Nietzsche's language will attempt to approach it in the same spirit or along the same lines. Perhaps, there is yet a chronological or somewhat recurrence of seasonal symbols lying buried out there under the productive soil of Nietzsche's text or their correspondence to the parts of the book (e.g., Part I – autumn; Part II – winter; Part III – spring; Part IV – summer). Perhaps,

there is yet a circulation of water images throughout the narrative (such as water turning into vapor, vapor into snow, snow back into water and so on and so forth). These miniscule seeds of poetic imagination just sown may one day take root and spring forth into beautiful flowers. In the meantime, I appreciate Nietzsche's creative imagination for having allowed me to exercise mine and would like to conclude by saying that I shall come back again to proclaim the discovery of Nietzsche's creation, whether conscious or unconscious, of the eternal recurrence of diurnal symbols in *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*. Let it be my ultimate eternal confirmation and seal.

### *THE WILL*

*Like the trembling of durable cherishing,*

*Like the babbling of curable perishing,*

*Like the face of the unholy and divinity,*

*Like the grace of the lowly and sublimity,*

*Like the ration of roaring enormity,*

*Like frustration and boring deformity,*

*Like the courage of ill progressivity*

*Is the marriage of will's creativity.*

(Ivan Zhavoronkov

*Philosophical Stones in Poetical Tones 38)*

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