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Time, Power, and Superhumanity

PAUL S. LOEB

Reviewing his own books in *Ecce Homo*, Nietzsche praises *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* above all the others. This book, he writes, contains the highest realization of the concept of superhumanity and is grounded upon the highest formula of affirmation that is at all attainable, namely, the concept of eternal recurrence (*EH* III: Z-1, Z-6). Yet there has always been a suspicion among careful students of *Zarathustra* that there is some kind of deep incompatibility between its two major concepts. In particular, scholars have doubted that the linear time presupposed by the progressive teaching of superhumanity is compatible with the circular time presupposed by the teaching of eternal recurrence. Also, they have doubted that the negation of the past implied in the futuristic ideal of superhumanity is compatible with Nietzsche's characterization of eternal recurrence as a supreme formula of affirmation. Partly as a result of these persisting doubts, many commentators have concluded that Nietzsche did not intend eternal recurrence as a literal cosmological doctrine.¹ Alternatively, and more recently, they have concluded that Nietzsche eventually abandoned or reformulated the ideal of superhumanity.²

In this article, I want to propose a new understanding of *Zarathustra*'s twin concepts that better displays their internal coherence and thus allays the doubts which lead to the textually implausible conclusions mentioned above.³ My central claim is that a careful reading of *Zarathustra*'s speech on redemption, as well as of the narrative event of *Zarathustra*'s self-redemption, reveals Nietzsche's concept of backward-willing (*das Zurückwollen*) as the key link between his concepts of eternal recurrence and superhumanity. Although the traditional analysis precludes it, I shall argue that Nietzsche depicts *Zarathustra*'s discovery and exercise of his ability to will backward in time. This discovery, he suggests, flows from *Zarathustra*'s realization of time's circular and relational nature, and leads in turn to his achievement of a power over time that cures him of the spirit of revenge and enables him to become superhuman. *Zarathustra*'s twin teachings are thus indeed compatible because the concept of superhumanity actually presupposes a theory of circular time according to which there is no way to affirm the future

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without also affirming the past. Indeed, I shall argue, Nietzsche incorporates this theory of circular time into the very narrative-structure of his book, thereby exhibiting in figurative terms what his character Zarathustra teaches in literal terms.

I. THE WILL TO POWER

I will begin with Zarathustra's speech on redemption, and in particular with his *diagnosis* of the spirit of revenge. According to Zarathustra, the will suffers from the *impotence* that it feels when confronted with the unchangeable past. Because time is constantly flowing, and flowing in a forward direction only, the will sees that it cannot undo any deed and that it is powerless (*ohnmächtig*) against that which is done and in the past. Zarathustra describes the will's feeling of impotence with respect to the past in metaphorical terms: as the feeling of being fastened in fetters and imprisoned in a dungeon, or of being confronted with a stone that it cannot move and roll away. Thus, the will's loneliest melancholy, says Zarathustra, is that it cannot will backward and that it cannot break time and time's appetite: "there is suffering in the willer himself, since he cannot will backward."

With this account of the will's impotence-derived suffering in mind, Zarathustra goes on to suggest that the will—which is a liberator (*Befreier*)—has so far devised only a *foolish* strategy for liberating itself from the "it was" which causes it such feelings of impotence. This foolish strategy is "revenge" (*Rache*):

And so the will rolls stones out of wrath and ill-temper, and it wreaks revenge upon whatever does not likewise feel wrath and ill-temper.

Thus the will, the liberator, becomes a hurter: and upon all that can suffer it takes revenge for its inability to go backward.

Thus, according to Zarathustra, it is because the will feels impotent against time and the past that it aims to increase its feeling of power by making others suffer as it does. In particular, Zarathustra says, the will takes revenge upon all that can suffer, upon whatever does not likewise feel wrath and ill-temper. In this way, Zarathustra reiterates the psychological lesson of his earlier "Tarantulas" speech—namely, that what is impotent secretly plots revenge against everything that has power.

Next, Zarathustra teaches about the will's "spirit of revenge" (*der Geist der Rache*). This spirit, he says, is an outgrowth of the will's revenge-based strategy for liberating itself from the past. Indeed, the curse for humanity is that such foolishness acquired intelligence and hence no longer appeared

foolish. Hence, the spirit of revenge, humanity's best afterthoughts, are still predicated upon the will's foolish attempt to diminish its suffering by inflicting hurt upon all that does not suffer as it does. The only difference is that the will now aims to justify its deeds of revenge by calling them "punishment" and by claiming that those whom it makes suffer deserve to suffer.

Although Zarathustra does not say so explicitly, it is clear why he thinks the will's revenge-strategy foolish. For in ensuring that others suffer as it does, the will does not thereby feel any less impotence with respect to time and so does not diminish any of its own suffering. For this reason, Zarathustra aims to contrast his own *wise* proposal for the will's self-liberation with the will's hitherto-foolish attempt to liberate itself.⁴ But this means that Zarathustra aims to teach the will how to diminish its suffering—something that can only be done by teaching it how to lessen its feeling of impotence with respect to the fact of time's ceaseless forward flow. Supposing he can teach this, Zarathustra says, then the will would also be able to unharness itself from its own folly and to unlearn its spirit of revenge:

I led you away from these fable-songs when I taught you: "the will is a creator."

All "it was" is a fragment, a riddle, a dreadful accident—until the creative will says to it: "but thus I willed it!"

—Until the creative will says to it: "But thus I will it! Thus I shall will it!"

But has it already spoken thus? And when does this happen? Is the will already unharnessed from its own folly?

Has the will already become its own redeemer and joy-bringer? Did it unlearn the spirit of revenge and all teeth-gnashing?

And who taught it to be reconciled with time, and what is higher than all reconciliation?

Higher than all reconciliation must that will will which is the will to power:—yet how does that happen to it? Who taught it also even backward-willing?

In the last lines of this conclusion to his redemption speech, Zarathustra proposes a *cure* for the spirit of revenge that follows naturally and directly from his earlier diagnosis: since the will is led to acquire the spirit of revenge by its inability to will backward in time, then the will must be taught how to do this. Such a cure, Zarathustra suggests, would teach the will to reconcile itself with time, that is, to accept the ceaseless forward flow of time. But it would also teach the will something higher than this, something that is required by Zarathustra's discovery that "where there is will, there is will to power" ("On Self-Overcoming")—namely, how to exercise power over time and liberate itself from the past. Indeed, it is precisely because the will is will to power that it suffers so much when it feels impotent against the past.⁵ This is also why Zarathustra calls the will a "joy-bringer" (*Freudebringer*) when it increases its sense of power by teaching itself how to will backward in time.⁶

The traditional analysis of Zarathustra's speech on redemption rejects this obvious interpretation of Zarathustra's cure because it holds that literal backward-willing would require an impossible reversal in the direction of time, or a denial or negation of time itself.⁷ For this reason, the traditional analysis interprets Zarathustra as dismissing the possibility of backward-willing, and indeed as suggesting that the desire for this possibility still conceals within itself the will's aversion to time and thus the will's spirit of revenge.⁸ Thus, where Zarathustra claims that the will's spirit of revenge is a foolish and hence *unsuccessful* attempt to escape time's imprisonment, the traditional analysis interprets the spirit of revenge as the will's refusal to admit its complete inability to escape time's imprisonment. And where Zarathustra claims that the will's redemption requires a wise and hence *successful* escape from time's imprisonment, the traditional analysis interprets redemption as the will's final acceptance, and indeed affirmation, of its complete inability to escape time's imprisonment.

Against this traditional analysis, however, the conclusion of Zarathustra's redemption speech clearly indicates his aim of teaching the will two *compatible* abilities: first, how to *reconcile* itself with time; and, second, something higher than all reconciliation, namely, how to *escape* time through backward-willing. Nowhere in his speech does Zarathustra suggest that the second ability would undermine the first, or that backward-willing would require a reversal or cessation in the flow of time. Indeed, as his earlier "Blessed Isles" speech anticipates, eternal recurrence—which is the means whereby Zarathustra aims to teach the will backward-willing—is supposed to be a doctrine that eulogizes and justifies the reality of time's ceaseless forward flow.⁹

Here, then, I would submit, is an important lacuna in the traditional analysis of Zarathustra's speech on redemption. At an abstract level, this analysis fails to notice that Zarathustra's *doctrine of will to power* lies behind his diagnosis and cure for the spirit of revenge. And at a more specific level, it fails to notice that Zarathustra conceives of *the will's power over time* as the key to his diagnosis and cure for the spirit of revenge. Since Zarathustra's redemption speech helps to explain the connection between his doctrines of superhumanity and eternal recurrence, it follows that this traditional analysis also misses the sense in which Zarathustra's doctrine of will to power and, more specifically, his concept of backward-willing, constitute the chief links between these two doctrines.

Still, it might be wondered at this point what exactly Zarathustra means by his concept of backward-willing. Also, how is this concept supposed to entail the will's escape from time's imprisonment without yet denying the reality and irreversibility of time's ceaseless forward flow? Finally, how exactly are these ideas supposed to follow from Zarathustra's doctrine of eternal recurrence? In the rest of this article, I want to propose some brief answers

to these questions, and offer some evidence to support these answers. I will conclude with some suggestions about the implication of these answers for Nietzsche's doctrine of superhumanity.

II. ETERNAL RECURRENCE

Nietzsche offers us some important clues for answering these questions when he depicts Zarathustra as anticipating, and then relating, the event of his own redemption in the conclusion of Part III. Thus, in "Old and New Tablets," Zarathustra reviews the cure outlined at the end of his redemption speech, and then says that he is awaiting his own redemption. Nietzsche's clue here is that we need to study his depiction of Zarathustra's redemption if we are to understand the conclusion of his earlier redemption speech.

In fact, however, Nietzsche does not directly depict Zarathustra's redemption. Rather, immediately following "Old and New Tablets," Nietzsche depicts Zarathustra as awakening his most abysmal thought and then remembering his redemption during his ensuing convalescence. Speaking to his animals, Zarathustra says:

how well you know what had to be fulfilled in seven days:—
—and how that monster crawled into my throat and choked me! But I bit
the head off of it and spat it away from me.
And you,—have you already made a lyre-song out of this? Now however
I lie here, still weary from this biting and spitting away, still sick from my
own redemption ("The Convalescent").

Here, then, Nietzsche lets us know that Zarathustra's confrontation with his most abysmal thought—the thought of eternal recurrence¹⁰—somehow led to his redemption, and that in particular his "biting and spitting away" was the occasion of this redemption. In his preparatory notes, Nietzsche has Zarathustra say: "Redemption! I spat out the head of the serpent! Redemption! I taught the will backward-willing" (*KSA* 10, 578).¹¹ So Nietzsche obviously intends for us to see that the thought of eternal recurrence is what led Zarathustra to his redemptive teaching of backward-willing.

But Nietzsche does not tell us the meaning of Zarathustra's remembrance. Instead, this remembrance alludes in turn back to the two parts of the prevision recounted by Zarathustra at the start of Part III ("On the Vision and the Riddle"). For the initial part of this prevision depicts Zarathustra's confrontation with his most abysmal thought of eternal recurrence. This is a thought represented by the image of two straight lanes, seemingly eternal and leading in opposite directions, yet in fact joined together into one tremendously extended, though finite, circular course wherein all forward-running

things and events—including even their associated moments of time—eternally recur.¹² And the concluding part of Zarathustra's prevision depicts his ensuing encounter with a young shepherd choking with nausea on a heavy black serpent that had crawled down his throat and bit itself fast there. After unsuccessfully trying to pull the serpent out, Zarathustra cries to the shepherd, "Bite! Bite! The head off! Bite!" and the shepherd follows his advice, spits the head of the serpent far away, and springs up transformed and no longer human.

Again, however, Nietzsche does not explain Zarathustra's prevision, but instead depicts Zarathustra as challenging his fellow-travelers to guess the meaning of his prevision by solving the following series of riddles:

—*what* did I see then in a parable? And *who* is it who must yet come one day?
Who is the shepherd into whose throat the serpent thus crawled? *Who* is the human into whose throat all that is heaviest, blackest will thus crawl?

Nietzsche's clear implication is that we ourselves need to solve these riddles if we wish to understand how Zarathustra attained redemption by teaching himself backward-willing.

So let us suppose, as the initial part of his prevision suggests, that Zarathustra comes to learn "the unconditional and endlessly repeated circular course of all things" (*EH* III: BT-2). What this means, first of all, is that Zarathustra's perspective on his own death is transformed. Although he realizes that his soul is still as mortal as his body, and that he therefore becomes nothing upon dying, he now sees that his death is no longer final. Instead, he will be created again by the recurring knot of causes in which he is entangled and return to a life that is identical in every respect ("The Convalescent").¹³ Since, however, the associated moments of time are themselves entangled in the recurring knot of causes, Zarathustra will only be re-created once time itself has recurred and returned to exactly the same moment in which he was created.¹⁴ But Zarathustra cannot perceive any of this elapsed time because he does not exist after his death or before his creation. From his perspective, therefore, the last moment of consciousness is immediately followed by a return to that moment of his most distant childhood in which he first became aware ("On the Vision and the Riddle"; *KSA* 9, 564–65).¹⁵ Although others will perceive a complete end to his life, Zarathustra himself can never experience such an end or even a break in his life. Whereas Zarathustra previously regarded his life as an arrow that began at some point in the past and would end at some point in the future, he now sees that his life is actually a ceaselessly forward-flowing ring in which the endpoint eternally turns back to become the starting point.

From this realization, there follows what may be called Zarathustra's reconciliation (*Versöhnung*) with the fact of time. Prior to learning eternal recur-

rence, Zarathustra was filled with melancholy and nostalgia regarding those treasured moments in his life that were past and hence gone forever. In the course of his speeches, Zarathustra expressed this sadness most vividly when he cursed those who murdered the now irretrievable divine moments of his youth (“The Tomb Song”). But after learning eternal recurrence, Zarathustra recounts each of the peak moments he has experienced in the course of his journeys, and sings joyfully after each: “Oh how should I not lust after eternity and after the nuptial ring of rings, the ring of recurrence?” (“The Seven Seals”). Nietzsche’s implication is that Zarathustra’s new understanding of his life as a ring leads him to see that he will once again, and indeed eternally, experience all those joys that he wanted back but thought were lost forever.¹⁶ This is why, in his preparatory notes, Nietzsche has Zarathustra say: “Do not be afraid of the flux of things: this flux turns back into itself: it flees itself not only twice. / All ‘it was’ becomes again an ‘it is’. All that is future bites the past in the tail” (KSA 10, 139).¹⁷

Now let us suppose that Zarathustra turns his attention to the irreversible and unending temporal flow of his eternally recurring life. On Zarathustra’s old conception of his life as an arrow, there is a unidirectional flow of influence from his past to his present to his future. But on his new understanding of his life as a ring that turns back into itself, Zarathustra is led to see that there must also be a flow of influence from his present to his past, and even from his future to his past and present.¹⁸ In his concluding song, Zarathustra expresses this new understanding as the “bird-wisdom” (*Vogel-Weisheit*) of his new freedom from the weight of the past: “Behold, there is no above, no below! Throw yourself around, out, back, you who are light!” (“The Seven Seals” 7).¹⁹ Although Zarathustra still cannot change the undesirable aspects of his past, he is now able to reconcile himself with these aspects because he sees that his past is partly a result of his present and future willing. In this way, the creative will of the redeemed Zarathustra is able to say to his past: “But thus I will it! Thus I shall will it!”²⁰

Strictly speaking, of course, Zarathustra knows that he cannot help but direct his will toward future states of affairs. But because he now sees his future as biting the tail of his past, he expects that this willing will eventually be directed at his past and hence become a kind of backward-willing.²¹ And it is just this expectation, Nietzsche suggests, that leads Zarathustra to acquire a power over time that is higher than all reconciliation with time. This is because Zarathustra’s older will is now able to exert a deliberate influence upon his younger will in order to ensure that he complete his destiny and become who he is. More precisely, after learning eternal recurrence, Zarathustra discovers that he can develop a new kind of *memory* of the will which can be said to extend backwards, from his present to his past—thus allowing him to keep promises to himself and to fulfill his responsibility

toward himself.²² This mnemonic willing will be buried in his younger self's subconscious and will manifest itself in the form of *precognitive* dreams, visions, omens, voices, and so on. Although the younger Zarathustra will not know the source or meaning of these manifestations, the older Zarathustra can design and encode his memorized "I will"s in such a way that they are recalled at the right times and elicit the appropriate responses.

I believe this idea is the source of Nietzsche's conceit throughout his narrative that Zarathustra has prophetic dreams and hears disembodied whispers, cries, and laughter calling to him and giving him commands such as, "It is time! It is high time!" (cf. "The stillest Hour"). These communications, Nietzsche implies, come from the backward-willing fully-ripened Zarathustra, and serve as a conscience that keeps the still-ripening Zarathustra focused on his ultimate goal and prods him into action at those times when he is tempted away from himself or does not feel adequate to his destiny (cf. "On Involuntary Bliss").²³ Indeed, Nietzsche suggests, the reason Zarathustra is horrified in the face of these reminders of his destiny is that, since his backward-willing is a forward-willing that bites the tail of his past, the manifestations and consequences of this backward-willing may be said to follow his death. Thus; as prefigured by Nietzsche's prefatory image of the living Zarathustra carrying a dead companion on his back ("Zarathustra's Prologue" 7–9), Zarathustra may be said to carry within his subconscious the buried mnemonic messages of his "dead" self.²⁴ This "ghost" or "shade" may be said to visit Zarathustra at certain key moments in his progress to perfection, and to grow slighter and weaker as Zarathustra comes closer to attaining his destiny (cf. "On Great Events," "The Shadow").

In this way, as the traditional analysis properly insists, Zarathustra understands that his life is always subject to the fact of time. But his new realization of its eternal recurrence leads him to see that his will may nevertheless be released from bondage to this fact and help bring into existence those divine life-moments that he wants eternally returned. As he anticipated in his redemption speech, this new understanding now allows Zarathustra to see that he is the creator-artist or poet-author (*Dichter*) of his own life.²⁵ For the previously *fragmented* aspects of his life are now unified by the backward-willed destiny toward which they were being directed by his future completed self. The previous *riddles* in his life are now solved by the underlying hidden meaning that was his backward-willed destiny. And the previously *accidental* or *chance* aspects of his life are now necessitated and preordained by his backward-willing perfected future self.

This is just a brief sketch of the theory I find in Nietzsche's *Zarathustra*, and it certainly requires a more detailed explanation and philosophical defense than I have here provided. But it is sufficient, I think, to account for some odd and enigmatic aspects of Nietzsche's treatment of redemption that the traditional analysis does not notice or is forced to leave unexplained.

III. REDEMPTION

To begin with, let me return for a moment to the concluding question at the end of Zarathustra's redemption speech: "Who taught [the will to power] also even backward-willing?" This is of course a strange question for Zarathustra to be asking, since it suggests that he knows the mentioned teaching took place, but not who did the teaching. But it is also a strange question for the reader to be hearing, since the narrative of *Zarathustra* indicates that the teaching cannot have taken place when Zarathustra suggests, that is, prior to his asking these questions.

Zarathustra's question becomes less strange, however, if we suppose that the thought of eternal recurrence is indeed the *Grundconception* of Nietzsche's literary creation (*EH* III: Z-1). Suppose, that is, that Nietzsche hopes to employ the chronological structure of *Zarathustra*'s narrative as a means of figuratively exhibiting Zarathustra's discovery of backward-willing. Thus, although Zarathustra will not claim to have been redeemed until after his confrontation with his most abysmal thought, we are supposed to infer that this redemption requires him to teach himself how to will backward in time. But since his life is a closed circle in which his future is also his past, Zarathustra may be said to have already learned backwardwilling. Hence Zarathustra's suspicion, at the time of his redemption-speech, that someone has *already* taught backward-willing, together with his confusion as to who this might be.

Such an elaborate reading would of course be implausible if it were based only upon the peculiarity of the single line cited above. But this peculiarity is found also in the series of mixed-tense declarations and questions immediately preceding this line. In this conclusion to his redemption-speech, where he has forgotten that his disciples are listening, Zarathustra asks himself three questions about the backward-willing learned by the will to power: Who taught it? How does this happen to it? And, when does this happen to it? The second question, I have argued, at least has a determinate solution. For Nietzsche clearly suggests that the will to power becomes able to will higher than all reconciliation with time, namely, backward, because someone teaches it the truth of eternal recurrence.

From this answer, however, there follow Zarathustra's other two questions to himself concerning the identity of this teacher, and the time of his teaching. We readers know (or seem to know) that Zarathustra is the teacher of eternal recurrence, and that his teaching will take place sometime after his redemption-speech. But for Zarathustra himself, a character caught in the midst of Nietzsche's circular narrative, there cannot be a definite answer to the question at what point in his life his teaching takes place.²⁶ This indeterminacy is reflected in the confluence of Zarathustra's confused recollection of someone having already taught backward-willing, his present wariness about teaching backward-willing to his unprepared disciples, and his

confident expectation of someone teaching backward-willing in the future. This indeterminacy is intensified, moreover, by Zarathustra's implication that, once having been taught backward-willing, the creative will shall be (or was, or is) able to say that it wills "it was" not just in the past tense, but also in the present and future tenses. Since, however, Zarathustra's teaching of backward-willing is soon to be part of the "it was" of his life, Zarathustra will then have to regard himself as having willed this teaching in the past, present, and future.²⁷

Although complicated and puzzling, Zarathustra's riddling questions at the conclusion of his redemption speech are merely a preview of his still more enigmatic questions in those chapters of Part III where he actually experiences his foreseen self-redemption. Whereas Nietzsche has so far merely alluded to his invention of a recurrence-chronology, in these later chapters he directly challenges us to untie the various knots he has incorporated into this narrative. I will address only one of these knots at this point.

As we have already seen, the key Nietzsche provides us for solving his riddles at the end of Zarathustra's prevision lies in his narrative fulfillment of this prevision. During his convalescence, that is, Zarathustra remembers having an experience that we recognize as the experience he attributed to the young shepherd in his recounted vision. Obviously, then, the solution to Zarathustra's who-riddles is Zarathustra himself: he is the one who was destined to come one day, he is the human and young shepherd into whose throat the serpent, and all that is heaviest and blackest, was destined to thus crawl.²⁸

Or so it would seem. For having drawn this obvious conclusion, we are immediately faced with a discrepancy between Zarathustra's prophetic vision and Zarathustra's convalescent remembrance—namely, the difference in their narrative point of view. In the vision, that is, the gagging nauseated figure is seen from the outside point of view of the Zarathustra who is having the vision that he later recounts to the sailors. But in talking to his animals, Zarathustra describes the experience of gagging and nausea as something he has just undergone himself. Since, however, Nietzsche intends us to think of Zarathustra's vision as predicting his future experience, we may infer that the younger Zarathustra sees himself giving aid to his unrecognized future self at a crucial and difficult moment later in his life. And this suggests further that the older Zarathustra was able to perform the necessary redemptive act of biting the head off the serpent because he was commanded to do so by his younger self.

But that is not all. For if we look more closely still at the details in Zarathustra's prophetic vision, we find that the Zarathustra who is having the vision is first alerted to his future self's plight by a howling dog. Zarathustra recalls hearing this dog howl at the moon in his most distant childhood, and he now sees this dog leaping, bristling, and whining at the side of the gagging shepherd that is lying on the ground. When the dog sees Zarathustra

coming, it howls again and then cries out for help in a way he has never heard before. Indeed, the gagging shepherd's inability to cry for help himself seems to be the reason why the dog is forced to howl and cry for someone to come to his master's aid. But the convalescent Zarathustra remembers that he had screamed in great pain during his confrontation with his most abysmal thought, and that he had cried as no one had yet cried at the smallness of humanity. Nietzsche's implication is that the older Zarathustra depicted in "The Convalescent" is represented in Zarathustra's prevision not only by the symbol of the gagging young shepherd but *also* by the symbol of the howling dog.²⁹

This conclusion is supported by Nietzsche's allusion to Zarathustra's earlier realization, after he has been mocked by the people at the market place, that he is not meant to be their shepherd and shepherd-dog ("Prologue" 6). The reason he says this is that he has just tried, and failed, to play both these roles: first, as shepherd, enticing them to follow him with his teaching of superhumanity ("Prologue" 3-4); and next, as shepherd-dog, biting the heels of their education-based pride with his speech about the last humans ("Prologue" 5). But Zarathustra's unprecedented cry of pain during his confrontation with his most abysmal thought was prompted by the same object of disgust that was the theme of his earlier shepherd-dog speech, namely, the smallness of humanity. Nietzsche thus leads us to infer that the shepherd-dog in Zarathustra's prevision is a symbol for that aspect of Zarathustra which warns of the great peril of small humanity. And since this great peril is that the dominance of small humanity will prevent superhumanity from ever arriving, Nietzsche leads us to infer as well that the shepherd-dog's cry for help is in fact an attempt to save the shepherd-Zarathustra from small humanity's attempt to forever silence his teaching of superhumanity. Together, these inferences lead us to a reading of Zarathustra's vision in which he foresees his older will as divided in two: the will of a shepherd under attack, and silenced, by the dominance of small humanity; and the will of a shepherd-dog coming to the aid of the former by backward-willing a cry for help to a younger will that can issue the proper advice.³⁰

Here, then, we have Nietzsche's most explicit representation of the idea, implicit in Zarathustra's redemption speech, that Zarathustra's act of backward-willing will have to involve some kind of interaction between his older and younger will. But Nietzsche suggests more specifically here that the older will belongs to Zarathustra at the climactic moment in his life when he has just awakened his thought of eternal recurrence, and that the younger will belongs to that time in Zarathustra's life when he has a prevision of thus awakening his thought of eternal recurrence. This is because, after awakening his most abysmal thought of eternal recurrence, Zarathustra learns that his life is a closed circle in which the future flows into the past. But this means that it is possible for him to perform a new kind of mnemonic willing that can be recollected by his younger self at the appropriate time in the form

of a dream-prevision. Also, the most powerful aid to memory is pain (*GM* II:3), and Zarathustra is undergoing an experience he describes as a torture and crucifixion (“The Convalescent”). Zarathustra’s prevision is thus actually a recollection of that key moment in his future when he awakens his most abysmal thought of eternal recurrence and is overwhelmed by its implications. Although Zarathustra does not know the source or meaning of this recollection, he is able to offer the right advice for whomever will be undergoing the experience he foresees. Accordingly, when Zarathustra himself undergoes exactly such an experience, he is able to remember this advice and thereby rescue himself from the traumatic effects of awakening his most abysmal thought.³¹

IV. SUPERHUMANITY

Given this reading of Nietzsche’s treatment of redemption, let me now return to the questions I mentioned at the start of this article—namely, whether Zarathustra’s initial teaching of superhumanity is compatible with the circular time and the formula of affirmation built into his final teaching of eternal recurrence. I think it is fair to say that the current consensus among *Zarathustra* scholars is that the answer to these important questions is no.³² However, in a departure from earlier commentary, these readers suggest that this answer does not detract from the merits of Nietzsche’s book because he himself wanted us to notice these incompatibilities. Nietzsche, they argue, placed Zarathustra’s teaching of eternal recurrence at the end of the book because he wanted to show that Zarathustra’s teaching of superhumanity as a redemptive future goal was actually inspired by his own spirit of revenge. On this reading, Nietzsche depicts Zarathustra’s abandonment or reformulation of his initial teaching in favor of a concept of a kind of human being who would no longer need to seek redemption from the passing of time. Such a human being, who wills his life’s eternal recurrence, would instead be capable of affirming the intrinsic value of the unchangeable past and thus of affirming life in its totality.

Against this interpretation, however, there are Nietzsche’s continuing efforts to promote his concept of superhumanity—as in his *Ecce Homo* boast that this concept becomes the highest reality in his *Zarathustra*.³³ On the exegesis I have offered, a clue to what Nietzsche means by this is the concluding scene of Zarathustra’s prevision where the young shepherd jumps up transformed—no longer human (*nicht mehr Mensch*), laughing a laugh that is no human laughter (*ein Lachen, das keines Menschen Lachen war*). Nietzsche’s implication is that Zarathustra unknowingly foresees that his redemption will transform him from human into superhuman. Since this redemption is initi-

ated by Zarathustra awakening his thought of eternal recurrence (as depicted in the opening part of his prevision), and since this redemption consists in his learning backward-willing (as depicted in the concluding part of his prevision), Nietzsche thus represents Zarathustra's superhumanity as resulting from the power over time that is granted him by his new knowledge of eternal recurrence. In this way, he concludes his book with a doctrine of eternal recurrence that shows how Zarathustra's inaugural teaching of superhumanity is realized in the character of the newly redeemed Zarathustra.

If we suppose further, as I have argued, that Nietzsche depicts the newly redeemed Zarathustra as sending mnemonic communications back to those key stages of his life in which he needed help in progressing toward his redemption, then it may be said as well that Nietzsche illustrates his concept of superhumanity throughout his entire narrative. He illustrates it, for example, in the Zarathustra-child who holds up a mirror in which there appears the image created by his enemies ("The Child with the Mirror"); in the Zarathustra-shadow or ghost flying overhead at noon to announce that it is high time for the greatest event of his stillest hour ("On Great Events")³⁴; in the raging Zarathustra-wind that overcomes the soothsayer's nihilistic prophecy by tearing open the gate of the fortress of death and throwing up a black coffin that bursts open with gravity-killing laughter ("The Soothsayer")³⁵; and in the whispering, admonishing, mocking, laughing voice of Zarathustra's stillest hour telling him it is time to leave his children and return to his solitude for further ripening ("The Stillest Hour," "On Involuntary Bliss").³⁶

Finally, let us suppose, as Nietzsche explicitly suggests, that the ending of his published book should be read as circling back to its beginning (*KSB* 6, 491).³⁷ On my interpretation, this means that the newly superhuman Zarathustra who is going under backward-wills his transformation to the Zarathustra who is descending the mountain at the start of the book's narrative. And indeed, the Zarathustra who is descending the mountain says he wants to *become human again* (*wieder Mensch werden*) and to go down among humans so as to empty his cup of its overflowing wisdom ("Zarathustra's Prologue" 1). Also, the saint in the forest says that this Zarathustra is transformed (*verwandelt*) since he last saw him ten years ago carrying his ashes up the mountain: he is now carrying fire, he is no longer filled with nausea, he now moves like a dancer, he has become a child, an awakened one.³⁸ Thus, as Zarathustra had anticipated, the liberated will has now indeed become a self-propelled wheel (*ein aus sich rollendes Rad*) that says joyfully to its past: "But thus I willed it!"³⁹

This cyclical reading of Nietzsche's narrative shows how his introductory concept of superhumanity, which has so often been criticized as devoid of content, is in fact deeply grounded in the details of the book's *subsequent* narrative and theory.⁴⁰ More specifically, this cyclical reading shows how Zarathustra's "initial" teaching of superhumanity, far from being rendered

obsolete by his “final” teaching of eternal recurrence, actually presupposes it.⁴¹ This is because, at the start of the book, the Promethean Zarathustra descends his mountain in order to bring humanity a gift (*Geschenk*), namely, his teaching of superhumanity (“Zarathustra’s Prologue” 1–2). But shortly before his redemption, Zarathustra says that once he is redeemed he will want to go down once more among humans in order to give them his richest gift (*Geschenk*) of humanity’s redemption (“On Old and New Tablets” 3). Nietzsche’s implication, then, is that the younger Zarathustra’s inaugural teaching of superhumanity was in fact a teaching of humanity’s redemption, and that this teaching was backward-willed by the older Zarathustra who had just learned eternal recurrence and thereby become redeemed and superhuman.

This implication is reinforced by Zarathustra’s central announcement, in his teaching of superhumanity, that the time has come for humanity to set itself its goal (“Zarathustra’s Prologue” 5). Implicit in this announcement are Zarathustra’s three conditions for humanity’s redemption (“On Old and New Tablets” 3): first, that all the separate peoples of humanity, with all their separate goals, be unified into a single whole with a single goal⁴²; second, that all of the riddles in humanity’s existence be solved through the meaning provided by this goal;⁴³ and third, that all the accidents in human history be redeemed by the purposeful willing of this goal.⁴⁴ Superhumanity, then, is a redeemed humanity—that is, a humanity which has become completed and perfected through its self-imposed collective goal. But Zarathustra’s own redemption, as we have seen, presupposes backward-willing and the truth of eternal recurrence. So Nietzsche leads us to infer that his concept of superhumanity presupposes these as well, and that humanity needs to backward-will its future superhuman destiny in order to redeem and justify its past.

I think this conclusion helps to explain Nietzsche’s emphasis, throughout his narrative, on Zarathustra’s dual role as a herald of superhumanity (“Zarathustra’s Prologue” 4) and as a teacher of those self-chosen individuals who will one day form a new people that will give rise to superhumanity (“On the Gift-Giving Virtue”). For not only does Zarathustra’s backward-willing allow him a prevision of his own future, but his interaction with his backward-willing disciples allows him a prevision of their future as well. This is why, for example, Zarathustra is able to overcome the soothsayer’s prophecy through a reassuring dream in which he sees himself as a raging wind throwing up a black coffin that spills open with a thousand peals of laughter and a thousand masks of children, angels, owls, fools, and child-sized butterflies (“The Soothsayer”).⁴⁵ But the future of Zarathustra’s thousand children is a future in which they themselves interact with new backward-willing generations that in turn interact with future backward-willing ancestors of superhumanity, and so on. Accordingly, Zarathustra is able to have a prevision of humanity’s future that extends all the way to the emergence of backward-willing superhumanity itself.⁴⁶ This is why Zarathustra

says that he picked up the word “superhumanity” (*Übermensch*) when he flew out into distant futures (“On Old and New Tablets” 2–3), and why he counsels his disciples to listen to the good tidings that come from the future (“On the Gift-Giving Virtue”).⁴⁷ Paradoxically, it is the very success of Zarathustra’s heralding and teaching that first enables him to see what he must herald and teach.

On this new reading of Nietzsche’s chief work, there is thus no contradiction between the twin teachings of eternal recurrence and superhumanity. For both teachings presuppose the same theory of circular time according to which there is no way of affirming the future without also affirming the past. Yet the reason why so many readers have thought there was a contradiction, and indeed why they have not been able to find any content in the teaching of superhumanity, is that they have dismissed Nietzsche’s unifying concept of backward-willing as requiring an impossible reversal in the direction of time. In fact, however, Nietzsche always assumes that time flows in a forward direction only. But given his claim that time is relational, and that it must eventually return back to its starting point, Nietzsche is able to argue that the course of a human life is actually a closed circle, and that all forward-willing within this circle inevitably has an influence on the past. To be redeemed, then, is to recognize the fact of this influence, and purposefully to will in accordance with this fact so as to shape one’s life into a meaningful necessary whole. Supposing a few humans were able thus to redeem themselves, they would point the way toward superhumanity—that is, toward a perfected humanity that has learned to shape its history into a meaningful necessary whole. This is why Nietzsche—whose self-appointed task is “to prepare a moment of supreme self-awareness on the part of humankind, a *great noon*, when it looks backward and looks forward, when it steps out from the dominion of accident and priests and for the first time poses, *as a whole*, the question why? to what end?” (*EH* III: D-2)—declares: “—Among my writings my *Zarathustra* stands by itself. With it I have made to humankind the greatest gift that has been made to it so far” (*EH* P:4).

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NOTES

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1. Löwith's bibliographic survey (199–202) reports that these doubts, and this conclusion, are expressed for the first time in Oskar Ewald's commentary, *Nietzsches Lehre in ihren Grundbegriffen: Die ewige Wiederkehr des Gleichen und der Sinn des Übermenschen* (Berlin, 1903), and receive their most influential formulation in Simmel (174–75). For some well-known attempts to refute these doubts, see Heidegger's final lecture on Nietzsche, "Who Is Nietzsche's Zarathustra?"; Müller-Lauter, *Nietzsche*, 84ff.; and Soll, 336–38.

2. Cf. Lampert, 19–21, 181, 257–58; Pippin, 51–63; Conway (1989), 215ff.; Conway (1990), 103ff.; Clark, 270–77; Ansell-Pearson, 160, 192; and White, 100–123. Of these commentators, Lampert is the most emphatic: "It seems to me that one of the greatest single causes of the misinterpretation of Nietzsche's teaching is the failure to see that the clearly provisional teaching on the superman is rendered obsolete by the clearly definitive teaching on eternal return" (258).

3. For an exegetical critique of the first conclusion, see Abel, 188ff.; Moles, 323–26; and my articles "The Moment of Tragic Death" and "Death and Eternal Recurrence." For an exegetical critique of the suggestion that Nietzsche has Zarathustra progressively abandon (and not just reformulate) his teaching of superhumanity, see Ansell-Pearson, 185–91.

4. Due to his emphasis on the single remark in "On Tarantulas"—"that humanity be redeemed from revenge: that is for me the bridge to the highest hope"—Heidegger (69ff.) conceives only of redemption from (the spirit of) *revenge*, and is unable to follow Nietzsche in his interpretation of redemption (*Erlösung*) as release, liberation, or escape from *time's imprisonment*. Cf. also Lampert (140–51) and Stambaugh (53).

5. For a similar point, see Fink, 81, 84.

6. "What is happiness?—The feeling that power *grows*, that a resistance is overcome" (AC 2).

7. Cf. Stambaugh (85–86), who suggests that willing backward would require reversing the direction of time (85–86). According to Lampert (148), Zarathustra's speech shows that, because time as passage cannot be suspended by man, redemption cannot come through liberation from time as passage.

8. Heidegger (76ff.) is the most influential exponent of this view.

9. In his redemption speech, Zarathustra explicitly refers back to his "Blessed Isles" speech when he reminds his disciples that he has earlier taught them that the will is a liberator and joy-bringer and creator. This earlier speech contradicts Heidegger's suggestion, implicit in his criticism of Nietzsche's redemptive solution (74–79), that the doctrine of eternal recurrence is still a teaching about permanence, namely, the permanence of transience. Heidegger himself seems to acknowledge this point when he writes that the permanence of eternal recurrence does not consist in stasis (69).

10. More precisely, as Nehamas points out (148), Zarathustra's thought is "most abysmal" (*abgründlich*) for him, and induces great nausea in him, because it entails the eternal recurrence of even the smallest.

11. "*Erlösung! Aus spie ich den Schlangenkopf! Erlösung! Den Willen lehrte ich das Zurückwollen.*"

12. I defend this interpretation of Zarathustra's prevision in my article "Death and Eternal Recurrence." In particular, I argue there, against the common view, that Zarathustra's rebukes of the dwarf's and his animals' interpretations of eternal recurrence do not entail his rejection of circular time. I also argue there that, although commentators have not noticed this, Zarathustra's dialectical questions to the dwarf imply a relational conception of time according to which temporal moments do not exist independently of the things or events with which they are associated. According to Zarathustra's doctrine, then, time itself recurs along with the cosmos, and a thing or event is identical with its recurrence even with respect to time. *Pace* Bernd Magnus's objection (cf. Clark, 267), the *re-currence* of Zarathustra's numerically identical life is indeed discernible through memory (see note 22 below).

13. This is what Zarathustra's animals claim to know he would say at the moment of his death. Because the convalescent Zarathustra has asked his animals to stop speaking, and because

he does not seem to pay any attention to their last speech, some commentators have argued that we should not trust this claim. But Zarathustra had just said how *well* they know what had to be fulfilled and what comfort he had invented for his convalescence. For other objections to dismissing Zarathustra's animals' speeches, see Lampert, 212–23.

14. Zarathustra's animals, in explaining the doctrine they know Zarathustra teaches, express the idea that time itself recurs in terms of the metaphor of a monstrously great year of becoming which must, like an hourglass, turn itself over again and again so that it may run down and run out anew. Further, they express the idea that associated times will be identical by claiming that the (small) years within each great year will be identical with each other ("The Convalescent"). Cf. also *Gay Science* 341, where the demon says that the eternal hourglass of being is turned over again and again, and that even the very moment in which he is speaking must come again in the same succession and sequence.

15. For an elaboration and defense of this interpretation of Zarathustra's prevision, see my article "Death and Eternal Recurrence." On my interpretation, Nietzsche's rejection of absolute time rules out the critical suggestion (cf. Clark, 266–70) that Zarathustra's dying consciousness would have to traverse eons of elapsed time in order make a connection with his reborn consciousness in some temporally *subsequent* or *later* cycle of cosmic history.

16. Cf. KSA 13, 43. Müller-Lauter ("The Spirit of Revenge," 154–56) argues that Heidegger's reading of Zarathustra's redemptive cure—as requiring the eternal return of the past—is unable to account for Zarathustra's feelings of terror and burden when confronted with the thought of the eternal return of the past. But Zarathustra fervently desires the eternal return of his past divine moments; he is terrorized and burdened only by the thought that even the smallest will eternally recur ("The Convalescent").

17. Cf. also KSA 10, 205: "I teach you redemption from eternal flux: the flux always flows back into itself again, and you always step into the same flux, as the same." For similar ring-images in *Zarathustra*, see "On the Virtuous," "On Old and New Tablets" (2), and "The Sleepwalker's Song" (11).

18. Thus, following his redemption, Zarathustra sings: "Oh my soul, I taught you to say 'today' (*Heute*) like 'one day' (*Einst*) and 'formerly' (*Ehemals*). . . . Where could future and past dwell closer together than with you?" ("On the Great Longing"). Noting Zarathustra's defense of the reality of time in "Upon the Blessed Isles," Robin Small argues that Zarathustra cannot be interpreted as advocating a conception of circular time that renders illusory any absolute distinctions among past, present, and future (88–91). However, a closer look at Zarathustra's defense in "Blessed Isles" shows that what he means by the reality of time is flux and transitoriness (*Vergänglichkeit*). Since the view of circular time implied in Zarathustra's prevision assumes a ceaseless forward flux that turns back into itself, Zarathustra's allusion to "Blessed Isles" does not condemn it. Indeed, Zarathustra associates the thought of God, and the Platonic contempt for flux, with a conception of absolute linear time that leads to absolute distinctions among past, present, and future. So his vindication of the reality of time actually *requires* a conception of time that eliminates these absolute distinctions.

19. As Zarathustra's prevision indicated, then, the teachings of eternal recurrence and backward-willing provide not only the cure for the spirit of revenge but also the means for a great victory over his archenemy, the spirit of gravity and heaviness (*der Geist der Schwere*). Cf. my article "Death and Eternal Recurrence"; and Fink, 97–98.

20. This interpretation of Zarathustra's redemptive solution should be sharply distinguished from the current consensus suggestion of a merely *metaphorical* "backward-willing"—that is, of a literary or historical or psychological operation (*Nachträglichkeit*) whereby Zarathustra retrospectively reinterprets his past in an affirming and empowering manner. Cf. Nehamas, 159–69; Higgins, 187–88; Clark, 255–60; Large, 44–49; Schutte, 120–25; and White, 114–15. Indeed, this current consensus typically depends upon the traditional analysis that Zarathustra dismisses the possibility of literal backward-willing.

21. For a similar analysis, though more abstractly formulated, see Fink, 88.
22. See *Genealogy of Morals* (II:1–3) for Nietzsche’s account of “memory of the will” (*Gedächtniss des Willens*) as an active ongoing willing of what was once willed and as a precondition of all responsibility and promise-keeping. Following Simmel (173–74), there is nearly complete agreement among students of Nietzsche’s doctrine that strict identity between Zarathustra’s life and its recurrence precludes the possibility of any memory links between them. Cf. Soll, 335, 339–42 (note especially his citation of Zarathustra’s howling-dog memory as “aberrant and ill-considered”); Higgins, 163–64; Clark, 266–70; Moles, 295, 412–13 n. 91. But, as Kain points out (377), this consensus covertly assumes, contrary to Nietzsche’s doctrine, that there is some original or initial “occurrence” in which there is no recurrence-derived memory. Zarathustra’s recurring life is always identical as long as it always contains the same recurrence-derived memories (or “precognitions”) in the same succession and sequence (*GS* 341; *KSA* 9, 524).
23. See Nietzsche’s description of the “highest” conscience belonging to the sovereign individual, in *Genealogy of Morals* (II:1–3). Such an individual, he writes, has power over himself and fate because he has bred for himself an active memory of the will by means of which healthy active forgetfulness is suspended for the sake of promising and responsibility.
24. See below for interesting connections to Nietzsche’s narrative descriptions of Zarathustra’s first companion as a “dead dog” (“Zarathustra’s Prologue” 8) and of Zarathustra’s preconvalescent condition as that of a “dead man” (“The Convalescent”).
25. Although not in the sense, or for the reasons, proposed by Nehamas (159–69).
26. Something like this idea, as applied to Nietzsche himself, motivates Derrida’s reading of the start of *Ecce Homo* in *The Ear of the Other*, 7–21, 45–46, 56–57, 88–89.
27. Strictly speaking, as I argue at the end of this article, Nietzsche’s concept of backward-willing does not even permit the identity of its teacher and the time of its teaching to be narrowed down to Zarathustra and his lifetime.
28. Cf. also *GM* II: 24–25. Although it seems odd that Zarathustra’s prevision represents his chronologically *older* self as a *young* shepherd, Zarathustra’s stillest hour has told him that he has become young late and that he needs to overcome even this late youth in order to become a child (“The Stillest Hour”). Cf. also “On Free Death,” where Zarathustra distinguishes between emotional or spiritual age and chronological age: “In some the heart grows old first and in some the spirit. And some are old in their youth: but those who are young late stay young long.”
29. Cf. also “The Sleepwalker’s Song” (8), where the howling dog is identified with the wind, which is in turn associated with Zarathustra throughout the narrative (cf. “On the Rabble”). Also, the narrative’s emphasis on Zarathustra’s compassion for, or “suffering-with” (*Mitleid*), the gagging shepherd and his howling dog suggests that he identifies with both of them.
30. At the finish of his Prologue, Zarathustra says only that he is abandoning his role as shepherd and shepherd-dog with respect to the people (*Volk*) and herd (*Herde*) in the marketplace. There is thus no contradiction in Zarathustra foreseeing himself in a *new* role as shepherd and shepherd-dog (this time, with respect to those outside the marketplace-herd), or in his foreseeing a redemptive end to this new shepherd-role. See my article “The Serpent-Worm-Monster.”
31. See my article “The Serpent-Worm-Monster,” for a discussion on the meaning of this advice.
32. See note 2 above.
33. Cf. also Ansell-Pearson, 185–91.
34. Cf. also “On the Land of Culture” for Nietzsche’s poetic image of Zarathustra “flying” backward through time; and “The Seven Seals” for his allusion to the “high time” or “wedding” (*Hochzeit*) in which Zarathustra and life are joined together through eternal recurrence.
35. On my account, Zarathustra rejects his favorite disciple’s interpretation because he has realized that his various dream-symbols do not refer to the power of his *current* self, but rather to the power of his redeemed *future* self (and his children, see below). This reading is supported by the dream imagery in which the thunderbolt knocking at the gate of death and the tearing

open of the gate of death both come from the other side where someone has been carrying his ashes up the mountain. It is supported as well by Nietzsche's allusion to Zarathustra's post-redemptive gravity-killing laughter in "On the Vision and the Riddle" and "The Seven Seals"; and by his allusion to Zarathustra's post-redemptive description of himself as a mocking gust sweeping into old tomb chambers and bursting tombs ("The Seven Seals"). After hearing this backward-willed message from his future redeemed self, Zarathustra is therefore reassured that his light will be saved and last through the coming fulfillment of the soothsayer's nihilistic prophecy. The sound of his own future joyful and life-affirming laughter allows the still unripe Zarathustra to come back to himself and stop being like those of whom the soothsayer had spoken. Cf. also "Old Tablets" (16), with its explicit allusions to the soothsayer's prophecy, and the image of the redeeming Zarathustra as a blustering wind liberating the will from its imprisonment in the past.

36. See my article "The Conclusion of Nietzsche's *Zarathustra*" for an interpretation of Zarathustra's great-noon stillest hour as the hour in which he performs the greatest event of summoning and awakening his most abysmal thought of eternal recurrence.

37. Writing to Köselitz about the ending of Part III, Nietzsche observes parenthetically: "It goes back to the beginning of the 1st part: *circulus* therefore, although hopefully not *circulus vitiosus*" (March 30, 1884). Later, in what seems a clear reference to Zarathustra, Nietzsche asks whether he who kills his own eternal recurrence and therefore makes himself necessary would not then be "*circulus vitiosus deus*" (BGE 56). In my article "The Conclusion of Nietzsche's *Zarathustra*," I consider more fully the related question of Nietzsche's plans for ending *Zarathustra*.

38. Cf. Nietzsche's description of the redeemed shepherd-Zarathustra who has overcome his great nausea as "one transformed" (*ein verwandelter*), and Zarathustra's speech, "On the Three Transformations" (*Verwandlungen*). The last of Nietzsche's *Dionysus-Dithyramps*, "Of the Poverty of the Richest" (KSA 6, 406–10), alludes to these opening lines of *Zarathustra* when it begins and concludes by mentioning the *ten years* that pass before Zarathustra wearies of his solitary stay on the mountain. In the middle of this poem, however, Nietzsche describes this same Zarathustra as "tired and blessed, a creator on his seventh day"—thus alluding to his repeated mention in "The Convalescent" of the seven days in which Zarathustra remains lying down following his redemption.

39. Cf. "On the Three Transformations," and BGE 56.

40. Cf. Tanner's dismissal as "a sad piece of wishful thinking" Nietzsche's claim that the concept of superhumanity becomes the highest reality in *Zarathustra* (51). In truth, he observes, "One has to imagine all too much about the *Übermensch*, that blank cheque which Zarathustra issues without any directions about cashing it, for him to be helpful" (65).

41. Citing Zarathustra's animals' concluding announcement that he must *become* the teacher of eternal recurrence, Heidegger suggests that Zarathustra obviously cannot commence by teaching eternal recurrence and so instead begins by teaching superhumanity (66–67). On my interpretation, however, Zarathustra fulfills his destiny as teacher of eternal recurrence during his inaugural teaching of superhumanity. Cf. also Müller-Lauter, 85.

42. "Hitherto there have been a thousand goals, for there have been a thousand peoples. Only fetters are still lacking for the thousand necks, the one goal is still lacking. Humanity still has no goal. / But tell me, my brothers, if humanity still lacks the goal, is there not also still lacking—humanity itself?" ("On the Thousand and One Goals").

43. "Uncanny is human existence and still without meaning. . . . I want to teach humans the meaning of their existence" ("Zarathustra's Prologue," 7).

44. "We are still fighting step by step with the giant Accident, and over the whole of humanity there has hitherto still ruled the senseless, the meaningless" ("On the Gift-Giving Virtue," 2).

45. Cf. "The Greeting," where Zarathustra calls his disciples his children and laughing lions.

46. Cf. especially the conclusion of "Blessed Isles," where Zarathustra anticipates his teaching on redemption and describes the shadow that once came to him—that is, his prevision of a future superhumanity imprisoned within the stone of humanity's past. Alluding to his image of

the teaching of eternal recurrence as a hammer with which to break time and the immovable stone "it was" (cf. *KSA* 10, 492, 559; *KSA* 11, 295), Nietzsche has Zarathustra say that only the blows of his hammer will serve to free this lightest of all things. Cf. also *BGE* 62.

47. Cf. Large, "Temporal Structures in Nietzsche," for a discussion of Nietzsche's futurism in *Zarathustra*.

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