

# Miguel Santos-Vieira

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## Fusing the Horizons : Heidegger, Nietzsche and the Time of the «Augenblick»

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MIGUEL SANTOS-VIEIRA<sup>1</sup>  
*Universidade Nova de Lisboa, Portugal*  
miguel.vieira@fcsh.unl.pt

## FUSING THE HORIZONS: HEIDEGGER, NIETZSCHE AND THE TIME OF THE *AUGENBLICK*

**Abstract.** This paper examines Heidegger's lecture to the Bremen Club – delivered in 1953 – entitled *Wer ist Nietzsche's Zarathustra* as the foreground for Heidegger's notion of *Augenblick* in connection to the figure of Zarathustra and the concept of Eternal Return of the Same in the *Nietzsche* lectures – delivered in 1937. In these lectures Heidegger sums up his interpretation of Zarathustra as the figure whose task it is to communicate the doctrine of the eternal return of the same and who therefore has as his particular task the explanation of the meaning of time. Heidegger cites repeated sayings of the eternal return. At the centre of the sayings is the passage referring to the riddle of the doorway named *Augenblick*. The question I shall endeavour to ask is: what is the eventuation of the *Augenblick* in the turn (*Kehre*) of the return (*Wiederkehr*)? I argue that the notion of *Augenblick* is key to Heidegger's thinking of the turn and the understanding of the figure of Zarathustra as the return of the transcendence of *Dasein*. This connection becomes explicit through an exegesis of the different analogies delineated in the structure of the event of *Augenblick* – *er-augen*, *Er-eignis* – with *Wieder-kehr/Wider-kunft*.

**Keywords:** phenomenology, time, *Dasein*, authenticity

1. Zarathustra and the two riddles of *Augenblick*. 2. The first Analogy of *Augenblick*: *Wider-kehr/Wider-kunft*. 3. The second analogy of *Augenblick*: the sayings of the turn (*Kehre*).

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<sup>1</sup> Integrated Researcher at Faculdade de Ciências Sociais e Humanas – Universidade Nova de Lisboa. Portuguese Government's Foundation for Science and Technology Postdoctoral Fellow, Visiting Scholar at University of London-Heythrop College.

“All we need is the plain, sudden unforgettable and hence forever *new look into something which we – even though it is familiar to us – do not even try to know, let alone understand in a fitting manner*”.

Martin Heidegger, *Unterwegs zur Sprache*<sup>2</sup>

The notion of *der Augenblick* along with *das Ereignis* and compounds of the verb *kehren* begin to appear together in Heidegger’s published work in the second of his series of lectures dedicated to Nietzsche, given in 1937 and published in 1961 as *Die ewige Wiederkehr des Gleichen*. Taken together they provide the key to Heidegger’s analysis of Nietzsche’s work *Also Sprach Zarathustra*<sup>3</sup>.

For Heidegger, *die Kehre* and the overcoming of metaphysics had already been understood and carried out by Nietzsche. Heidegger understands Nietzsche’s self-understanding of his philosophy as the inversion of Platonism as the whole history of metaphysics. Nietzsche is the inversion (*Umkehr*) of Plato that turns metaphysics in and back on itself and shows it to be a ring, a *Wieder-kehr*. In the *Beiträge* Heidegger plays with how, in the turn out of metaphysics, this becomes

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<sup>2</sup> All translations from the German are the author’s except where otherwise stated. Cf. M. Heidegger, *Unterwegs zur Sprache*, *Gesamtausgabe* 12, Neske, Pfullingen 1965, 257–258 (Klostermann, Frankfurt 1985, 246). “Es genügt der einfach jähe, unvergeßliche und darum stets neue Blick in das, was uns zwar vertraut ist, was wir gleichwohl nicht einmal zu kennen, geschweige denn auf die gemäße Weise zu erkennen versuchen”. M. Heidegger, *Lectures from 1950–59*, transl. P.D. Hertz as *On the Way to Language*, Harper, San Francisco 1982. M. Heidegger, *Der Weg zur Sprache*, lecture given in Munich and Berlin in 1959 under the title *Die Sprache*, first published in the fourth series of *Gestalt und Gedanke*, ed. C. Podewils, Oldenbourg, München 1959, transl. P.D. Hertz as *The Way to Language*, in: *On the Way to Language*, op. cit.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. M. Heidegger, *Nietzsche* I, *Gesamtausgabe* 6.1, Neske, Pfullingen 1961 (Vittorio Klostermann, Frankfurt 1996); M. Heidegger, *Die ewige Wiederkehr des Gleichen*, Freiburg, summer semester 1937, transl. D.F. Krell, as *The Eternal Recurrence of the Same in Nietzsche by Martin Heidegger*, vol. 2, Harper and Row, San Francisco. Also in the 1953 lecture delivered to the Bremen Club entitled *Wer ist Nietzsche’s Zarathustra?* along with the specific steps from Nietzsche’s *Also Sprach Zarathustra* (1883). The genesis of the thought of the eternal return of the same is to be followed from Nietzsche’s *Ecce Homo* (1888, vol. XV of the *Grossoktav* edition), 85.

a *Wider-kehre*, a turn-against that turns out of the eternal return into the new beginning<sup>4</sup>. In the same way that, for Heidegger, Aristotle and Plato base their working out of being on the originary meaning of being understood by the Greeks and therefore point two ways at once, both in the originary voice of being in what they say and their metaphysical determination of it, so also Nietzsche points in two ways, in the pointing toward a fundamental ontology in the (nevertheless metaphysically constructed) figure of Zarathustra and in the metaphysics from out of which Zarathustra is construed, personified in the dwarf.

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<sup>4</sup> Cf. M. Heidegger, *Beiträge zur Philosophie (Vom Ereignis)*, Gesamtausgabe 65, ed. F.-W. von Herrmann, Klostermann, Frankfurt 1989. Original (and incomplete) text worked out between 1936 and 1938, transl. E. Parvis and M. Kenneth as *Contributions to Philosophy (From Enowning)*, Indiana UP, Bloomington 1999, 407: “Kehre ist Wider-kehre” (turning is turning against). See also Heidegger’s *Preface* in: W. Richardson, *Heidegger: Through Phenomenology to Thought*, Martinus Nijhoff, Dordrecht 1963, where the nature, the inherent necessity and the implications of the ‘reversal’ are explained at length. Heidegger again insists here, seeking to put an end to “the baseless and ceaseless prattle” about the ‘reversal’, that “the thinking of the reversal *is* a change in my thought. But this change is not a consequence of altering the standpoint, much less of abandoning the fundamental issue, of *Sein und Zeit*”. The basic question of *Sein und Zeit*, far from being abandoned by reason of the reversal, is “fulfilled in a decisive manner in the thinking of the reversal”. The extent to which Plato has stimulated Heidegger’s thinking is evidenced not only by his *Plato’s Theory of Truth* essay by the discussion of the good (ἀγαθόν) in *Vom Wesen des Grundes* and in *Nietzsche*, but also, for example, by the recurrent discussion of the Platonic Idea in his later writings. Heidegger worked and lectured extensively on some of the dialogues of Plato during the period when he was writing *Sein und Zeit*, for example, the *Sophist*, with which he begins this work, and the *Philebus*, which has had some influence on the analyses of *Befindlichkeit* (attunement) and *Stimmung* (disposition). M. Heidegger, *Wegmarken*, Gesamtausgabe 9, ed. F.-W. von Hermann, Klostermann, Frankfurt 1976, 1919–1961, first published as *Wegmarken*, Klostermann, Frankfurt 1967, transl. W. McNeill as *Pathmarks*, Cambridge UP, New York 1998. Cf. M. Heidegger, *Platons Lehre von der Wahrheit*, from a Freiburg lecture course, winter semester 1930/31 (see *Gesamtausgabe*, vol. 34, below), first published as *Geistige Überlieferung*, Helmut Küpper, Berlin 1942, subsequently in *Platons Lehre von der Wahrheit mit einem Brief über den Humanismus*, Francke, Bern 1947, transl. J. Barlow, E. Lohner as *Plato’s Doctrine of Truth*, in: *Philosophy in the 20th*, eds. W. Barnett, H. Aiken, Random House, New York 1962, retransl. Th.J. Sheehan, W. McNeill, as *Plato’s Doctrine of Truth* in: *Pathmarks*, op. cit.

In doing so Heidegger discovered he also had to take account of what thinking had thought metaphysically. Such a reading meant to think through for himself the meaning of the philosophy of Nietzsche, to inscribe himself into the Nietzschean thought of nihilism and so to make it his own. In doing so Heidegger throws open the whole question of what is to know or interpret, at all. The question is thrown open both by throwing into question how metaphysics lost sight of a fundamental way of being in nearness, proximity, as the articulation of distance and closeness, and it is thrown open by re-articulating what proximity, belonging-to, might mean for the one who experiences the *Augenblick* in the eternal (*ewige*) that returns.

### 1. ZARATHUSTRA AND THE TWO RIDDLES OF *AUGENBLICK*

In a lecture to the Bremen Club – delivered in 1953 – entitled *Wer ist Nietzsches Zarathustra?* Heidegger sums up his interpretation of Zarathustra in the Nietzsche lectures as the figure whose task it is to communicate the doctrine of the eternal return of the same and who therefore has a particular task in explaining the meaning of time<sup>5</sup>. Zarathustra proclaims *der Übermensch*, the overman, in consequence of the death of God by asserting the triumph of the subject's will to power<sup>6</sup>. Overman (recalling *über* – *μετά* – the *trans* of transcendence) is the finite appearance of my 'I' in virtue of the death of infinite (moral) transcendence, being in general or the death of God thought metaphysically. Zarathustra says (with a direct reference to the Greeks, to *Ὀκεανός*): "Once we said God, when we looked over distant seas, but

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<sup>5</sup> Cf. M. Heidegger, *Wer ist Nietzsche's Zarathustra?* (*Vorträge und Aufsätze, Gesamtausgabe 7*), op. cit.

<sup>6</sup> There is simply no support for translating *der Übermensch* as 'superman'. Walter Kaufmann has demonstrated that the term 'overman' originated in English with the American author Emerson's coinage of the term Over-soul, in a passage which Nietzsche refers to explicitly in *Die Götzen-Dämmerung* under the title *Emerson* (F. Nietzsche, *The Gay Science*, translated with commentary by Walter Kaufmann, Random House, New York 1974, 11).

now I have taught you to say: overman”<sup>7</sup>. At the outset of the lecture Heidegger says that in *Also Sprach Zarathustra* there is a word to be thought toward in the manner of a struggle, a contested seeking, and this ‘word’ is in relation with the text, but it is not the text, though the text makes for a thinking toward the word. The text seeks for a speaker, for it is not enough to cite the text, but rather ‘who’ cites the text is also in question. To ask ‘who’ is Zarathustra is already to ask differently to asking ‘what is?’ It is to be distant from the province of the quiddity of substances, of the ‘whatness’ of essences. Who is Zarathustra? Who is the one who has been given the possibility of *der Augenblick*? Asked another way, in what occurs-for-itself in the *Augenblick*, what occurs-for-Zarathustra in the eternal that *re-curs*?

Heidegger suggests that what is put in question by Zarathustra is the emptiness of everything up until this hour. He says, “for everyone means for every human being as a human being, for every given individual insofar as he or she becomes in his or her essence a matter worthy of thought for him or herself”<sup>8</sup>. Zarathustra’s ‘who’ is decisive. Zarathustra, “as the form of the teacher who teaches the overman, involves us, involves Europe, involves the earth as a whole – not merely today but tomorrow. That is so, no matter whether we affirm or reject this thinking, whether we neglect it or ape it in false tones”<sup>9</sup>. How is it that Europe is involved here? The prevailing epoch conditions in the tone of the speaking of Zarathustra, because these are the tones of the surrounding world. This surrounding world (*Umwelt*) in its appear-

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<sup>7</sup> F. Nietzsche, *Also Sprach Zarathustra* (Friedrich Nietzsche: Kritische Studienausgabe, de Gruyter, Berlin 1999 (1968), vols. 1-15), 109: “Einst sagte man Gott, wenn man auf ferne Meere blickte; nun aber lehrte ich euch sagen: Übermensch”.

<sup>8</sup> Cf. M. Heidegger, *Wer ist Nietzsche’s Zarathustra* (Vorträge und Aufsätze, Gesamtausgabe 7), 97: “Für Alle’ dies meint: für jeden Menschen, für jeden jeweils und sofern er sich in seinem Wesen denkwürdig wird”.

<sup>9</sup> Cf. M. Heidegger, *Wer ist Nietzsche’s Zarathustra?* (Vorträge und Aufsätze, Gesamtausgabe 7), 102 f: “Die Gestalt eines Lehrers (...) der den Über-Menschen lehrt, geht uns, geht Europa, geht die ganze Erde an, nicht nur heute noch, sondern erst morgen. Das ist so, ganz unabhängig davon, ob wir dieses Denken bejahen oder bekämpfen, ob man es übergeht oder in falschen Tönen nachmacht”.

ing, as it appears, is the overcoming of the barriers and limits which constitute the subject, barriers of an inner and outer world, of myself as substance, and so revealing me to be stretched out over time, the gap between my being as being and being itself. It is how Zarathustra brings speech itself to the fore, as not only its content but at the same time its tone or ‘how’, and the fact that Zarathustra as a figure is most decisively not a subject, either imagined or real, that indicates an inner and an outer of the difference between the world and my-self is shown. Most of all it indicates that fundamental changes in history are the result of founding revelations, which occur through heroes. The great thinker, the poet, the artist, the statesmen is the storm center for the clash of past and future. He alone is granted the vision necessary to understand what must be said and done<sup>10</sup>.

Heidegger, citing fragment 726 of the *Großoktav* edition of the notes appended to *Also Sprach Zarathustra* points out in a discussion of the development of the doctrine during the ‘Zarathustra Time’ that the consequence of the doctrine is that ‘the thought of thoughts gives the highest keenness and decisiveness to beings in every moment-of-vision (*Augenblick*)’<sup>11</sup>. In these lectures Heidegger cites repeated sayings of the eternal return.

At the centre of the sayings – in the chapter *On the Vision and the Riddle* – is the passage referring to the riddle of the doorway named *Augenblick*, with the two avenues leading off into the past and the future. Zarathustra climbs the mountain with a dwarf on his back. He is

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<sup>10</sup> Cf. M. Heidegger, *Vorträge und Aufsätze, Gesamtausgabe 7, 1936–53*, Neske, Pfullingen 1954. *Logos*, a contribution to the *Festschrift* for Hans Jantzen ed. K. Bauch, Geb. Mann, Berlin 1951, and given as a lecture to the Bremen Club in the same year, transl. D.F. Krell, as *Logos (Heraclitus, Fragment B 50)* in: *Early Greek Thinking*, eds. D.F. Krell, F. Capuzzi, Harper and Row, New York 1975, 25–78.

<sup>11</sup> Cf. M. Heidegger, *Nietzsche I, Gesamtausgabe 6.1*, Neske, Pfullingen 1961; *Die ewige Wiederkehr des Gleichen*, Freiburg, summer semester 1937, transl. D.F. Krell as *The Eternal Recurrence of the Same in Nietzsche by Martin Heidegger*, vol. 2, op. cit., 408 f.: “– Weißt du nicht? In jeder Handlung, die du tust, ist alles Geschehens Geschichte wiederholt und abgekürzt”.

the one who ascends with the “greatest burden”<sup>12</sup>. Zarathustra looks to the doorway in which *Augenblick* is inscribed and he presents the riddle to the dwarf by asking whether the two lines contradict each other eternally. Zarathustra tries to understand the significance of a doorway, which leads, on the one hand, into the eternity of the past and, on the other, into the eternity of the future. Past and future come together at the doorway itself, which is titled *Augenblick*. It is not simply a door but a doorway (*Torweg*), which suggests a point of entry into something. *Augenblick* is above the two avenues themselves and it is the flux of time running to the no-longer-now of the past and the not-yet of the future. When asked by Zarathustra if he believes that the two avenues, past and future, contradict each other eternally, the dwarf murmurs contemptuously that ‘everything straight deceives. All truth is curved; time itself is a circle’<sup>13</sup>. The dwarf’s solution to the riddle is that time circles in on itself. The two avenues meet in eternity. For the dwarf, the overcoming of contradiction – speaking-against – is the sameness of everything.

“To think eternity demands: to think the *Augenblick*, i.e., to set oneself in the *Augenblick* of being oneself (*Selbstseins*). *The Eternal Return of the Same only gets thought when it gets thought in a nihilistic way and in an Augenblick-like way*. In such thinking, however, the

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<sup>12</sup> Cf. F. Nietzsche, *Die fröhliche Wissenschaft*, n. 341, Kritische Gesamtausgabe, hersg. von G. Colli, M. Montinari, Fünfte Abteilung, Zweiter Band, Walter de Gruyter, Berlin 1973, 251: “Die Frage bei allem und Jedem »willst du dies noch ein Mal 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?” (“The question posed to each thing you do, ‘Do you will this once more and countless times more?’ would weigh upon your actions as the greatest burden! Or how beneficent would you have to become toward yourself and toward life to demand nothing than this eternal sanction and seal?”) The English translation is David Farrel Krell’s. Cf. M. Heidegger, *Nietzsche II: The Eternal Recurrence of the same*, Harper & Row, San Francisco 1984, 19.

<sup>13</sup> Cf. M. Heidegger, *Die ewige Wiederkehr des Gleichen (Nietzsche, Gesamtausgabe 6.1)*, 294: “Alles Gerade lügt (...) Alle Wahrheit ist krumm, die Zeit selber ist ein Kreis”.



thinker moves himself back into the ring of the eternal return of the same, but so that he co-achieves and co-decides that ring<sup>14</sup>.

## 2. THE FIRST ANALOGY OF *AUGENBLICK*: WIDER-KEHR/WIDER-KUNFT

It is on the basis of the working out of time of the *Augenblick* that Zarathustra formulates a second question to the dwarf: “If everything has already been there, what do you make of this moment, dwarf? Must not this gateway too already have been there, and if all things are knotted tight, so that the moment also pull itself along behind and if the moment also moves down the lane ahead, must not all things strike out along the avenue once again? The patient spider, the moonlight, I and you in the gateway – must we not recur eternally?”<sup>15</sup>

This question of Zarathustra is at the absolute intersection of what is given to be thought in the *Augenblick* and how the turning is thought out or explicated from the moment. What is at issue here is how Zara-

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<sup>14</sup> Cf. M. Heidegger, *Nietzsche I, Gesamtausgabe* 61, 401: “Die Ewigkeit denken, verlangt: den Augenblick denken, d. h. sichversetzen in den Augenblick des Selbstseins. *Die Ewige Wiederkehr des Gleichen wird nur gedacht, wenn sie nihilistisch und augenblicklich gedacht wird.* In solchem Denken aber rückt der Denkende selbst in den Ring der ewigen Wiederkehr ein, jedoch so, daß er den Ring miterringt und mitentscheidet”. The idea that the *Augenblick* – as a self-circling temporality – is the only experience of eternity possible for finite human beings stems from Heidegger’s attempt to interpret in existential-ontological terms the New Testament’s eschatological pronouncements, especially concerning the possibility of everlasting life. As part of the generation following Dilthey and Nietzsche, and as a theology student exposed to the view of liberal theologians of the era, Heidegger was influenced by the attitude that the belief in an afterlife and in the Second Coming (παρουσία) as an actual historical event were remnants of an other-worldliness whose time had passed.

<sup>15</sup> Cf. F. Nietzsche, *Also Sprach Zarathustra*, Vom Gesicht und Räthsel – 2: “Siehe, sprach ich weiter, diesen Augenblick! Von diesem Thorwege Augenblick läuft eine lange ewige Gasse rückwärts hinter uns liegt eine Ewigkeit. 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? Und diese langsame Spinne, die im Mondscheine kriecht, und dieser Mondschein selber, und ich und du im Thorwege, zusammen flüsternd, von ewigen Dingen flüsternd – müssen wir nicht Alle schon dagewesen sein?”

thustra comes to what is *there* to be known as the *Augenblick* and conflate everything to ask what lies under the return, a turning back from the very world represented by the dwarf. That which Zarathustra might formally have understood as *eine Sache*, an object, which occurs for him in a process – that the dwarf personifies – now comes to him in an *Augenblick*. How does this world that I am given by the directedness of a glance in which I am turned when the moment constitutes its ordering to me to the whole of time – whether, with Zarathustra, I am turned out to the future, or whether, with the dwarf, I am produced and reproduced by the past?<sup>16</sup>

It is a puzzle in itself why throughout the Nietzsche lectures there is a constant oscillation between describing Nietzsche's Eternal Return as either *Widerkehr des Gleichen* or *Widerkunft des Gleichen*. Here it becomes clear that the slight instability of *Widerkehr* and *Widerkunft* is the temporal horizon of *die Kehre* at work – *the Kehre is working through how something comes to me and is understood – the Augenblick*. Either I am turned toward the future, *toward* the moment of decision *through* an *Augenblick* towards which I turn and turn *into* myself, I am called into myself: I become the being for whom its being becomes a concern for itself – *Dasein*. Or I remain in the past determined *by* the past, and so out *of* the past so that even my future is determined out of what has passed and gone by.

This instability is never explained thematically by Heidegger but is, however, brought to the fore in the very elaboration of Nietzsche's riddle and through the originary experience of time disclosed in the *Augenblick*. This instability is temporal, ordered to what is to come, *künftig*, or what turns back on itself, *widerkehrt*. The *Wiederkehr* is

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<sup>16</sup> M. Heidegger, *Nietzsche I, Gesamtausgabe* 61, 277: “Wie sollen sie dies, wo doch alles hinter allem nur herläuft, wie ja die Zeit selbst es zeigt, bei der das noch-nicht-Jetzt zum jetzt wird und jetzt auch schon ein nicht-mehr-Jetzt ist und dies im ständigen Und-so-weiter? (Bow how is it possible, when each thing moves along behind its predecessors, as is manifest with time itself? For in time the not-yet-now becomes the now, and forthwith becomes a no-longer-now, this as a perpetual and-so-on”. Krell's translation, cf. *The Eternal Recurrence of the Same in Nietzsche by Martin Heidegger*, vol. 2., op. cit., 56.)

a *Wider-Kehr*, a turn against, as the reversal of Plato that completes and turns back on itself and so becomes *ewig* forever, and a circle, a ring.

“As *Augenblick*, we determine that time in which future and past meet head-on, in which they – in a decisive manner – get empowered and executed by man himself, since man stands in the place of this hitting together, indeed *is* this place himself. The temporality of the time of eternity, which is demanded to be thought in the eternal return of the same, is the temporality in which above all – and so far as we know – man stands alone, since he – resolved to the future, empowering what has been – shapes and bears the present”<sup>17</sup>.

With these preliminary remarks in mind it will now be possible to make sense of the second solution to the riddle of the *Augenblick*.

Heidegger informs us of the terrifying image, which depicts a shepherd choking on the snake in his mouth. Zarathustra thus calls to the shepherd to bite off the head of the snake. The shepherd must bite off the head of the snake in an *Augenblick* in order to release it from its mouth. Zarathustra is the shepherd or the doorway itself; *he* alone is the solution to the riddle. He also therefore experiences *from within* the *Augenblick*, the demand of the moment, the place where the moment eventuates (*ereignet*). To be on the threshold, in the *Augenblick*, is to face what lies on the two sides of the threshold: everything matters, all is alike; and nothing has meaning, all is alike. “This means: inserting oneself in the temporality of acting for oneself and deciding by looking ahead (*Vor-blick*) into what is coming to me and behind into (*Rück-blick*) what is given as an endowment” which would be the originary experience of time<sup>18</sup>.

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<sup>17</sup> Cf. M. Heidegger, *Nietzsche I, Gesamtausgabe* 61, 318–319: “Als »Augenblick« bestimmen wir jene Zeit, in der Zukunft und Vergangenheit sich vor den Kopf stoßen, in der sie entscheidungsmäßig vom Menschen selbst bewältigt und vollzogen werden, indem der Mensch in der Stelle dieses Zusammenstoßes steht, ja sie selbst *ist*. Die Zeitlichkeit der Zeit *der* Ewigkeit, die in der ewigen Wiederkunft des Gleichen zu denken verlangt wird, ist die Zeitlichkeit, in der vor allem und, so weit wir wissen, allein der Mensch steht, indem er, dem Künftigen ent-schlossen, das Gewesen bewahrend, das Gegenwartige gestaltet und erträgt”.

<sup>18</sup> M. Heidegger, *Die ewige Wiederkehr des Gleichen (Nietzsche, Gesamtausgabe* 6.1, 446): “Dies besagt: das Sichversetzen in die Zeitlichkeit des Selsbhandelns und

### 3. THE SECOND ANALOGY OF *AUGENBLICK*: THE SAYINGS OF THE TURN (*KEHRE*)

“That which is to come is precisely a matter for decision, since the ring is not closed in some remote infinity but possesses its unbroken closure in the moment, as the centre of striving; what returns – if it is to return – is decided by the moment and by the force with which the moment can cope with whatever in it is repelled by such striving. (...) the moment is not the fleeting now, not an instant of time whizzing by a spectator, but the collision of future and past. Here the moment comes to itself. It determines how everything recurs”<sup>19</sup>.

At one point in his lecture, Heidegger explains to his students what the idea of *Augenblick* can mean for them, especially since he has been talking about the rarity of the *Augenblick* as an event of world-historical significance. Here, he tries, as he did in *Sein und Zeit*, to show the importance of being authentic in terms of the *Augenblick*. He notes that human being cannot look back to the eternal past to discover what has been for him, but he may be able to discover what *was* by seeing what *will be*.

“What then already was, and what will come back when it comes back? Answer: that which will be in the nearest *Augenblick*. If in cowardice and ignorance you let *Dasein* slip away with all its consequences, then this will come back, and it will be that which already was. And if you, from the closest *Augenblick* and thus from every one, form a highest one and from it take hold of and take note of its results, than

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Entscheidens aus dem Vorblick in das Aufegegebene und im Rückblick auf das Mitgegebene”.

<sup>19</sup>M. Heidegger, *Die ewige Wiederkehr des Gleichen* (Nietzsche, *Gesamtausgabe* 6.1, 312): “Was künftig wird, ist gerade Sache der Entscheidung, der Ring schließt sich nicht irgendwo im Unendlichen, sondern der Ring hat seinen ungebrochenen Zusammenschluß im Augenblick als der Mitte des Widerstreits; was wiederkehrt – wenn es wiederkehrt – darüber entscheiden der Augenblick und die Kraft der Bewältigung dessen, was in ihm an Widerstrebendem sich stöß. (...) der Augenblick nicht das flüchtige jetzt ist, nicht der für einen Zuschauer nur vorbeihuschende Moment, sondern der Zusammenstoß von Zukunft und Vergangenheit. In ihm kommt der Augenblick zu sich selbst. Er bestimmt, wie alles wiederkehrt”.

this *Augenblick* will come again, and that will have been what already was: ‘Eternity holds’. But this will be decided in your *Augenblicken* and only there decided, and from that which you *will* and can will from yourself”<sup>20</sup>.

What Heidegger describes to his students in this passage is the analogy of *Augenblick* with *Ereignis* as the event of a delivering over of man and being one to another to its eternity. In this passage, Heidegger speaks of the sayings of the turning involved in the *Augenblick* – an eternity that ‘holds’ (*Es gilt*) and therefore delivers in a *Kehre*, in the saying of its taking place. The time of the *Augenblick* is the time of two epochs in their standing against each other – the epoch of beings as pure presence and the epoch of the presencing of being (the two opposed possible futures named in the lecture *Vom Wesen der Wahrheit*) and the moment of vision, the flash as the conditioning possibility of eventuation (*Ereignis*) of *Dasein* in its turning.

One epoch turns out of the other, as the most extreme possibility of it, in a moment of vision. *Augenblick* speaks of a *Kehre*, an oscillation, a switching between being turned toward the (originary) future – the mystery or the passing away of meaning (a future dominated by the past), a turning of *Dasein* this way and that, which is *Dasein*’s factual concretion, being in the world. In other words *die Kehre* does not name a single turn but the *Wi[e]der-kehre*, a turn, the vibration of coming to the self and losing the self, of owning and disowning that is the character of knowing beings and at the same time disclosing a worlded self, an ‘I’. This ‘I’ belongs either to a genuine, open future, or is driven to

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<sup>20</sup> M. Heidegger, *Nietzsche I, Gesamtausgabe* 61: “Was war denn schon, und was wird wiederkomen, wenn es wiederkommt? Antwort: das, was in nächsten Augenblick sein wird. Wenn du das Dasein in die Feigheit und in die Unwissenheit abgleiten lässtest mit all ihren Folgen, so wird diese wiederkommen, und sie wird jenes sein, was schon war. Und wenn du aus dem nächsten Augenblick und so aus jedem einem höchsten gestaltest und daraus die Folgen verzeichnest und festhältst, so wird dieser Augenblick wiederkommen und das gewesen sein, was schon war: »Es gilt die Ewigkeit«. Aber diese wird in deinem *Augenblicken* und nur da entschieden und aus dem, was du selbst vom Seienden hältst und wie du dich in ihm hältst – aus dem, was du von dir selbst willst und wollen kannst”.

replicate the past in the future, which is an anxious resistance of the demands of the future.

*Dasein* oscillates in reaching forward to know and returning to itself in its knowing. Part of the structure of this oscillating is the decay of the meaning of the known<sup>21</sup>. For this reason, there is never only one step into a single moment, but rather the step is repeated and repeated in *Dasein*'s constant self-disclosure of its future for itself. Without this self-disclosure, this ever-renewing return to openness, what *Dasein* has in knowing ossifies and decays: it passes away and remains in its traces only as objects and shards of ruined meaning. Hence the question Heidegger awakens in his students – ‘how do I properly enter the circle?’ – is also just the question raised by the riddle of the doorway put to the dwarf by Zarathustra. The dwarf entered the circle from a distance. Zarathustra enters the circle from the moment. It is here in the nearest *Augenblick* of everything that Zarathustra places into question his speaking itself. Zarathustra, in speaking to himself as speaking to his soul, can never speak *privately* to himself, for this speaking is received, open to everyone and yet no one has yet attained his saying.

Heidegger, in dialogue with Nietzsche, heeds and hears the speaking of Zarathustra and so he himself is able to speak of what Nietzsche and Zarathustra have to say. For Heidegger, therefore, Zarathustra is nei-

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<sup>21</sup> We notice first that any verb ‘to know’ in Greek is strictly connected to the on-looking seeing at stake in every moment of vision, *Augenblick*. Instead of νοεῖν or φρονεῖν we find the perfect (that is past) infinitive εἰδέναι: ‘to have seen’. It is true that this word is often translated as present infinitive, ‘to know’. It is translated as ‘to know’ because it contains a reference to what is (presently) known only because it conforms to what is *already* seen (the past sense of the perfect tense of the verb), in other words we know something because we recognize it (we already knew what to look for in seeing what we now see). Here it can be demonstrated how the *Augenblick*, as a moment of vision, connects before our very eyes each single glance of the eye to what we have-seen-already, and so what we are ready to look for (looking by knowing what to look for already, in advance), with the present knowing. We know it because we already seen it. In Greek this infinitive εἰδέναι has no present indicative form, no form for ‘I am (now) seeing’. The infinitive always employed in the present tense to indicate seeing is ὁράν, a verb which always has a specific connection not with the seeing of the ‘mind’ νοεῖν and so knowing by working out (thinking), but the seeing of the eyes, and so looking, on-looking, looking-out-for.

ther an imaginary figure nor the analytic of *Dasein*, but a retro-jection, *the very own analogy of the form of the return of the transcendence of Dasein* in an epochal moment, the moment of nihilism. Zarathustra is understood through the analogy of the eventuation of *die Kehre* in every moment of vision, as it were, he is the being of beings in reverse, not human *Dasein* in its speaking to being, but being in its speaking to *Dasein*, nothing human but something which has the character of returning. It is then possible to see that what is at issue here is the proximity of the return of every *Augenblick*. This experience comes about as an event of need and necessity in every *Dasein*. The word necessity in German is *Notwendigkeit*, a turn-toward-and-into-a-need, from *die Not*, ‘need’, and the verb *wenden*, ‘to turn’ or ‘to wend’<sup>22</sup>. Heidegger is consciously turning Nietzsche over on himself when he places the understanding of the time (*Zeit*), eternity (*Ewigkeit*) and the moment (*Augenblick*) together: “The eternal is not the everlasting, but rather that which can withdraw into the moment (*Augenblick*), in order once again to return. That which can return again (*wiederkehren*), not as the same (*Gleiche*), but as what transforms from the new, the one-only, being (*Seyn*), so that in this manifestness it is not at first recognised as the self-same (*Selbe*)”<sup>23</sup>.

The shift from the eternal as what returns again (but not as the same) clearly recalls and distracts Nietzsche’s Eternal Return of the Same (*ewige Wiederkehr des Gleichen*), so that the shift from the same to the self is the constant transformation of the self. As we approach the end, it is as well to take into account the implications of this shift of the *Kehre* in the *Augenblick*. Heidegger is saying that the analogy

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<sup>22</sup> Heidegger refers that it is that event in the history of Western humanity that Nietzsche designates with the name nihilism. Nihilism is therefore to be understood as the event (*Ereignis*) which brings before me a basic experience that there are beings as whole and it brings it in the character of a nihilation.

<sup>23</sup> Cf. M. Heidegger, *Beiträge zur Philosophie, Gesamtausgabe* 65, 371: “Zeit – Ewigkeit – Augenblick. Das Ewige ist nicht das Fort-währende, sondern jenes, was im Augenblick sich entziehen kann, um erstmals wiederzukehren. Was wiederkehren kann, nicht als das *Gleiche*, sondern als das aufs neue Verwandlende, Eine-Einzige, das Seyn, so daß es in dieser Offenbarkeit zunächst nicht als das Selbe erkannt wird!”

of the return with the same is to be worked out in terms of the 'self'. Implied in this shift is the working out of the *Augenblick* in terms of original temporality. Heidegger knows that the 'self' is the being above all which knows and experiences change and which therefore is *as* temporalizing, but not as a drive. Because not as a drive, the self is not as the driven will into the future, but as what, undergoing change as that which is ever-renewed in the moment (*Augenblick*) whereby whatever renews emerges from being itself, discovers itself without at first recognizing itself. The self is not the self-same and yet persists as the self. *This* manner of the temporalizing being of being human is the genuinely 'futural' being of man *on which the ever-sameness of the restriction to the past is based*. It is for this reason that Heidegger employs the archaism *Seyn* as opposed to *Sein*, as the explicit analogy for the name of being implicitly folded and worked out in the transition of Nietzsche's *Wiederkehren des Gleichen* to an *Augenblick des Kehren*. What is at issue here is originary being, the genuine ground, the source, of the being of being-human, which at the same time is an *Ab-grund*, a without ground, an abyss. It is this abyss because it is genuinely not oriented *toward* the future as the drive into it, but as what issues forth from *out of* the future. The future is what provides and lays out the 'there', the *Da*, of being the "there", *Da-Sein*: the moment of vision of being.

The *Augenblick* configures the project of thinking beings from being when on the other hand it is beings that are being thought in retrospective from being. This project is temporal and speaks of the nothing and concealment as the transfiguration from inauthentic time to authentic time. Here the *nothing* is without a reason, so that *the* nothing can at last be spoken of again, beyond every attempt to rationalise it, to calculate or destroy it: this is at one and the same time the triumph of absolute nihilism as Nietzsche described it, and a return to the proper sense of *the* nothing. Perhaps one of Heidegger's most shocking equations, in destroying the equation of God and being – or rather in confirming Nietzsche's destruction of the identity of God and being, is the equation of being and the nothing. Heidegger says, outrageously



(quoting a line of Hegel) “pure being and pure nothing are the same”<sup>24</sup>. In the epoch of nihilism, the nothing comes to the fore, as Nietzsche argues. But it does not come to the fore in the way that Nietzsche suggests: Heidegger says that not only in nihilism can being itself not be thought, and so does being disappear and vanish as a vapor, but also that Heidegger concludes: “perhaps the essence of nihilism lies in this: that it consists in not taking seriously the question of the nothing”<sup>25</sup> In nihilism the nothing comes to the fore. But nihilism only annihilates, as a ‘no-saying’, and as the rage of power. The “essence of the nothing is: the nihilating (...) the nothing itself nothings”<sup>26</sup> *for itself*, as that which makes the concealed *able to appear for itself* all over again. The nothing *claims* us, above all in the moods of dread and *Angst*,<sup>27</sup> which is not a psychological state, an *interiority* to the subject, but a *Vorkommnis*,<sup>28</sup> a coming-forth, above all, of being itself. Being *is* (Heidegger’s verb is *west*, ‘essences’ from out of the concealed *into* unconcealment). The nothing is therefore not a mere absence, or the annihilation of what *is*, but rather (the other way round) what is concealed from mortals in their existence, either individually, or in regions of existence, or in existence as a whole, and from out of which all that *is* springs forth. Concealment and *the* nothing are now to be understood ontologically, from the ‘there’ of the being of being human, and not metaphysically, from a ‘universal perspective’ and total vantage point of either reason, or divinity. The concealed and the nothing, as the before and after to

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<sup>24</sup> M. Heidegger, *Was ist Metaphysik?*, in: *Wegmarken, Gesamtausgabe*, vol. 9, Klostermann, Frankfurt 1996 (1967), 120: “Das reine Sein und das reine Nichts ist also dasselbe”.

<sup>25</sup> M. Heidegger, *Der europäische Nihilismus*, in: *Nietzsche II, Gesamtausgabe*, vol. 6.2, Klostermann, Frankfurt 1997 (1961), 43 (M. Heidegger, *Nietzsche: Der europäische Nihilismus, Gesamtausgabe*, vol. 48, Klostermann, Frankfurt 1986, 43: “Vielleicht liegt das Wesen des Nihilismus darin, daß man *nicht* ernst macht mit der Frage nach dem Nichts”).

<sup>26</sup> M. Heidegger, *Was ist Metaphysik*, Max Niemeyer Verlag, Tübingen 1953, 114: “Das Wesen des Nichts: die Nichtung (...). Das Nichts selbst nichtet“.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*, 113: “Das Nichts begegnet in der Angst” (“The nothing regions in *Angst*”).

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*, 110.

mortals, therefore both reveal finitude to whatever is *in* existence and disclose the meaning of time, as the future and the past, that collide in that single moment of vision that reveals being in the world in a world of being: existence. In existence, mortals look out to the future and either forget, or remember, the past. The Greek word for concealment is *lethe*, and the Greek word for truth is *ἀλήθεια*. The ‘a’ of *ἀλήθεια* is a privative, so that truth is ‘that which is drawn out from concealment’, *un-concealment*. Existence, as what is extant and stands out for mortals is the true, as what is surrounded by, and drawn out from, the concealed. Every *Augenblick* happens in another analogical *Augenblick*, as it were, opening up and closing off possibilities of being for the whole world as such and keeping the readiness of expectation for every being. Living on the edge, willing that life returns again and again just as it is so that I overcome the meaninglessness of empty serial time and I align myself with my fate discloses the freedom and the courage to fight the battle against the world not to destroy the world but to rescue the possibilities of the world to their oblivion the hero. Nietzsche’s idea of a new life does not offer guidance in practical ways of living but it is a new way to stand in the midst of being. No one will arrive at this new life if he tries merely to conform to a program deduced from an interpretation of Nietzsche’s writings. Just as Christ warned that salvation was possible only through the experience of faith, not through obedience to laws, so too Nietzsche says that the new life is possible only for those who exist in the *Augenblick*.

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