Gestell, Ereignis, and the Eternal Return
(Chapter 9 of Draft MS: *The Logic of Being: Heidegger, Truth, and Time*)

Over the last several chapters, I have argued for an underlying phenomenon of *undecidability* ontologically characteristic of the structures of sense and given time and indicated through the actual hermeneutics of these factical phenomena.   In indicating these features, the metaformal hermeneutic demonstratively articulates the problematic of thinking and being as it stands under the condition of time, and thereby encounters the problem of its givenness in experience and thought. This is the problem that presented itself to Plato as among the deepest which a dialectical understanding of *what truly is* would have to confront, and to which the late Plato responded with the negative suggestion of an underlying structure of irreducible temporal paradox or the positive one of an ultimate structural correspondence between temporal thought and atemporal being in the logical *koinonia* made possible by the dynamic, logically regulated mixing of forms. It thereby conditions the way in which the history of "metaphysics" subsequently unfolds as determined by the structure of *logic* thought as common to the jointly *ontological* and *theological* founding of the meaning of beings in their being. This history, as I shall argue here, reaches a certain kind of completion with the development of modern forms of mathematical logic and the metaformally indicated problems of totality and reflexivity that are indicated in it, whereby it also points to the specific structural conditions for its possible overcoming.

As we have seen, this overcoming is already suggested, specifically, as a consequence of Frege's radical critique of subjectivist representationalism, which leads him to propose a virtual structure of "objective" sense, inherent in language as such as its real structure without being "actual" in the sense of effective.[1] And it is confirmed subsequently in the metaformal results, from Russell's paradox to Gödel's theorems in their extended implications, that point to the inherence of the real at the problematic point of the impasse of formal symbolizations, systems, and procedures.[2]

But it is the contemporary actuality and ubiquity of *information technology*, which is itself the direct technological yield of early twentieth-century logical/symbolic formalism, which points most directly to the conditions of this overcoming in the contemporary condition itself. As I argue here, in particular, with the radical and pervasive development of information and computational technology characteristic of our time, the history begun with the Eleatic Visitor's identification of the *dunamis* of the logical *koinonia* as the psychological/logical structure ultimately responsible for the correspondence of thought and being also reaches an inherent completion. For with this development, the history of the *logical dunamis* is completed in the complete *realization* of "logical" structure as the ubiquity of the total claim of computation and computability and the total shaping of practices, economies, and ways of life in its form. Here, the logical *dunamis* is thus, finally, no longer grasped as the principle of an individual-psychological mediation, in the *psuche* of the individual subject of judgment or knowledge, between beings in themselves and the forms in which they give themselves to be thought. Instead, with the

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[1] See chapter 1, above.
[2] See chapter 5, above.

totalization of 'instrumental' and computational calculability, it is immediately and fully *actualized* as the full reality of effectively organized "social" practices, institutions, and forms of life.   In this actuality of 'logical form' as realized technology and technological practice, what was formerly the neutral or abstract 'third term' between being and thinking thus becomes directly *realized* and actually "effective" as the unified form of all comprehensible practice, communication, and action.   With this, as well, what was previously known as the notional or abstract "force" of reason is instrumentalized, formalized, and 'brought *into* effect' as the total and unified reality in which all beings and their thought are simultaneously lodged.   This is why, as Heidegger himself often suggested, the 'culmination' of metaphysics takes the form of the univocal assumption of completely effective actuality, the ubiquitous regime of "reality" ("Wirklichkeit") for which there is no longer any reserve of *dunamis* within which thoughtful reflection can ultimately shelter, but only the full and direct accomplishment of effective force. Here, the total normative or regulative force of the traditional law of non-contradiction is directly manifest as the assumption of the unlimited possibility of the unproblematic continuation of effective "technological" practices and procedures *in infinitum*. The assumption of effectiveness is itself here total, since no problem is seen as invulnerable to the forms of technological and instrumental resolution these practice and procedures allow, or as manifesting the conditions under which they must necessarily confront their *own* problematic basis. But the significant consequence of this is, as I shall argue, is that 'Being itself' can then 'show up' only, and exactly, at the point of the posed problem of decidable consistency, as a structurally necessary *in*effectivity, whereby it already thus indicates the specific conditions for an overcoming of the whole regime of metaphysics that here drives to completion.

This drive to completion is visible in the typical character of *totality* that structures the most distinctive and ubiquitous problems of the contemporary "global" situation, whether these are determined in the registers of the political, the 'economic,' the sociological, the ethical or the ecological. They are problems about the constitution of the whole, negotiations of the boundaries of what is seen as all-inclusive, and border questions at the limits of the logic of total systems that claim and enforce global comprehensiveness. They are also, just as much, characterized by the presumed effectiveness and force of what is (ambiguously enough) called "technology," which I here understand in a sense that preserves the link of the term with the Greek *techne* as well as with the later-developed sense of "technique" or procedure. In the light of these problems and in view of the situational factors that determine them, the original question of the relationship of thought and being also takes on a distinctive shape, conditioned as much by the radical discoveries of meta-formal insight that make the structure of the infinite available to mathematical thought, in our time, as by the specific technologies and material practices of computation and "information" that follow from these discoveries.

Heidegger's own conception of a contemporary "culmination" of metaphysics, marked in the technological "exhaustion" of the possibilities of thinking first instituted at the Greek beginning, is undoubtedly indispensable here. Nevertheless, the deepening of the ontological problematic on meta-formal grounds that is also here suggested already suffices to articulate the significance of ontological questioning for the problems of the contemporary, and of what is "beyond" it, "to come," in a different direction than any indicated by Heidegger himself. Here, in particular, what is at issue with respect to the determined "history of metaphysics" is no longer the task of a deconstructive "retrieval" of what is

thought at its origin and progressively concealed within it or that of safeguarding, during or after the period of its totality or its exhaustion, what within it is, as ultimately determining, anyway purported to be its greatest exigency. It is, rather, just a question of understanding how this relatively determined history can be seen to communicate formally, at a certain point, with its *own* broader structural and temporal conditions in the underlying problems to which it points, and thereby how, with its ontologically-formally determined closure, it also and in the same moment points to a broader "outside".[3] In fact, the suggestion of such a broader conditioning of the relatively determined "metaphysics of presence" is already essentially made as soon as the structure of the formal problematics of time and sense that we have pursued are indicated. These problematics themselves are configurations to which the thinking of "being as presence" must itself be originally responsive, and to which this thinking again opens up at the determined point of the closure or exhaustion of its determining rubrics. It is no accident from this perspective that, as I have argued, they also appear to indicate original formal-ontological problems that plausibly underlie the structure of "natural" time just as much as they do "historical" time, and so thereby articulate the formal and metaformal conditions ontologically characteristic of *thinkable* time, however further determined, and as such.

I

In the 1953 lecture "The Question Concerning Technology" and elsewhere, Heidegger characterizes the contemporary age as determined by the predominance of what he describes as the "essence" of technology: *Gestell* or enframing. This essence is not, according to Heidegger, itself any technological thing; nor is it determined or determinable as an outcome simply of human activity.[4] Unlike the various specific technological instruments and systems, we cannot understand the claim of modern technology itself as responsive to antecedently given human needs or desires.[5] Rather, understanding technology in its essence requires that we understand how it imposes upon *us*, "challenging" [*herausgeforden*] us to its characteristic kinds of activity and production.[6] Its determination of the contemporary condition results in a pre-determining of all beings as resources and the "setting-in-order" of all that is called "actual" [was man das Wirkliche nennt] as "standing-reserve" [*Bestand*] for production, manipulation, and exploitation.[7]

In a closely related sense, the characteristic and dominant configuration of contemporary thought and practice is described, in a number of texts of the 1930s and 1940s, as a "machination" [*Machenschaft*] which (circularly) aims to order all beings with a view only to their ever-greater orderability and thereby

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[3] Cf. Jacques Derrida in *différance* (Derrida 1968, p. 22): "Perhaps we must attempt to think this unheard-of thought, this silent tracing: that the history of Being, whose thought engages the Greco-Western *logos* such as it is produced via the ontological difference, is but an epoch of the *diapherein*. "
[4] GA 7, pp. 9-10.
[5] GA 7, p. 10.
[6] GA 7, p. 21.
[7] GA 7, p. 21.

tends toward the assumption of their universal representability and calculability.[8] Heidegger understands the contemporary dominance of *Gestell* or (earlier) *Machenschaft* as itself the expression of the necessarily *final* epochal determination of the being of entities within the series of configurations that make up the history of metaphysics as a whole. With this dominance, the "possibilities" of metaphysics are in a certain way completed or exhausted; the exhaustion takes the form, in particular, of the completion of the progressive withdrawal of Being itself from thinkability that has characterized the development of metaphysics since its inception.

Gestell is thus the historically and structurally determined form of the culmination of a history of ever-greater obscurity and forgetting, whereby all the original possibilities of metaphysics are finally used up and the withdrawal of Being and truth is thought as complete. It is therefore striking that at various places in his late work, Heidegger gestures toward an enigmatic relationship, indicated as to be "looked into" or "looked forward to" in the further development of ontological thought or the thought that comes after it, but not significantly developed, between *Gestell* and *Ereignis* itself. One formulation of this is given in the Le Thor seminar of 1969:

> An excellent way of approaching *Ereignis* would be to look into the essence of enframing [*bis in das Wesen des Ge-stells zu blicken*] insofar as it is a passage from metaphysics to another thinking …for enframing is essentially ambiguous….Enframing is, as it were, the photographic negative of enowning.[9]

 Or, in a partially similar formulation from "The Principle of Identity" (1957):

> Thus looking toward the present [*der Gegenwart entgegenblickend*], beyond the situation of man, thinking catches sight of [*erblickt*] the constellation of Being and man in terms of what joins the two to each other [*was beide einander eignet*], from out of the event [*aus dem Er-eignis*].

> Assuming that the possibility awaited us [*die Möglichkeit warte uns entgegen*] that the frame [*Ge-stell*] – the mutual challenge of man and Being in the calculation of what is calculable – were to award itself to us as the event [*Ereignis*] which first surrenders man and Being to their own [*das Mensch und Sein erst in ihr Eigentliches enteignet*]; then a path would be open for man to experience beings in a more originary way – the totality [*das Ganze*] of the modern technological world, nature and history, and above all their Being.[10]

With these formulations, Heidegger seems also to indicate a curious relationship of the *totality* of the history of metaphysics – thought as its "culmination", or the "exhaustion" of its possibilities in the contemporary dominance of *Gestell* -- with something outside or beyond it that also determines it. This

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[8] The phenomenon of "Machenschaft" and the ubiquity of its determining force is centrally discussed, for example, in the *Beiträge* [GA 65] and the Nietzsche lectures of summer, 1939 [GA 6, vol. 1] (especially the two lectures on "The Eternal Recurrence of the Same and the Will to Power" which were written for the course but never delivered).

[9] GA 15, p. 366.

[10] GA 11, pp. 48-49 (translation slightly altered).

is *Ereignis*, which grants or ontologically conditions each of the determinate configurations of metaphysics and the whole "epoch" of presence itself. The relationship suggested here between the final of these configurations and this opening is neither extant nor assured; it is, rather, to be glimpsed, anticipated or prepared, recommended as a *possible* path for thought to come, its own provenance dependent ultimately on the granting that *Ereignis may* allow. Nevertheless, in that *Ereignis* is thought, from the *Beitraege zur Philosophie* to the end of Heidegger's career, as the very event of the happening of an "other" to the metaphysics of presence or the present itself, and thus (in other words) the event that determines the possibility of a *future* in general, these are determinate indications of the actual form of a thinkable relationship between all that is enclosed in this history and what insists beyond it as its condition and exterior.

The problem of this relationship is the problem of the "present" time of technology in relation to the time that, surrounding and determining it, also can (Heidegger suggests) perhaps be indicated on the basis of an ontological thinking of its underlying formal essence. This thinking would itself necessarily be, in one way, the repetition of a thinking of time or of the possibility of a future that is "determined" by the essence of technology – and *in particular* is determined through and at the limits of calculation and calculability and the "configuration" or "constellation" in which it relationally places man and Being. It is significant that in indicating the possible relationship between Gestell and Ereignis Heidegger himself uses, in the first quotation, a *technological* metaphor of picturing: that of the negative *photographic* image.   In the second formulation, along similar lines, what is indicative of the relation, what gives it to be seen, is specifically determined by "calculation" and what is "calculable" and the particular relationship that exists between them. What is invoked with both metaphors or figures is, rather than their simple mutual exteriority, a deep mutual imbrication of "technological" thinking or "calculative" thought to the thought of Being as such, whereby the more or less determined forms of technology indicate or become, by means of a sudden reversal whose possibility is nevertheless deeply programmed in their essence, the thinking of or from Ereignis itself.

With this, Heidegger points to the forms in which our "technological" present will possibly or could conceivably communicate with the "beyond" to metaphysics that thereby takes on the sense of a possible future of it, or of a future, in general, beyond the forms of pre-determination that the metaphysically determined ontotheological thought of being will always have enforced. And indeed it would probably not go too far to say that the forms in which a "future" can today be envisaged, the forms in which our age knows itself in relation to what it thinks as its possible "beyond," are so many figures of this very relationship between a technologically determined thinking of time and the "event", envisioned in alternate forms of anxiety and celebration as the technologically inevitable moment of global catastrophe or as the equally determined "singularity" in which technological thinking finally overcomes itself and transforms itself, no longer needing the assistance of the organic "human" powers of thought, into something unforeseeable by means of them.[11]   According to Heidegger, however, the possibility of the thinking that goes to and from the event of the future to come is not to be seen except from within a thinking of the *history* of what, first giving us to think time at all, also withdraws progressively within this history.   This withdrawal, familiarly, will have marked and programmed the

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[11] For a helpful recent analysis of the idea of the singularity, see Chalmers (2010).

history of metaphysics, and it is only with the *completion* of its itinerary that its *happening* can truly or actually appear.

How are thought and being related at the beginning of this history, and at its end? And to what kind of determination of time do they thereby point? In the *Beiträge* (1936-38), Heidegger gives another formulation of the peculiar relationship between the essence of technology and the event of Being, here thought as its truth:

> Machination as the essential occurrence [Wesung] of beingness [Seiendheit] gives a first hint [gibt einen ersten Wink] of the truth of Beyng itself. We know little enough of machination, although it dominates the being-history [Seinsgeschichte] of the previous Western philosophy, from Plato to Nietzsche.[12]

Machination is here thought, not only as the latest and final configuration of the metaphysical thinking of being as "beingness" (Seiendheit), but as in fact "dominating" (durchherrscht) this history in its entirety. In thinking this domination as an "essential" occurrence, it is possible to gain a first glimpse or hint of the truth of Beyng itself – that is, when it is thought in itself outside just this determination as the "beingness" of beings.

In particular, the futural thinking toward or from *Ereignis* here takes the form of a grasping of the inner connection of what is, for Heidegger, deeply and decisively linked with machination – the dominance of "lived-experience" [Erlebnis] which develops an anthropologistic or subjectivist principle of the unified experienceability of all things, events, and phenomena. This connection is itself the indication of a particular non-simultaneity, one which opens and closes the history of metaphysics:

> If machination and lived-experience are named together, that indicates an essential belonging of the two to each other but at the same moment [zugleich] conceals an equally essential [gleichwesentliche] *non-simultaneity* [Ungleichzeitigkeit] within the "time" of the history of Beyng…

> The belonging of the two with and to each other [*Die Zusammengehorigkeit beider*] can be grasped only through a return to their most disparate non-simultaneity [aus dem Rückgang in ihre weiteste Ungleichzeitigkeit] and through a dispelling of the appearance of their extreme oppositionality. If thoughtful meditation [Besinnung] (as questioning of the truth of beyng and only as this) achieves knowledge of such belonging, then at the same time [zugleich] the basic thrust [Grundzug] of the history of the first beginning (the history of Western metaphysics) is already grasped out of the knowledge of the other beginning. Machination and lived-experience is formally [formelhaft] the more original framing [die ursprünglichere Fassung] of the formula for the guiding question [Leitfrage] of Western thought: Beingness (Being) and thinking (as representational grasping [vor-stellendes Be-greifen]).[13]

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[12] GA 65, p. 127 (transl. slightly modified)
[13] GA 65, p. 128 (transl. slightly modified).

The "non-simultaneity" to which Heidegger here points is the gap which opens up between thinking and being as such with what is here understood as the "first beginning" – the original thought of being as beingness in the Greeks – and closes in the contemporary configuration of the ever-more insistant dominance of machination and lived-experience. Between this opening and this closing, the whole history of metaphysics is comprehended, and the principle and formula of its communication *as a whole* ("within the 'time' of the history of beyng") with its broader exterior thereby indicated. What is the basis of this indication itself, which Heidegger here specifies as doubly formal, both in the sense of the "formula" for the history of metaphysics – Being and Thinking – and its *more* original formulation – Machenschaft and Erlebnis? According to Heidegger's suggestion, metaphysics will have had a beginning and end in the thinking of presence, here understood as the dual form of the presence of being, determined as beingness, to thinking, determined as representation; and again, more basically, as that of the linked configuration of machination and lived experience as the redoubled general circulation of experienceable beings.

But how do the beginning, and the end, themselves "take place"? The question has to do with time, the time that Heidegger here indicates exactly as the "'time' of the history of beyng," *in* which the gap between the open and closing of metaphysics – the time *of* the history of metaphysics – itself takes place. How is this time to be thought? It is indicated, here, on the basis of nothing other than the character of a *Machenschaft* whose basic form is calculation.

Over the last chapters, we have seen formal grounds for beginning to think an originally structure of paradox that is formally indicated, both as the infinite given time of the cosmos and as the paradoxical form of the instant, as the constitutive real-insistent infinite of the instant and the world, as soon as the availability in general of the actual infinite to thought is itself reflected in a thinking of time. We have also had reason to see a specific link between this given form and the original givenness of number, at the basis of all counting and measuring and all possible calculation as such. If Heidegger does not follow out these connections in detail or by pursuing the analysis of the metaformal question of this givenness of number, he nevertheless repeatedly indicates a thinking of the original form of time that would be at or beyond the formally indicated specific limits of calculation and counting as such. This thinking, followed out (as we have attempted to do here) in terms of the original paradoxes structurally constitutive of time as it gives itself both cosmologically and instantaneously, structurally points to deeper problems of the structure of this more "general" time in which the history of metaphysics, stretched between its Greek inception and its contemporary closure, "takes place".

In particular: does this broader time *itself* "happen" sometime? Does it, like the determined time of the "metaphysics of presence", open at some locatable time and close at another? And if so, how is it locatable, how calculable? (How are we to count what surrounds and conditions counting in general, the more general *conditions* for the possibility of countable order as such)? Or does it go on forever, without beginning or end, endlessly varying itself in configurations whose own rule and decidability would then be found in their constant novelty? Or is it neither of these: neither itself a finite configuration with beginning and end nor an openly infinite endless becoming whose principle is freedom, but rather a path determined both by the form of the unlimited and by the refusal of every

such principle, of freedom and novelty as much as of determinacy and necessity: in short, does it *eternally return*?

II

The Nietzsche courses taught by Heidegger between 1936 and 1940 occupy a decisive position within the articulation of the project of the history of being that begins in the *Beiträge* and continues throughout the rest of Heidegger's career. In the courses, Heidegger develops the suggestion that Nietzsche's thinking represents the *end* of the history of metaphysics that pursues the "guiding question" of the being of beings as opposed to the "grounding question" of being's truth.[14] Heidegger finds a guideline for understanding Nietzsche's "basic metaphysical position" in two statements: first, that the "basic character of beings as such is 'will to power'" and second, that "Being is 'eternal recurrence of the same.'"[15] The implications of these statements are then pursued through interpretations of Nietzsche's conceptions of art, knowledge, truth, and illusion, and situated as based in a particularly and conclusory configuration of the metaphysical interpretation of beings in terms of presence. In Heidegger's second course on Nietzsche, taught in the summer of 1937, in particular, Nietzsche's doctrine of eternal return is treated comprehensively as an assertion about "beings as a whole," understood as (in Nietzsche's own words from *Ecce Homo*) the doctrine of the "unconditioned and infinitely reiterated circulation of all things" [*unbedingten und endlich wiederholten Kreislauf aller Dinge*] (p. 926, GT sect. 3).[16]

Heidegger sees the announcement of the doctrine in the form of a "riddle" in Nietzsche's *Zarathustra*, book III, as a venturing [Wagen] of the "truth of beings as a whole" [der Wahrheit des Seienden im Ganzen]. The doctrine is here presented by Zarathustra to a dwarf.[17] Zarathustra indicates a gateway on which is inscribed the name "moment" [*Augenblick*]; from the gateway stretch two eternal paths, ahead and behind. Whatever *can* happen has already happened on the path behind, and will happen again on the path running forward.[18] All things are thus "bound together" [*fest…verknotet*] in such a way as to be drawn behind them by this gateway and must occur again; even the gateway itself must therefore occur once more. On Heidegger's interpretation of the passage, "time and eternity" are here

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[14] GA 6, vol. 1, pp. 79-80.

[15] GA 6, vol. 1, p. 33.

[16] GA 6, vol. 1, p. 255

[17] GA 6, vol. 1, p. 290

[18] 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 wenn Alles schon dagewesen ist: was hältst du Zwerg von diesem Augenblick? Muss auch dieser Thorweg nicht schon - dagewesen sein?
Und sind nicht solchermaassen fest alle Dinge verknotet, dass dieser Augenblick *alle* kommenden Dinge nach sich zieht? *Also* - - sich selber noch?
Denn, was laufen *kann* von allen Dingen: auch in dieser langen Gasse *hinaus* - *muss* es einmal noch laufen! -

viewed in an image oriented from the "moment" or "now".[19]   The image is not, though, directly to be understood as the final theory of Nietzsche, but rather just as the "riddle" that presents a question. The "doctrine", in particular, is first posed as a question to which the dwarf appears readily to have an answer: the dwarf himself asserts the circular form of "time itself" [die Zeit selber].[20] However, the question is repeated later on in the passage, this time as the question whether *this* moment – the moment of Zarathustra and the dwarf and their questioning itself – must not be repeated eternally. And this time the dwarf has no answer: with this second formulation, Zarathustra himself becomes "afraid" of his own thoughts, and his vision of a young shepherd being bitten in the mouth by a snake, the head of which he must bite, occurs.[21]

The difference between the two formulations, according to Heidegger, lies in the fact that the second question is posed, not as a general question about the form of time itself, but on the basis of the *moment*, as the question of the recurrence of *this* moment itself. With this particular kind of questioning, in particular, one is required to "adopt a stance of [one's] own within the "Moment" itself, that is, in time and its temporality." With this posing, according to Heidegger, Nietzsche is able to formulate his doctrine in a general way; put this way, it can be seen as an argument from particular assumptions about the finitude and infinitude of time and things:

> Nietzsche summarizes an essential thought concerning his doctrine so succinctly here, in the form of a question, that it is hardly comprehensible on its own, especially since the requisite presuppositions, although mentioned, do not really become visible. Those presuppositions are: first, the infinity of time in the directions of future and past; second, the actuality [Wirklichkeit] of time, which is not a "subjective" form of intuition [die keine "subjektive" Form des Anschauens ist]; third, the finitude of things and of their courses [und dingliche Abläufe]. On the basis of these presuppositions, everything that can in any way be must, as a being, already have been [muβ alles, was überhaupt sein kann, schon als Seiendes gewesen sein]. For in an infinite time the course of a finite world [der Lauf einer endlichen Welt] is necessarily already completed.[22]

By formulating essentially this argument, Heidegger suggests, Nietzsche is able to propose the doctrine of eternal recurrence as a fundamental position relating beings as a whole to their temporal condition. But he is only able to do so by first placing *himself* in the "moment" in a decisive way. In the placing, the thinker of the thought of the eternal recurrence is "transposed to beings as a whole [in das Seiende im Ganzen]," or placed under the particular condition of the way in which beings as a whole appear in the "gateway" of the moment in which future and past meet.[23] Through this placing under the condition of the moment, the doctrine of the eternal return is itself shown as a matter which calls for *decision*: "what recurs – if it is to recur – is decided by the Moment and by the force with which the Moment can cope

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[19] GA 6, vol. 1, p. 293.
[20] GA 6, vol. 1, p. 294.
[21] GA 6, vol. 1, pp. 295-96.
[22] GA 6, vol. 1. p. 296.
[23] GA 6, vol. 1, p. 318.

with whatever in it is repelled by such striving [und der Kraft der Bewältigung dessen, was in ihm an Widerstrebendem sich stößt]."[24]

This interpretation allows Heidegger, in the summer 1939 lecture course "The Will to Power as Knowledge," and especially in two lectures that were written in 1939 as a conclusion to the course (along with the two previous Nietzsche courses) but never delivered, to portray Nietzsche's position overall as an "inverted Platonism" in which is realized the final configuration of all those in the succession that Plato's own thought of being as beingness originally inaugurated.[25] It is such a conception that actually underlies, according to Heidegger, the linked Nietzschean metaphysics of will to power and eternal return, and explains their basic metaphysical orientation. This orientation, the "essence" of the will to power, is the inversion of the Platonic hierarchical opposition of being and becoming into a position that seeks the unlimited "permanentizing" of becoming in presence [Beständingung des Werdens in die Anwesenheit].[26] The idea of an *eternal* recurrence is that of a "securing" of the becoming of what becomes and a "permanantizing" of its "constancy in the direction of its circling back into itself and forward to itself [im Sinne des in sich zurück- und zu sich vorauslaufenden Kreisens]."[27] This is a thought of the "permanentizing of whatever becomes [des Werdens des Werdenden] into the one presence of the self-recapitulation of the identical [in die eine Anwesenheit des Sichwiederholens des Identischen]."[28] Such a securing of becoming in the repeated form of the self-identical unfolds truth, in particular, as a "securing of beings in their decidable feasibility [in seiner *ausmachbaren Machbarkeit*]."[29]

This is the position with respect to beings as a whole that is known, in its relation to Being, as "machination [Machenschaft]"[30] In it, Heidegger says in the 1939 lectures, "meaninglessness comes to power [Sinnlosigkeit zur Macht gelangt]" and is self-organized as a "total mobilization … by and for the will to power".[31] In this position, "calculability," "representation" and "production" are finally driven to an "extreme" point, "characteristic of mankind's unconditioned hegemony over all sources of power on the face of the earth, and indeed its dominion over the globe as such [dessen unbedingter Herrschraft über alle Machtmittel des Erdkreises und über diesen selbst]."[32]

Heidegger's interpretation of the significance of the doctrine of eternal recurrence thus plays an essential role in connecting the narrative of the history of being as a whole with the more immediately obvious predominance of assumptions, practices, and modes of thought and action that are characterized by the "totalization" of beings as universally representable and calculable. Under this condition of totalization, Heidegger suggests, it is also for thought to prepare itself for experience or

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[24] GA 6, vol. 1, p. 312.
[25] GA 6, vol. 1 and vol. 2. The latter two lectures are published as "The Eternal Recurrence of the Same and the Will to Power"
[26] GA 6, vol. 1, p. 648.
[27] GA 6, vol. 2, p. 11.
[28] GA 6, vol. 2, p. 11 (transl slightly modified).
[29] GA 6, vol. 2, p. 21 (transl. modified).
[30] GA 6, vol. 2, p. 21.
[31] GA 6, vol. 2, p. 21.
[32] GA 6, vol. 2, p. 22.

accomplishment of the radical reversal whereby it suddenly frees itself of this final configuration of machination and representation and, with it, from the whole history it completes.   In Heidegger's thought after the 1940s, the thought of this preparation is marked by a waning of the rhetoric or figure of decision, and becomes largely characterized as the thought of "Gelassenheit," or of the peculiar "letting" beings be which is to allow once more the possibility of their *be*ing in an originally disclosive way. This is the thinking, at the most extreme possible distance from technology, enframing, and its characterization of beings in terms of acting and effectivity, of the "saving power" of the original unity of *techne* and *poiesis*, and of the "fourfold" in which the counter-play of earth and sky, man and gods, holds open the place of disclosure and granting as such.

The suggestion of this attitude as the successor to a modern "enframing" attitude toward beings has been both endorsed on Heidegger's behalf and, elsewhere, criticized as fundamentally regressive and "nostalgic."[33]   But without disputing any of these terms in which Heidegger ventures to think or propose the possibility of what cannot yet, *strictu sensu*, even be thought (since its thinking would *already* accomplish it), it is possible and coherent to ask whether there are more specific terms to be found, within the concrete factical interpretation of the determined "present", for the indication or demonstration of what *surrounds* the metaphysical interpretation of being as presence as its prior condition and more general exterior itself. How, in particular, in the thought and reality of the "consummation of metaphysics", is a certain "outside" already indicated, or *readable* in today's determinate structural, temporal, or ontic-ontological forms? The question asks, with Heidegger, about what *in metaphysics* points to a certain "beyond" its own totality, but *also* about what points (formally or ontologically) to this beyond *in the realized idea of totality itself*, as this idea gives itself in the constitutive forms in which it regulates contemporary thought and practice.

Here, it is relevant to consider in a specific way the ever-more-pervasive technologies of information production, distribution, and exchange which today encircle the globe and affect practically every human life on the planet, through the possibilities of communication, and economic transformation they facilitate. It appears possible, in particular, that this dominance witnesses a specificity of information technology itself – as opposed to the older forms of mechanical or industrial technology that Heidegger himself most often refers to – in articulating the form in which the metaphysical tradition today reaches its most definitive culmination and exhaustion. From this perspective, in particular, the technologies of computation and communication that today ensure the universal capture (and indeed capitalization) of all forms of linguistic expression and performance as "information" are not simply indifferent

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[33] Relevantly to this, it is significant that, in "The Question Concerning Technology," in discussing what he calls, following Hölderlin, the "saving power" [das Rettende] of art, Heidegger actually *contrasts* the possibility of a recovery of poiesis with what he treats explicitly as the *distinct* possibility of a sudden transformation of *Gestell* into *Ereignis*: "Whether art may be granted this highest possibility of its essence in the midst of the extreme danger, no one can tell. Yet we can be astounded. Before what? Before this *other* possibility [der anderen Möglichkeit]: that the frenziedness of technology may entrench itself everywhere to such an extent that someday, thoughout everything technological, the essence of technology may unfold essentially in the propriative event of truth [duch alles Technische hindurch das Wesen der Technik west im Ereignis der Wahrheit]." (GA 7, p. 39; emphasis added).

mechanisms, but rather ontologically indicative in a special sense, and thereby, in the conditions of their "totalization" and total capture of the character of beings, also potentially transformative.

In fact, as we have seen in chapter 6, above, Heidegger himself sometimes anticipates the contemporary development and predominance of information technology in significant detail, as (for instance) in the 1966 essay "The End of Philosophy and the Task of Thinking," where in connection with the "role of logic as symbolic logic and semantics" he points to "cybernetics" as the "new fundamental science" that will soon "[determine] and [regulate]" all other sciences. It is equally significant in relation to this to note once more the central connection Heidegger draws, already in the 1930s, between the dominance of machination and the character that beings attain within it of being universally countable or *calculable* [Zahlbar]. As we have seen (chapters 5 and 6 above), what comes into view here in the specific character of contemporary technology as enframing beings as a whole through the assumption and practice of their universal calculability is indicative of, because fundamentally rooted in, what is for Heidegger an (perhaps the) *original* and determinative structure of metaphysics itself: namely, the structure of logic as a regular *technique*. Here, the measurability and calculable manipulation of all beings is itself assured on the ultimate basis of the applicability of regular methods of their representation and computation, the very methods that are subsequently captured and universally promulgated in the concrete form of the digital computer. The "contemporary" situation of global information realizes this regime all the more fully, insofar as it allows and propounds the dominance of calculable technological and economic manipulation, and the assumption of universal effectiveness that underlies and supports it, around the world and with respect to all its (thereby determined) forms of life.

It is thus also relevant that the unitary structural basis of all contemporary forms of information technology in the underlying formal architecture of the digital computer also, and by its own inherent structure, demonstrates a formally necessary ontologically significant phenomenon of *undecidability* and *ineffectivity* that necessarily accompanies the functioning of all regular systems and regularly calculable forms of order. The connection is in view in Alan Turing's remarkable 1936 paper, "On Computable Numbers, with an Application to the Entscheidungsproblem."[34]   In the paper, Turing simultaneously created the logical structure of the modern electronic computer by fixing the formal structure of a finite, algorithmic decision procedure *and*, in the very same argument, demonstrated the existence of (countlessly many) mathematical problems that essentially *cannot* be decided by any such procedure.[35] Along with this, and as another consequence, Turing's result demonstrates the existence of (uncountably) *many* "uncomputable" real numbers: numbers whose decimal expansion cannot be

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[34] Turing (1936).

[35] More precisely, what Turing demonstrated is that *for any given* formal system or "universal" Turing machine, there will be well-defined decision problems that *that* system cannot solve. Whether this points simply to the limitation of each such system with respect to problems that can indeed be solved by an infinitary power of human thought irreducible to finite procedures, or whether it witnesses the real structure of problems unsolvable by *any* means or powers whatsoever, is just what is at issue in the dilemma of the "disjunctive" conclusion that Gödel draws in the 1953 Gibbs lecture (see chapter 5, above).

determined by the reiterated application of *any* finitely stateable rule.[36]   A further corollary (derivable by partial means of an auxiliary result)[37] is a form of Gödel's first theorem itself: for any system of sufficient complexity to capture arithmetic, there will be an arithemetic sentence that it cannot prove or refute, provided the system itself is consistent.

Here, then, the very logical architecture which, as realized, provides the actual concrete basis for the whole contemporary regime of "universal" calculability and decidability is also shown to entail the inherently necessary existence of problems that are undecidable and quantities that cannot effectively be computed, in a strict and rigorous sense.   With this demonstration and in it, the very idea of effectivity, as that of the *universal* procedural determinability of all beings by regular computational means, is negated in its general form and shown ultimately incapable of founding the assumed "total" regime that it is invoked to support. As is shown by Turing's own results and verified by the other metalogical structures and results we have considered, this means that any demarcation of a domain in which procedures can be considered effective and always capable of producing determinate solutions with respect to well-posed problems must always be understood as taking place only within a *broader* realm of ineffectivity, wherein the smooth functioning of these processes cannot be guaranteed and the procedural avaiblability of solutions is not and cannot be generally assured. This extends as well (and in an eminent sense) to the *total* demarcation of the "contemporary" regime of universal calculability and decidability that Heidegger treats as the contemporary dominance of machination, whereby it bears in its very underlying structure and material/technological basis the conditions for the overcoming of the ontological assumption that maintains it.[38]

If Turing's result shows in formal detail that any determination of regular effectivity – and also all that assures and guarantees it – communicates with a broader undecidability which is its general surrounding, then it is apparently possible to apply this demonstration to the consideration of the most characteristic and general forms and practices of contemporary technological, social, and political life. In particular, it is here apparently possible to envision a formally based critique of these forms and practices that operates by problematizing and challenging the *claim* or *assumption* of general effectivity that underlies their application and force. Here, the formal indication that is apparently derivable from the actual metaformal results rejoins the Heideggerian ontological problematic at the point at which it, itself, seeks to provide terms to challenge and question the contemporary dominance of "machination" and the assumption of the total circular manipulability of beings that characterizes it. For as Heidegger

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[36] This is as opposed both to rational numbers but also to real numbers such as π or $\sqrt{2}$, whose successive digits *can* be determined by successive applications of such a rule.

[37] In particular, the recursive enumerability of theorems in systems of the type Gödel considered.

[38] It might be objected here that Turing's result does not by itself bear in any direct way against universal *calculability* in a strict sense of the term: i.e. it does not imply the unavailability, by means of finite procedures, of determinate answers to mathematical problems of calculation (those, for instance, involving the calculation of the value of a well-defined numerical function), but only the unavailability by means of these procedures of answers to certain *decision* problems, i.e. problems of a "yes or no?" form (see chapter 5 for an example in terms of Diophantine equations). However, though Heidegger's discussions of "calculability" generally do not specify the exact form of the problems that are here seen as answerable with respect to all entities as such, it is clear that they must be seen as extending to problems of the second sort, if the "universal" thinkability of all beings and their properties in the form of their "calculability" is indeed here affirmed (or, ultimately, criticized).

points out, the basis of this assumption is just the claim of an unlimited calculability and circulability of beings, itself grounded in the totalization of their calculability and total availability to representation. If, then, there is a formally demonstrable incalculability inherent in the very constitutive ideas of number, mathematics, and the thought of procedures itself, then the general suggestion, already made in Heidegger's text, of a specifically determined "limit" and "outside" to the contemporary technological regime here receives significant confirmation and is put on a formally rigorous basis.

But the specific critical suggestions that can be made in light of the deepened formal-ontological problematic are also somewhat different than those that are usually accorded to the "Heideggerian" critique itself. There is no suggestion here, for instance, of the usefulness or even possibility of a marginal withdrawal from the prevailing technological forms of organization and effective structure. What is indicated, instead, is a formal thought and a praxis, grounded within it, that *directly* confront the prevailing forms of technological organization and regular practice on the ground of their own constitutive claim to totality. There is also no need, within the deepened formal-ontological problematic, to have reference to the determined category of *poiesis* or art in general as a privileged region within which to base this critique. What the critique of "technological" thinking and practice, thus deepened, calls for is not any kind of escape into, or privileging of, particular kinds of beings or specialized practices of "skill" as a counter to *techne* or its contemporary development as global technology, but rather a direct formal confrontation, *on its own terms,* of the developed idea of technique that underlies it in all of its forms and ideological underpinnings. This prepares what is indeed a "confrontation" of ontological thought with the essence and structure of global technology. But its principle is not to be found either in a simple resistance to technology or in its acceleration to the point where, by means of an actual or fantasized necessity, it suddenly collapses or transforms itself into something different. It is rather, simply, the deeper thinking, in light of the mathematical and metalogical results on which it is genetically dependent, of what is structurally involved and inherent in the very possibility of its effectivity and thereby in the force of its global claim over life and practice.

III

There are various possible arguments from the three premises about time and phenomena that Heidegger attributes to Nietzsche to the claim of a circular eternal recurrence of events. The premises are that i) that time is infinite in the directions of past and future; ii) that time is not subjective or ideal but, rather, real; and iii) that things and "their courses" are necessarily finite. As is well known, after arriving at the doctrine in 1881, Nietzsche envisioned and attempted various kinds of "scientific" proofs of its truth as a cosmological claim about the totality of events in the physical universe. Some of these were to be based on what he took to be established scientific claims, for example that of the finitude and conservation of force (energy) or matter and the determinism of physical laws. One version of the argument is that, given these premises, if any state of the universe recurs once, it must deterministically follow again an infinite number of times. But since (as Nietzsche may have supposed) if matter and forces are finite, any *possible* state must have *already* been reached within (infinite) past time, every such state must thus *already* have repeated itself an infinite number of times.

Even if the premises of determinism and finite energy and matter are granted, the argument does not succeed in this form. For it appears possible, even on these assumptions, that the states of the universe succeed one another in the manner of the succession of digits in the expansion of an irrational number (such as π or $\sqrt{2}$): the succession of digits is determined by the successive application of a rule, but there is no cyclical repetition of a series of digits at any point. More generally, dynamic phenomena of continuous motion or change, even if governed by fully deterministic rules, need not exhibit fixed periodicity at any point in their (infinitely continued) progress. It is thus not possible to argue directly, as Nietzsche may have hoped to do, from cosmological premises about finitude and determinism to the claim of eternal recurrence by considering the universe to be a closed dynamical system unfolding in a time that is infinite in both directions.[39]

Nevertheless, another, related argument that may have a better chance of success can be drawn from considerations that are already present in Kant's consideration of the four cosmological antinomies in the "Transcendental Dialectic" of the *Critique of Pure Reason*.[40] The antinomies are contradictions of reason with itself with respect to the idea of totality involved in its ongoing search for the conditions of phenomena. They concern, respectively, the completeness of the whole of all appearances in space and time, their spatial and temporal divisibility, the origination of phenomena by means of natural causality or spontaneity, and the conditioning of all phenomena by an absolutely necessary being.[41] Although the topic of time appears officially only in the first antinomy, in parallel with the question of the boundedness of space, the question of time is in fact central to all four antinomies. For all four turn on the question of the totality of series of conditions, and this question in each case raises the issue of the structure of *priority* thought more or less explicitly in temporal terms as the question of conditioning, either on the side of the subject or the object or both. Thus, the second antinomy involves the question of the possibility of serially *carrying out* a division of the world into simples, the third turns on the question of the causality of appearances by means of nature or freedom, and the fourth concerns the necessary conditioning of any temporal series of appearances by its immediate temporal predecessor.[42] In each of these cases, the question of totality presents itself as the question of the boundedness or

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[39] It appears likely, on the basis of textual considerations, that Nietzsche did not ultimately think mechanism decisive in proving or refuting the doctrine of eternal recurrence, but that the most decisive consideration is rather that the world cannot have a final or end state. Cf., e.g., paragraph 1066 of *The Will to Power* (composed in March-June 1888: "If the world could in any way become rigid, dry, dead, *nothing*, or if it could reach a state of equilibrium, or if it had any kind of goal that involved duration, immutability, the once-and-for-all (in short, speaking metaphysically, if becoming *could* resolve itself into being or into nothingness), then this state must have been reached. But it has not been reached, from which it follows –
This is the sole certainty we have in our hands to serve as a corrective to a great host of world hypotheses possible in themselves. If, e.g., the mechanistic theory cannot avoid the consequence … of leading to a final state, then the mechanistic theory stands refuted." (pp. 548-49).

[40] In this paragraph and the next two, I rely upon an argument sketched by Oskar Becker in a 1936 article, "Nietzsche's Beweise für seine Lehre von der ewigen Wiederkehr" (Becker 1936).

[41] A 414-417/B 441-445.

[42] Thus, for instance in the "proof" of the thesis of the fourth antinomy (i.e. of an absolutely necessary being): "The world of sense, as the whole of all appearances, at the same time contains a series of alterations. For without these, even the temporal series, as a condition of the possibility of the world of sense, would not be given to us." (A 452/B480).

unboundedness of a temporal series, and thus as an instance of the more general problem of the *givenness of time* whereby any temporal ordering is possible.

The temporal consideration which is actually decisive in producing the bearing of each of the arguments on the question of the infinity of time appears at the beginning of the argument for the "thesis" of the first antinomy, which claims that the world has a beginning in time and is limited in space:

> For if one assumes that the world has no beginning in time, then up to every given point in time an eternity has elapsed, and hence an infinite series of states of things in the world, each following another, has passed away. But now the infinity of a series consists precisely in the fact that it can never be completed through a successive synthesis. Therefore an infinitely elapsed world-series is impossible, so a beginning of the world is a necessary condition of its existence; which was the first point to be proved.[43]

If we assume an infinite past time as actual, the argument maintains, we must also assume that an infinite series of successive states has *actually* taken place. This would then mean that the series, though actually infinite, has at some point terminated. But since this supposition is impossible (it is not entirely clear why Kant thinks so), it must be the case that the world has a beginning at most finitely long ago, assuming the world exists (as a completed whole) at all. This last proviso points, of course, to Kant's unitary solution to all four antinomies, which is to be found in the transcendental idealist denial of the *existence* of the world as a whole.   According to the solution, although the world is *never* given as a (finite or infinite) *totality* of appearances, it is nevertheless always possible for reason to pursue the series of conditions for any given conditioned one step further: looking backward, in particular, it is always possible to seek the prior condition for a given phenomenon. But through this "successive synthesis" one never attains a total or complete representation of the world as a whole.

This particular form of the solution depends not only on Kant's transcendental idealism, but also on the (Aristotelian) assumption that an infinite totality can be given only *potentially*, in an unlimited ongoing development. It is this latter assumption that leads Kant to identify the infinity o f a series with its "never" being able to be completed through successive synthesis, and thus to hold that reason's synthetic activity itself could never encompass a temporally infinite world as a whole. If we allow both assumptions to lapse, however, and conceive of world-time as *real* and of the actual infinite as thinkable, we are left with the necessity of supposing that, at any moment, an infinite number of successive events have in fact already occurred. If we, further, think of these successive events as determined, as a series, by a unitary rule, we must think that the infinite series determined by the rule has *already* concluded. There is something highly puzzling about this thought, although it is not actually obvious that it is simply incoherent.[44] At any rate, though, the problem can be avoided in just one way:

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[43] A 426/B 454.

[44] According to A.W. Moore (Moore 1990, p. 44) Wittgenstein once asked his audience in a lecture to imagine finding a man who has been reading out the digits of pi, backwards, for all time: he has just said, "3! I'm finished". What appears to be problematic here (or perhaps incoherent) is the idea of an actually infinite series *actually* being completed by means of the development of *all* of its individual members. (The anecdote appears to have

by concluding that the infinite succession is in fact an infinitely repeated cycle of finitely many events. If, in particular, a law determines a cyclic repetition of finitely many elements, there is nothing incoherent (or even seemingly so) in supposing that the cycle has *always* been repeating itself and will always do so.

There is thus a route to be traced from the Kantian considerations about the determination of series of appearances to an actual and *actually thinkable* eternal recurrence of events. The argument, in this form, is motivated not only by realism about time but by the essentially Cantorian consideration that an actual infinite can be given to thought as such. Kant, of course, was kept from this consideration by the limitations of the conception of the infinite that he adopts from Aristotle, as well as those of the mathematics of his time. Nevertheless, what can be preserved from the Kantian setting of the problem in the antinomies is its essential relationship to the problem of the givenness of an (ordinal) series as determined by a rule. This question of the givenness of a serial order is, as we have seen, itself intimately connected to the problem of the givenness of number, and in particular of its givenness as i*nfinite* in two ways: both extensively, in the transfinite hierarchy, and intensively, in the determination of real numbers as infinite expansions. For the consideration that leads (under the condition of realism rather than idealism about time) from the Kantian antinomies to the eternal recurrence, what is actually decisive here is the implications of the second Cantorian "generation-principle," whereby it is apparently possible to pass in thought from the idea of a series, as given by its rule, to the "limit" collecting *all* of its elements, without supposing (or even being able to suppose) that each of these elements are individually given or produced in actuality. In passing to the first infinite "limit-ordinal," ω, one passes to an ordinal number which has no predecessor; this is apparently the reason why it appears incoherent (or nearly so) to suppose the end of an actually infinite (and nonrepeating) series to be arrived at in time *by* the successive givenness of its elements. One can nevertheless think of time itself as an infinite actual continuum, proceeding *from* the present both backwards and forward in this way, provided only that it is thereby thought only as a kind of empty regular form and not, itself, as a determinate series of events.[45] Within the ambit of these assumptions, then, the only way to preserve the actual regular

been reported to Jonathan Bennett by Elizabeth Anscombe; cf. Bennett (1971), p. 135; and see also Wittgenstein (1930), p. 166 for a partially similar example.)

[45] In the *Science of Logic* (21.229-231) Hegel considers Kant's argument for the thesis of the first antinomy and argues first, that it is circular in assuming what is to be proved, and second, that all that it really can be taken to establish is that time can have a determinate and actual "limit" or end. For the argument, Hegel suggests, depends on the assumption of a "*given point in time* to which an eternity has elapsed," i.e. the "now" which is assumed in arguing that an infinite actual prior time must have elapsed in leading up to it, but (Hegel argues) "*a given point in time* has no other meaning than that of a determinate *limit* in time" or a "limit…to time which is actual." Thus, in assuming the "now" prior to which at eternity must have elapsed if time is infinite, one has already assumed that there can be a limit to time in general, which, as the existence of a limit of time as its *beginning*, is what is to be proved by the argument of the thesis overall. Hegel suggests in particular that the apparent difference between the "now" (which is both preceded by a past and succeeded by a future) and the initial point of time (which is not, of course, preceded by a past), is inessential here. For if the "now" is assumed as a "qualitative" limit – which it must be, according to Hegel, for the argument to go through – then it introduces a kind of caesura whereby it is also an "absolute, that is, abstract, *beginning* of the future" and thus has the same structure as the initial beginning moment.

Relative to the present considerations, however, the argument is unconvincing, or at least not clearly relevant. For, as we have seen repeatedly (see chapters 6 and 8 above), in the sense in which the moment is "given" that is

thinkability of the series of events conceived as taking place *within* it is then, as we have seen, to conceive it as an eternally recurrent cycle.

This argumentation is a kind of derivation of the eternal cyclical recurrence of a *series* of events, under the condition of their regular thinkability in infinite actual time, from Cantor's demonstration of the thinkable coherence of the "first" infinite set, ω. What, though, if we consider the problem of the infinity of time from the broader perspective of the *further* extended developments that follow metalogically directly or indirectly from the Cantorian moment, including *both* the unlimited open development of the transfinite hierarchy in the light of Russell's paradoxes and the other constitutive paradoxes of the one-All, and *also* the further developments of Cantor's own thinking about continuity? Although, as we have seen, Kant's antinomies closely anticipate in certain ways the paradoxes of the One-All, Kant does not really consider the second sort of question (about continuity) in the antinomies, since what is at issue here is always just a determinate *series* of discrete events. On the other hand, as we saw in the last chapter, Aristotle's consideration of what are essentially the problems of continuity and discontinuity in book IV of the *Physics* leads him both to point to the inherently paradoxical form of the "now", as constantly becoming what it is not and not becoming what it is in the procession of its "constant" flowing, and to foreclose this paradox by considering the "now" to inhere in time only potentially, as the result of a *possible* measurement. If, however, by contrast with both Kant and Aristotle, we grasp the givenness of time as the index of a *realism par excellence*, we have to deal with it, as really given, *as infinite* both cosmologically (in the infinity of cosmic time preceding and following the present moment) and in the *infinitely determined* (not simply determin*able*) structure of the "now" as such. To do so is to grasp a structural and real inherence of constitutive paradox in both cases, both "above" – in relation to the character of the *totality* of infinite time, which can only be given if there is *always* given "more", both before and after – and "below" – in relation to the punctual moment, which always threatens to undermine fixed identities with its continuous becoming. It was in this doubly paradoxical form that, as we saw in the last chapter, the original problem of becoming presented itself to Plato, both as the problem of the totality of time and as the problem of the form of becoming in the present, as the deepest possible challenge to the fixity of the idea and the structure of its *koinon*. And it is in this form that, as I have argued, it must be taken up again by the ontological problematic of being and time, in the light of the contemporary metalogical results that further unfold and articulate the mathematical structure of the infinite as it is given to thought.

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relevant to the ontological problematic, its "given"ness is not simply a matter of its being *specifiable* or *specified* as an abstract limit between two spans or as the initial point of one span. It is, rather, just as much, and irreducibly, a matter of its being given *as* present (or 'in' presence), which is to say that it is not just abstractly determinable but (actually) 'given' as actual. Hegel's argument thus crucially equivocates between two senses of the "givenness" of the "now" (that in which it amounts merely to its being specifiable or assumable, and that in which it amounts to its actual presence) in order ultimately to foreclose or forestall the conclusion that the "now" is recurrently and *essentially* given *as actual limit* (indeed, as what Hegel calls a "qualitative" limit) in each case. In avoiding this conclusion by appealing to the limit as only abstractly or generally *determinable*, Hegel follows exactly the same strategy, grounded in the more general distinction between *dunamis* and *energeia*, that allows Aristotle to avoid the paradoxes of the actually existing (and given) "now" as real parts of the continuum of time (see chapter 8, above). If the claim of the actual recurrent reality of the "now" as limit *and* as part is allowed to stand, however, the paradoxical structure (to which Kant's own argument points) by which this problematic givenness of the "now" as actual is related to the paradox of the temporal whole, is thereby reinstated.

If the actual-infinite is thought as really temporally inherent in this twofold way, then the structure that they point to must be seen as a *unitary* structural condition of both the form of time *and* determinate events 'within' it. This is because the underlying structural dynamics of the infinite and paradox are (meta)formally indicated aspects of the givenness of number, which precedes counting and measurement, both of events and of "time itself." Through this structure and by means of it, it becomes possible not only to "measure" time but also to consider events as continuously determined and determining with respect to what precedes and follows them; in this way it is possible to measure their (quantifiable) changes and motions *over* time. Here, the suggestion is not (as it was with Aristotle, for example) that the measurement of time is a special case of, or analogous structure to, the measurement of local motion. The suggestion is rather that both kinds of "measurement" have a *unitary and inherently paradoxical* real structural condition in the real inherence of the infinite, both in the cosmos and in the moment.

With this, the actual infinity of time is no longer conceived as given just to thought in a way that contrasts with its always finite "taking place" in concrete or experienced reality. Rather, both the abstract thinkability of infinite time *and* its "actuality" are given by means of the *same* unitary and paradoxical structural form. This form is conceived as real both with respect to thought *and* the being of what is; it is the form of temporal givenness as such, where this no longer contrasts with an imagined, hypothesized, or structurally implied givenness of phenomena from *outside* time. It is then no longer possible to oppose the thought of the infinite to its (presumed) always only finite *realization*. Neither the Aristotelian nor the Kantian forms of the distinction between what is only "potentially" infinite in temporal reality and the presumptively "finite" modes of its measurement can, any longer, be maintained. This distinction was, as we saw in chapter 8, already problematic in its original Aristotelian setting, since time was there seen as not only or simply ideal, but actually as real, and really infinite as given and not merely as thought. This is what led Aristotle to propose the conception of time as ambiguously both sensible and intellectual, as having an endogenous structural origin in the intellectual activity of the soul as well as an exogenous origin with respect to which it is receptive, a conception of time as the "non-sensuous sensuous" that is, as Derrida argues, essentially repeated in Kant and Hegel. With the conception of time as the structurally undecidable form of givenness, this ambiguity between passivity and receptivity is shown to have its own deeper condition in the undecdiability with which both time and events give themselves in general. It is also no longer possible to maintain the exteriority of the empty form of time itself to what is seen as the necessarily finitely determined (because thinkable) succession of events *within* time that we witnessed in the partially Kantian, partially Cantorian argument considered above.   For since time and events have, on this conception, a *unified* structural condition in the *actual inherence of the infinite* in the structure of their givenness, both their thought and their reality must be considered, in both cases, actually infinite in both the cosmological and the instantaneous senses

If the structure of given time is indeed thought as undecidable in both of these ways, it is not thought as *indeterminate* with respect to specific procedures of determination, but rather as determinate in a superior sense: namely, that its determinacy provably outstrips any finitely determined decision procedure. With respect to any such procedure, this not indeterminacy but a kind of super-determinacy

or hyper-determinacy, pointing to the inherent existence of problems and truths indeterminable by the relevant finite system, but nevertheless structurally demonstrable or at least indicated by means of reflexive thought. This superior determinacy is nothing other than what Gödel understood as the "inexhaustibility" of mathematics that is verified by his own incompleteness results.   If time is thought as characterized by it, then the moment as the determined limit of the measurement of a span, or the specifiably determinate *caesura* between "before" and "after", is visible as a kind of systematic fixed point at which this superior determinacy is indicated or shown. Neither the punctual moment, as a specific and unique real-valued point, nor the infinite totality of *all* moments is determinable *in general* by means of any finitely specified procedure, although both may be determined in specific cases. For example, a discrete moment, in a particular case, *may* be determined by a whole or rational number, or again by an irrational number corresponding to a (computable) procedure. Or the infinity of temporal events *may* be thought as determined in a regular way by a single general form of constant presence or regular repetition. But in both cases, what is or can be determined by a rule is in fact the (infinitely rare) exception with respect to the really inherent superior determinacy of the infinite-given structure of time in itself, which outstrips all rules and all regular determinations. And to this infinite-given structure also corresponds the inevitable inherence of problems undecidable by any finite means, and thereby essentially and systematically recalcitrant to being "measured" in terms of presence. Here, the "general" case of the moment is not the computable number but the uncomputable one, not the determination of the eternal in the form of a standing or repeatable determining presence functioning as a measure, but rather the inherence of the infinite-undecidable, which is structurally immeasurable in its totality by any finite system without contradiction.

The structure of time, thought this way, is not indeterminacy or randomness; but neither is it simply a "free" unfolding by means of temporally successive spontaneous choices, perhaps akin to that which is thought in the intuitionist idea of the "free choice sequence." For if a finite procedure, in determining a moment, can also point to its broader and superior surrounding in a determinate reality that surrounds and outstrips what can be determined in just such a procedure, it does so only by means of its own contact with the structurally insistent Real that surrounds and preconditions it.   The relationship of any particular procedure with this Real is not that of "freely" determining it but rather of showing how it is determined at certain points and under certain conditions while also verifying that it, itself, cannot *completely* determine this Real without contradiction. The insistence of this larger determinate Real is then visible under the two metalogical headings of incompleteness (if consistency is maintained locally) and inconsistency (if a single determinate procedure is applied to *all* cases). The assumption and maintenance of consistency within a particular system, as of regular procedures of measurement and calculation in general, is then visible as only a locally determined possibility, in each case capable of opening to discovery what must be only a limited range of truths, and also in general incapable of securing itself by means of an internal consistency proof. But the dynamics of consistency and completeness that are thereby shown also bear witness to the superior structure of undecidability that must surround any such system of local, consistent determination.

If time, in its original givenness, is thought of as having the structure of the undecidable in this way, it is thereby thought as "eternal" in two ways: both as infinite in the directions of the past and the future,

and as capable of infinitely many *total* determinations of its character "at all times". Is undecidability, thought this way as the unitary condition of the determinacy of time and events, then, also, a figure of eternal *recurrence*? If so, it is not the eternal recurrence of a fixed and limited cycle of ontic happenings *within* a general empty form of time that is infinite in both directions. For as we saw above, such an ontic cycle reflects only the character that events must be seen to have, given the premises of the infinity and reality of time, *if* they are also seen as univocally determined by a specific thinkable rule that must itself be applied serially. But the time of the cosmos and of the moment are to be thought in the form of the superior undecidability contemplated here, then such a determination is always (even if it is seen as determining the form of events *for all time*) only a relatively local determination and can never determine *all* the truths about either.   What is witnessed here in the broader phenomenon of undecidability in itself is not, then, the recurrence of a specific subset of events, but rather a kind of structurally inherent *a priori* which precedes the time involved in any regular procedure but in which "everything" has *always* "already happened."

The happening of a determinate event or the measurement of a determinate time is then thinkable as recurrence with respect to *this* a priori structure. But the *a priori*, thought in this sense, is no longer simply opposed to time and temporal becoming; nor is it thought as determined by the character of fixity, stability, or regularity in itself. It is rather implied in the very structural form of temporal givenness, which is common real structure underlying the measurement of moments *and* events. On the one hand, the "now" is repeated infinitely, before and after, as the empty form of time stretching backward and forward from the empty gateway that it itself opens up. On the other, events are repeated infinitely in the form of their sense, and the interpretation and transformation of their sense repeats them infinitely again. But the two repetitions are no longer opposed to one another as the actual (or sensible) to the thinkable (or possible); rather, they are seen as having a common underlying structure in the undecidable form of given time. The happening of what happens is no longer the "actualization" of the "potential" or possible, nor is it determined in the general form of *dunamis* or its realization as effectiveness. It is rather determined by, and determinate in, the virtual and ineffective but fully real structure of the undecidable as such which is the form of given time. In this form, which is itself just the moment, as gateway, from which an infinite path stretches backward and another stretches forward, everything that "can" happen has happened, and everything that does happen will happen an infinite number of time again – including this moment, as gateway, itself.   And what "can" happen is not, itself, "pre"-determined as a fixed order of possibilities, but rather (since the distinction between possibility and actuality is itself no longer in effect) as, exactly, what does happen and will happen. As such, the form of the "now" is the real and given form of what gives itself as the original structure of its repeatability, as well as the intelligible structure, inherent in each "now" as its own infinite depth, of the unlimited becoming of the world.

IV

If there is a doctrine of the eternal return that can be derived from the original undecidability of given time, it is not the one that Heidegger ascribes to Nietzsche in his lectures. In particular, it is not, as

Heidegger says, doctrine of a "permanentizing of whatever becomes into … the self-recapitulation of the identical," for two reasons. First it is not a "permanentizing", since undecidable givenness precedes and provides the determinate underlying basis for *any* subsequent determination of anything as permanent *or* impermanent; second, it is not a doctrine of the repetition of the identical, since its determines the self-identical as repeatable only *as* a local determination of what is originally the undecidable form of time and sense, which is always becoming other and different. If it is indeed true, as Heidegger suggests, that such a repetition of the identical is characteristic of the "metaphysics of presence" itself in its characteristic thought of time, then what we witness here is another thought of time which, in developing the paradoxical structure of the "now" and of the infinity of given time, is no longer determined in the medium of the present or as the thought of its consistent, indefinite repetition. Thus we see here a certain structural "other" to the "metaphysics of presence" itself and as a whole, which appears both to condition it as its underlying more general structure and also to become thinkable at a certain determinate moment of its internal development.

More specifically: the structure of an originally undecidable given time can be seen as the specific limit and also structural overcoming of the onto-theology which recurrently organizes, within metaphysics, the interpretation of the being of beings. As we have seen since chapter 1, onto-theology grounds both "from above" and "from below": both by selecting a superior ontic referent which sets a standard for the intelligibility of beings *as a whole* and by selecting a correspondent ontic principle for the constitution of beings *as such*.   Both aspects of grounding together determine, in each case, the form in which beings are understood and experienced, and both have a more basic original temporal determination in the form of the present. If, on the other hand, the original structure of given time is thought as paradoxical and undecidable in the twofold way I have suggested, both with respect to the moment and with respect to the totality, then *both aspects of onto-theological grounding are overcome in favor of their more original infinite-temporal conditions*. In particular: there will henceforth be no theological grounding of beings "from above", since the whole is not given from the perspective of the theological elevation of a supreme being as a consistent principle of the whole, but rather as the infinite and paradoxical extent of undecidable cosmic time, infinite in both directions. And there will be no ontological grounding "from below", since the infinitely deep paradoxical form of the "now" underlies the intelligible being of any being as given. With this condition, the two parts of the specific constitution of onto-theology are overcome in the dual paradoxical form of the paradox of the totality of cosmic time ('above') and the paradox of the given, momentary 'now' (below).

Henceforth, it will no longer be possible to stabilize beings or their becoming by means of ontic referents: in the condition of (what Reiner Schürmann calls) 'ontological anarchy' (cf. chapter 6) that results, the destitution of all such referents is formally indicated in the infinite-undecidable structure of given time itself. But in pointing to this larger inherence of undecidability in which the specific conditions for onto-theological grounding are themselves situated, the indication of the infinite which here insists both above and below also points to the more original conditions under which it was first *possible* to pursue a solution to the original problem of time and becoming by *logical* means. These are the conditions which, we have seen reason to think, presented themselves to Plato, and determined the form of the solution presented by the Visitor in the *Sophist* in terms of the *koinonia* of the great types.

The solution, in the categorical form in which it was later further consolidated by Aristotle, persists and continues to determine the tradition's thinking about logic and presence until the moment when the metalogical problematic brings out, on the basis of the consequences of the thought of the actual infinite, the necessary communication of logical structures of categories and regular procedures with the broader infinite-undecidable temporal structure in which they inhere.

In a number of texts, Gilles Deleuze has suggested that Nietzsche's occasional descriptions of the eternal return as the cyclic return of the same or identical are simply the exoteric face or manifest form of a deeper and more esoteric true content of the doctrine on which *only* difference returns.[46] Nietzsche, on this reading, will have proposed the doctrine in such a superficial and exoteric form only as the exterior face of a doctrine whose actual truth presupposes the disruption of all fixed identities and the destitution of the form and force of all unitary laws. On this interpretation, is returning indeed the returning of identity, but identity returns "as a secondary power" (p. 41), not the repetition of what is in itself identical or similar, but the *production* of the similar and identical *from* difference and its repetition.[47] Also and for this reason, the eternal return is understood as a doctrine of *selection*: with respect to difference, the eternal return selects certain "extreme forms" and only these return. These are not fixed identities or constituted things, but that in things which acts as "mobile individuating factors unwilling to allow themselves to be contained within the factitious limits of this or that individual, this or that Self." It is as selective in this sense that the eternal return, according to Deleuze, is *affirmative* and is an endless affirmation of difference; in particular, it selects "all the procedures opposed to selection;" what is excluded and made not to return is just whatever "presupposes the Same and the Similar."[48] As such an affirmation, the eternal return is akin to the reality of an "Ideal game" which affirms chance without first subjecting it to distribution by means of fixed rules and assigned identities. Deleuze develops the structure of this affirmation as an original temporal structure, that of the "Aion" which cuts into chronological time with an infinitely straight and infinite line at every point, determining the progressive order of chronological time as divisible *ad infinitum* and always really cut by the infinite repetition of difference.[49]

With these formulations, Deleuze presents the eternal return as an original form of difference in its repetition which, as pure paradoxical becoming, underlies and surrounds the determinate constitution of categorical and logical identities in the (actually produced) form of the identical. The conception affirms, then, an original becoming of the simulacrum at the real basis of the representational repetition of the identical and similar; the affirmation of such a prior condition of the image or copy in the simulacrum is Deleuze's development of the project of "overturning Platonism" announced by Nietzsche. And indeed, there is every reason to think that Nietzsche recurrently presents the doctrine of eternal return as one whose explicit or exoteric content (namely that "time itself" is circular, or that a

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[46] E.g., Deleuze (1968), pp. 41-42; Deleuze (1969), pp. 263-64.
[47] Deleuze (1968), p. 41.
[48] Deleuze (1969), p. 265.
[49] E.g., Deleuze (1969), p. 284.

fixed finite totality of events that cyclically repeats itself) masks a deeper truth that is more problematic to master and express.[50]

For all of these reasons, Deleuze's suggestion of a more original content of the doctrine of the eternal recurrence, to be found in the affirmation and repetition of difference which produces identity rather than the repetition of what is basically the same or identical, appears motivated. At any rate, I shall not dispute this suggestion here, but simply try to verify its connection to both the metalogically indicated structure of originally undecidable time, on the one hand, and to the "Heideggerian" ontological problematic and history of being, on the other. We have already seen reason to suspect that it is in the form of the problem of the original undecidability of time that the question of thinkable being and becoming presented itself to Plato, and that it was to this problem, thus understood more or less explicitly, that he presented both the "logical" *koinon* of the *Sophist* and his own more developed view of the dialectic of the indefinite dyad and the one as solutions. But the first solution presupposes and requires the fixed forms of the identity of the great types (including that of "difference") and their logical, psychological and ontological simultaneity; whereas the second, with its appeal to the approximative method of fixing limits by means of iterated division, can only, at best, dissimulate what is now visible as the actual underlying numerical structure of undecidability, in which points determinable by any finite procedure are fleetingly rare and exceptional. If one can see in Nietzsche's doctrine, as part of its esoteric or latent content, a conception of the undecidable structure of given time in which the *apeiron* is insistent in an even more exigent and overwhelming sense than in Plato's late conception, this raises in a different light the question of what in Nietzsche's thought of the eternal return may be seen as simply an "inverted" Platonism (with Heidegger) or what, by contrast, must be seen (with Deleuze) as its actual overcoming. At any rate, if the structure of undecidable given time can be shown both to condition and undermine the specifically logical thought of being inaugurated by Plato on its own underlying temporal ground, it points to the positive and formally indicated broader structure of temporality in which anything like Platonism – or the "history of being" as the metaphysics of presence – itself takes place.[51]

If time, in the form of the moment and its given infinity in the directions of its "before" and "after", is originally given as undecidable, then the affirmation of its original paradoxical structure is indeed something which appears, from the perspective of determinate decision procedures, as the affirmation of chance. For if the determination of temporal becoming cannot be decided by a determinate procedure of decision or measurement, it will indeed appear to be aleatory with respect to that procedure. But undecidability is not randomness; as we have seen, it is a more original structure of

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[50] For example, as both Deleuze and Heidegger note, versions of the doctrine are presented several times in *Zarathustra*: when the doctrine is first presented to the dwarf in "The Vision and the Riddle," he repeats it, murmuring, as the doctrine that "time itself is a circle." Later, Zarathustra's animals present a version of the doctrine that time is circular, and Zarathustra complains that they have made of his doctrine a tired refrain. In both cases, the exoteric presentation is contrasted with a more esoteric realization which Zarathustra himself struggles to attain and which is not directly expressed.

[51] In the description or formal indication of this structure, it is probably immaterial whether one considers oneself to be overcoming (something called) "metaphysics" as such in favor of a kind of thinking that is not or is no longer metaphysical, as Heidegger does, or whether the indicated thought of difference, beyond presence and identity, remains (as with Deleuze) "metaphysics", even in a "pure" sense.

determinacy, even excessively so. The structure of the undecidable, rather, points to the way that something like pure difference might be seen as pre-existing, and as determinative with respect to the subsequent possibility that identities are determined by means of fixed procedures of measurement and decision. Relatedly, if it is finite procedures and criteria that determine identities, the prior structure of the undecidable must be seen as the original structure of difference and paradox which conditions all such determination and decision. This original structure, as we have seen, is itself determined as the realized form of the paradoxes of becoming and of infinite differentiation, whereby what becomes some way is always becoming a bit more, and what goes from being something to being something else must pass through a pure infinitesimal point at which it is neither. To affirm the structure of original decidability is to see in the structural form of the moment (or "now" as such) the unresolved depth and positive reality of these paradoxes, as prior and problematic conditions, prior to any possible (consistent) schema or positive image, for the self-identity of anything that changes or the becoming-different of anything that is the same.

Furthermore, if the eternal return is seen in this way, its internal relation to the *ontological* problematic can readily be verified. In particular, if it is not simply the repetition of a fixed sequence of (ontic) events in an empty form of time, but rather the paradoxical structure of the infinite which expresses difference and preserves the paradoxes of unlimited becoming, it is thereby in a direct relationship with the reflexive structure of time's own self-givenness and thereby with the ontological structure of unconcealment – or truth – as such. The nature of this connection resolves what otherwise presents itself as a puzzling aspect of Nietzsche's presentation of the eternal return – that although it is on the one hand certainly intended as a *cosmological* doctrine that is seen as true, it is also, just as importantly, *to be affirmed* as the *affirmation* of *amor fati*. As we shall see, it would be as incorrect to see the first aspect of the doctrine as entering a simply empirical claim about the factual circulation of events as it would be to understand the second as a merely psychological imperative. The two aspects can be seen together, however, if the relationship of both to the ontological difference, and thereby being itself, is clearly grasped.

In his 1969 *Nietzsche and the Vicious Circle*, Pierre Klossowski considers the "experience" of the eternal return, arguing that the discovery of the doctrine entails a peculiar kind of *anamnesis* and, with it, a necessary disruption of the identity of the one who discovers it. For in the discovery, I am conscious of myself as having discovered the recurrence of all things and *with this* it must also be granted that the discovery itself has been made innumerable times before. If *I*, then, have learned the truth an infinite number of times before, I must also have forgotten it infinitely many times before; the current *anamnesis* is possible only on the basis of this infinite prior forgetting. But the revelation, as that of the return of all things, is also the discovery that the revelation itself could have happened at any moment in the cycle, or to anyone in general, and has indeed happened innumerable times before. If, then, I will its repetition, I do not will the repetition of myself as I am now (having discovered the eternal recurrence) or as I was before discovering it. Rather, I will myself "as a fortuitous moment whose very fortuity implies the necessity of the integral return of the whole series," a series which must thus traverse "the

successive realizations of all possible identities".[52] For this reason, at the moment I discover the eternal return:

> I cease to be myself *hic et nunc* and am susceptible to becoming innumerable others, knowing that I shall forget this revelation once I am outside the memory of myself; this forgetting forms the object of my present willing; for such a forgetting would amount to a memory outside my own limits: and my present consciousness will be established only in the forgetting of my other possible identities.[53]

It is in this way that the circle becomes, according to Klossowski, "a sign for everything that has happened, for everything that is happening, and for everything that will ever happen in the world."[54]

With the discovery of the return, I discover what is on the one hand a general form of time and events, but what on the other implicates me, and the moment of discovery itself, as the outcome of the infinite sequence that also begins at this very moment. The particular moment of discovery is not itself unique; the discovery can happen at any time, and must indeed have happened an infinite number of times before. Accordingly, the possibility of self-disclosure that occurs in it – whereby *I*, in this moment, discover myself as the outcome of an infinite series of events that also begins in it – must be structurally characteristic of *every* moment as such. Every moment as such structurally includes the possibility of a revelation of the whole circular course, and also the necessity of a correlative forgetting. This possibility is not, moreover, simply *my* possibility; in the revelation, I also understand that is the possibility of anyone at any time. It must rather be seen as structurally implied in the form of the moment itself. Through this structure, every moment in itself communicates with the *whole* totality of infinitely recurrent time. The possibility of the revelation of this whole – the revelation of the eternal return – along with its correlative forgetting – must then be given in the very form in which the moment gives itself. To determine my will in accordance with this form is then nothing other than to will the whole of everything that has happened, is happening, and will happen. This is to will in accordance with *amor fati.*

It is here that contact can be re-established with the ontological problematic, in particular in that it construes the form of given time as a reflexive self-giving that discloses and conceals. *One* form of this self-giving is, as we have seen, the specific structure of Dasein as clearing and concealing, the structure that originally relates it to truth as *aletheia*. This is the structure in which, according to *Being and Time*, temporality temporalizes itself through the temporal ecstases and in which Dasein is 'its' time; behind it lies the reflexive structure of paradoxical auto-affection, or self-giving time, that Heidegger discovers through his reading of Kant in *Kant and the Problem of Metaphysics*. In this paradoxical structure, as we saw in chapter 6 above, the idea of transcendence is ultimately overcome in favor of the more ontologically basic clearing that precedes the attained Dasein itself and in favor of the epochal historical granting of being's truth as ground and abyss. But it remains that the specific structural condition for

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[52] Klossowski (1969), p. 57; p. 58.
[53] Klossowski (1969), p. 58.
[54] Klossowski (1969), p. 58.

the revealing and concealing of beings and for granting of Being's truth is to be seen in what, giving itself, gives time.[55]

As we have seen, the consequences of the structure indicated here include an unlimitedness of difference in becoming, a paradoxical undermining of all fixed forms of identity, and a constitutive undecidability characteristic of the form of the moment and of infinite given time as a whole. None of these consequences are thinkable under the headings of "stability", "permanentizing", and the identity of the same, with which Heidegger goes on to characterize Nietzsche's doctrine as the final position of metaphysical thinking in the lectures. Together, though, they indicate a more complex and problematic relationship of the thought of the eternal recurrence, if construed in terms of them, to the determined history of metaphysics as a whole. In particular, they appear to bear to this history, as we have seen, the relationship that a general or dialectical problem bears to *one* of its more or less determined solutions. As such, they indicate the more original structure of time as given that pre-exists the "metaphysics of presence" as such, and also pre-determines its *possible* configurations up to their end.

What, though, is that which, in granting the form of time and events, pre-determines the happening of whatever can happen in the determined history of metaphysics as the metaphysics of presence, indeed by pre-determining the form of presencing and the present themselves? It is indicated by the name or descriptor *Ereignis*. And with the specific thought of these consequences of the eternal recurrence, thought in terms of the specific structures of the infinite indicated in the contemporary mathematical and metalogical texts, it thus apparently becomes possible to think that *the eternal recurrence is itself* one *form or structure of Ereignis*.   In thinking this (apparently) un-Heideggerian thought, we will have also thought the possibility, at a certain determined point of its discovery or revelation, of the appearance of Ereignis *itself* in or as the infinite temporal form of the eternal recurrence. But inasmuch as the eternal recurrence is itself the metaphysical picture correspondent, according to Heidegger himself, to the contemporary regime of the dominance of machination or Gestell, to see things this way would simply be to see Ereignis *in* Gestell as its other face or initially hidden form. And with his repeated statements about the peculiar relationship of Gestell and Ereignis, Heidegger himself will, of course, have said nothing else.

How does it come about, from this perspective, that the metaphysics of presence is able to determine the being of beings, from above and below, by means of specific ontic standards, and how does the affirmation of the eternal return overcome this thought? In his 1965 *Nietzsche*, Deleuze considers the successive stages of the "triumph of nihilism" in terms of the play of active and reactive forces that each involve . The third and most dangerous of these is that of the ascetic ideal:

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[55] Cf. Heidegger's 1962 lecture "Time and Being" (GA 14, p. 24): "In the sending of the destiny of Being [im Schicken des Geschickes von Sein], in the extending of time, there becomes manifest a dedication, a delivering over into what is their own [ein Übereignen], namely of Being as presence [von Sein als Anwesenheit] and of time as the realm of the open [und von Zeit als Bereich des Offenen in ihr Eigenes]. What determines both, time and Being, in their own [in ihr Eigenes], that is, in their belonging together, we shall call: *Ereignis* … What this word names can be thought now only in the light of what becomes manifest in our looking ahead toward Being and toward time as destiny and as extending, to which time and Being belong. [was sich in der Vor-Sicht auf Sein und auf Zeit als Geschick und als Reichen bekundet, wohin Zeit und Sein gehören.]"

The ascetic ideal: The moment of sublimation. What the weak or reactive life ultimately wants is the negation of life. *Its* will to power is a will to nothingness, as a condition of its triumph. Conversely, the will to nothingness can only tolerate a life that is weak, mutilated, reactive – states close to nothing. Then is formed the disturbing alliance. Life is judged according to values that are said to be superior to life: these pious values are opposed to life, condemn it, lead it to nothingness: they promise salvation only to the most reactive, the weakest, the sickest forms of life."[56]

On the condition of the reactive, which is itself a kind of reflexive form of redoubling, life is judged according to values that are "said to be superior" to it; the world as a whole takes on a determinate meaning as what is to be seen as overcome or able to be overcome it in thought. It is in this development that Deleuze reads Nietzsche as proposing the "genesis of the great categories of our thought: the Self, the World, God, causality, finality, and so on."[57] More specifically and in the 'ontological' idiom: with the specific redoubling accomplished by the reactive, the particular conditions are attained for the institution of metaphysics as onto-theology along with the basic sense of all transcendence as such. The world is determined by values and principles that are said to be outside it and superior to it; these principles aim to stabilize temporal becoming by means of something determinable from a simple "outside" position as extra-temporal or as stably fixed in general. For this operation, it is essential that a specific sense of the whole be attained, and also that it be able to be organized onto-theologically by one or another ontic referent. The affirmation of the active, by contrast, affirms life from within and overcomes the specific conditions of this onto-theological determination of categories. It points to the insistence of active becoming, before and behind the fixed values that are posited in the reactive attitudes as superior to the world and made to seem so. In this, as I have suggested, it affirms the original inherence within becoming of the infinite, and the undecidability that it brings with it as its intrinsically indicated form.

If this is correct, then what is revealed in the revelation of the eternal return is ultimately not either the determinacy of a particular standard for the being of beings or the complete arbitrariness of their utter and final removal from all standards in the generalization of a redoubled will to will. What is shown is rather the broader structure of the real-undecidable which surrounds and conditions any and all determinate procedures of decision. The affirmation of the eternal return is, then, the affirmation of this real-undecidable, and of the open and unlimited return of difference within it. This unlimited return of difference is the insistence of the paradoxes of becoming-unlimited, which cannot be solved or resolved, but only foreclosed, by any kind of determinate decision procedure. The insistence of this structure of paradox in the very form of the moment itself verifies that the moment is not the occasion for a decision or for a privileged gathering into presence but rather an opportunity for indicating the undecidability that inheres within it. On this basis it would apparently be possible – though I do not do so here – to re-read all that links the structure of the moment to the resolute and decisive in Heidegger, including also the connection he sometimes sees between it and a specially indicated structural opening, the structure of the present as *kairos*. Here, "the moment" is seen as the site of a gathering of

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[56] Deleuze (1965), p. 78.
[57] Deleuze (1965), p. 79.

authenticity and resoluteness, or as calling for a decision in a most original sense. But if, by contrast, the paradoxical structure of the eternal return is seen here, there is no occasion for decision and no demand for the resolute. All moments are equal as they equally bear the structure of the undecidable within themselves: the center is everywhere, and only difference returns. It is in this way that the moment can become, not an occasion for decision, but the object of an affirmation, an affirmation which goes all the further in implying its own infinite becoming. It is in this affirmation that time and being show themselves in a more original sense.

Heidegger himself may have suspected it. In the 1953 lecture "Who is Nietzsche's Zarathustra?" Heidegger suggests a different way of understanding the significance of the eternal recurrence, not simply as the fixing of becoming in permanence, but rather in relation to what Nietzsche presents as Zarathustra's highest hope: the deliverance of man from revenge.[58] "Revenge" itself, Heidegger notes, is further understood by Zarathustra as "the will's ill will against time and its 'it was' [des Willens Widerwille gegen die Zeit und ihr "Es war"].[59] If there is a deliverance from this to be taught, it will thus involve a particular relation to time itself, or to its own structural character. In particular, the "it was" is here "designates the fundamental trait of time in its proper and entire unfolding as time [Grundzug der Zeit in ihrem ganzen und eigentlichen Zeitwesen]."[60] The will's aversion, in revenge, is not just to one aspect or character of time but to time itself. In particular, Heidegger suggests, it is *transience* from which, here, the will suffers. In its attitude of revenge, this suffering will wills its own cessation and disappearance in general. The transient, and the earthly, are also "degraded" and "eternal Ideas" are posited.[61] It is as a response to this, Heidegger suggests, that Nietzsche's thought of deliverance intervenes. It responds to the "No" of the spirit of revenge with an affirmative "yes"; but this "yes" is, according to Heidegger, nevertheless still the affirmation of a metaphysical conception. It is, in particular, the metaphysical conception of a recurrence that can be "abiding" only if it is "eternal." With this conception, Nietzsche thinks becoming as the stable condition of beings and thereby thinks once more what is always thought, according to Heidegger, in metaphysics: namely the belonging of the predicate "eternal" to the being of beings.[62]

Nevertheless, in a brief "note on the eternal recurrence of the same" appended to the lecture, Heidegger recognizes the doctrine of recurrence as a "riddle" that today still gives itself to be thought. In particular, it is to be thought in the course of a thinking that tries to "bring to light the *essence* of modern technology".[63] Here, the eternal recurrence as a figure of technology is just *one* of its faces or aspects; beyond this there is something else, mysterious, still to be understood:

> What else is the essence of the modern power-driven machine than *one* offshoot [eine Ausforming] of the eternal recurrence of the same? But the essence of such machines is neither

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[58] GA 7.
[59] GA 7, p. 113.
[60] GA 7, p. 115.
[61] GA 7, p. 115.
[62] GA 7, pp. 115-16.
[63] GA 7, p. 124.

something machine-like nor anything mechanical. Just as little can Nietzsche's thought of eternal recurrence of the same be interpreted in a mechanical sense.

That Nietzsche interpreted and experienced his most abysmal thought [seine abgründlichsten Gedanken] in terms of the Dionysian only speaks for the fact that he still thought it metaphysically, and had to think it solely in this way. Yet it says nothing against the fact that this most abysmal thought conceals something unthought, something which at the same time remains a sealed door to metaphysical thinking [was sich dem metaphysischen Denken zugleich verschlieβt].[64]

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In this final section, I shall briefly sketch, on the basis of the meta-formally indicated structure of the ineffective, some features of an "ontological" critical politics, at some distance from what are usually seen as the political implications of Heidegger's own work, but nevertheless situationally appropriate to the structural problems and characteristic antinomies of the organization of global life today.

The key to this politics is the demonstration and awareness of the actual ineffectivity that surrounds and conditions the pursuit of all "effective" measures and solutions as a matter of their own inherent *logical* structure. For if systems of capital, structures of organization, global "planning" and the institutionalized and capitalized pursuit of technological "solutions" all operate on the assumption of the unquestioned legitimacy of effective procedures, the metalogical results demonstrate their inherent limit with respect to the total situation of global life to which they address themselves.   They show, on the one hand, that effective solutions will never succeed in resolving the structural antagonisms and underlying contradictions that actually structure this situation itself, and on the other that the various determined forms of procedural solution in which the contemporary forms of global governance and capital pursue their resolution can only succeed in reduplicating them. In this way, the demonstration and awareness of generalized ineffectivity provides rigorous grounds for the radical critique of all that is involved in the pursuit and maintenance of effectivity and thereby of the underlying assumptions and enforced practice of the regulated functioning of global life. The enforcement of this regular functioning is as much in force, today, in the seemingly decentered flows of global capital thought according to the ideological figure of the "free" market and the regulating exchange and commodification of "information" as it was earlier, in the time of the planned economies and centralized solutions of the twentieth century. The thought and reality of ineffectivity, which is shown by means of the contemporary metalogical results to be actually structurally inherent in the structure of the pursuit of effective solutions itself, marks the limit of this force and the possibility of its specific overcoming in contemporary thought and action.

This makes for what is, with respect to the globally normative standards and contemporary assumptions of the organization of collective life, on the one hand a rigorous and "ruthless critique of everything

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[64] GA 7, p. 124.

existing" and, on the other, an *affirmative* doctrine of the thought and practice of a life no longer determined by the pursuit of effectivity in any of its forms. One temporal figure of such a life is, as I have suggested, the eternal return. But as we have seen, this is no longer the regulated and regulating return of goods, information, or (more basically) capital as its form and determination. It is rather the ontologically conceived and metalogically demonstrated return of all that insists, beyond regular procedures and their effectiveness, at the very basis of their possible institution, maintenance, and force.

What is at stake in the question, temporal in an exemplary fashion, of the relationship of the two figures of the "eternal" return, the one the stabilizing into constancy of the procedural decidability of the effectiveness of identical beings, and the other the irregular return of the undecidable whose infinite form is not stability or permanence but difference itself? It is a question of *circulation*, and of the relationship of its meaning to the thought and structural reality of the infinite that would have insisted within it since its first specific thought in the history of the West.[65] If contemporary global life and practice indeed determines the form of life and exchange as a securing and ever-increasing expansion of the circulation of goods, information, and capital, the relationship of circulation to the infinite is thought quite differently in the actual ontological content of the eternal recurrence. Here, circulation is no longer the circulation of goods and capital but the return of "all that has happened, is happening, or ever will happen". And it is not determined by the "eternal" as the stabilization of circulation into the constancy of becoming, but as the recurrence of infinite difference which outstrips every finite form of stabilization and presence.

If, as I have argued, the eternal return can be ontologically thought, in its determination of the very form of the happening of what happens, as "the same as" *Ereignis*, it is possible to think *Ereignis* itself differently than Heidegger himself (at least sometimes) does. In particular, what is at issue here is the evident ambiguity of Heidegger's own thought of *Ereignis* as the *futural* event of being's own

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[65] In the 1946 lecture "Anaximander's Saying," Heidegger reads what is "considered to be the oldest saying of Western thinking" as a discourse of the circulation of presence and absence, as the arrival and departure of what comes, whiles, and goes: "Usage [Der Brauch [Heidegger's translation of Anaximander's *to chreon*]] hands over what is present to its presencing; to, that is, its while [händigt das Anwesende in sein Anwesen aus, d. h. in das Weilen]. Usage imparts to it the portion of its while. The while, apportioned in each case to what stays, rests in the jointure which disposes what presences in the passage between the two absences (arrival and departure) [Die je erteilte Weile des Weiligen beruht in der Fuge, die Anwesendes zwischen das zwiefache Ab-wesen (Herkunft und Hingang) übergänglich verfügt]." (GA 5, p. 368). He barely mentions, though, the declaration that is reputed to proceed in Anaximander the specific text considered here, that of the *apeiron* as the *arche* of all beings.: "According to the tradition reported in Simplicius' commentary on Aristotle's *Physics*, Anaximander is supposed to have said that that which presences without bounds: *arche ton onton to apeiron*. What is without bounds is not disposed by order and reck. It is not one of the things that are present but rather *to khreon*." (GA 5, p. 368). If, however, as we have suggested, the specific sense of the *apeiron* is already involved in the thought of this circulation and in the thought of presence as such that (as Heidegger will suggest) is originally thought here, then it must also essentially articulate what Heidegger later in the essay describes as the "concealed richness of the unifying One, the *en* which is, in his own way, is thought by every thinker" and in which is to be found, Heidegger suggests, the underlying sameness of being thought as *energeia, idea, eon, and logos*). (GA 5, p. 371). (There is a somewhat more developed discussion of the *apeiron* in Anaximander at the end of *Basic Concepts* (GA 51, pp. 118-20) where, nevertheless, its significance in Anaximander's thought is again treated just as that of the "refusal of every boundary").

appropriation to itself, of its ultimate return to itself in the sphere of its own propriety or proper belonging, outside and beyond the withdrawal and obscuration within the history of metaphysics that is also, according to Heidegger, proper to it.   The ambiguity of Heidegger's thought of this futural "to come" is the ambiguity of the figures in which the thought of Ereignis would, on the one hand, precede its "actuality" or "realization" as its "preparation" or hearkening, but on the other seem to bring it about, all at once, by means of a kind of sudden transformation of vision or insight. In thinking this ambiguity, Heidegger oscillates problematically between the rhetoric of decision and passivity, between the awaiting of a thinking that already knows the truth of Ereignis and the impulsive insistence of a practice of thought (and also of action?) that would seem to see at a determined "historical" moment the real possibility of bringing it about.[66]

If Ereignis is instead thought as (one form of) the eternal recurrence in the way I have suggested, its thinking is not structurally "beyond", because it is the same as, the thinking of what is involved in our present, or of the general form of the present itself. According to this general form, the structure of this present is not the determination of a specific form of presencing or even the stabilization of all becoming into infinite persistence. It is rather the insistence of infinite difference which, differentiating itself, provides for the undecidable coming of whatever is to come. What structurally insists in this coming cannot be pictured in any image of the world, or determined according to any specified or specifiable procedure. But the development of the idea of the infinite in our time points to the fact that there is nevertheless a way for this insistence to be rigorously demonstrated, and, with this, that the very difference of being can be positively indicated and thought.

What, then, of the "event"ality of the event, of the thought or possibility of the determinate moment of the break with all that has come before, or of the overcoming of the specific conditions of a longstanding historical or temporal determination of the sense of beings at a *particular* determined point? If it can be said of the distinctive forms of temporal thought and political organization of the twentieth century that the characteristically pursue a kind of sudden and radical breakthrough to the real at the punctual limit of the purification of forms, then this pursuit recurrently invokes and turns on the rhetoric and figure of the peculiar configuration of crisis, decision, and act. According to this rhetoric, the finally redemptive passage to the new is to be found only by means of a sudden completion of all that has come before whose very structure is that of the decisive "passage to the act." With this passage, the meaning of history is consummated or reversed, attained or nullified in the gesture that finally delimits it and thereby founds the possibility of another beginning.   The rhetoric of this "passion of the real" still persists, today, in the militancy of the politics of the new that invoke the decisive activity of the subject as the basis for a possible transformation or reconfiguration of existing situations at the point of what is there figured as the progressive exigency of truths. But the rhetoric of crisis and its overcoming by means of action is also deployed and pursued by the thought and practice of the regulation of global capital, which recurrently and effectively turns it to its own ends of the insurance of structural functioning and the securing of systems.

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[66] It *might* be possible – but only with an adequate and rigorous awareness of all the overdetermined dangers and problems that also are involved here – to begin (but only begin) here a reading of the significance of what have been called the "events" of 1933. I do not intend or presume such a reading, or its outcome, here.

By contrast with this, the deadlock which links the thinking of the determined forms of capitalist technological crisis to the idea of the general crisis of the end of history (whether thought in catastrophic or triumphalist forms) is already overcome by the thought of the temporal form of the eternal recurrence as the circulation of the undecidable. Here, "ontological" thought is no longer responsive to an anxiety of the possible loss of what insists within history or the exigency of its futural recovery on other terms or in terms of the "other." Rather, what is inherent and determinative in the events of history is thought in terms of its own specific structural and temporal relationship to what returns in it, and what thereby structurally implies its communication with all that happens, can happen, or will happen. With this thought of the infinite circulation of the undecidable, there is no longer anything to decide.   There is no need, and no exigency, of its preservation, maintenance or salvation of the event or its destiny, since this destiny also destines everything and everything returns.   But there remains the possibility of an affirmation that determines the world and the will under its sign, thereby indicating the inherent temporal ground of the pursuit of a clarified life to come.

The thought of the eternal recurrence, thus understood, has its fixed points in the moments of discovery or revelation at which it is illuminated or pursued, or where it becomes the principle of a life and action that is no longer determined by the effective pursuit of beings. But these fixed points are not themselves unique or privileged; they are simply indicative of the structure that is thereby seen to inhere in the form of time itself, in the moment as such. This points to what is, within them, a very different relationship to history and its becoming than that which is contemplated in the rhetoric of crisis and overcoming which capitalist-technological praxis and decisionist political thought essentially share.

In particular, if Nietzsche, with the revelation of the eternal return, could consider himself in possession of a thought that would or could "break the history of the world in two", it is because it is part of the structural content of this thought that this specifically determined history is, as such and at each of its moments, *already in communication* with the temporality of what is not history or is other to it, what cannot simply be determined as what happens according to its determinate principle or determining standard. Here there is indicated, in particular, not only the "other" beginning of another history, but other and different histories in general, and also the world-temporality of what is *not* history but is rather thought as the time of "nature" that precedes and envelops it. With this thought of the communication, in the paradoxical form of the moment, of history with its more general temporal condition, history is *already* and as such "broken" with respect to its temporally determining condition with which it is related in the circulation of the eternal return. It is this circulation of historical and natural temporalities, *in the plural*, and their communication within the paradoxical and infinite form of the now, that the eternal return teaches. The broken condition of history is the object of its affirmation, and the indicated site of what "we" must apparently learn to inhabit.   In learning to take up this inhabitance, it is not to be doubted that the ontic forms of circulation and of the expansion of its claims can and will continue, even for a long time.

Here, it is possible to suspect or discern the specific structural limit of the great Heideggerian dramatics of being's concealment and revealing, and in particular of the massive narrative of being's progressive withdrawal in the forms of its determination as beingness. In the thought of the eternal return, by

contrast, "nothing is hidden" and there is no withdrawal, unless it be the forgetting of what can and must always be remembered again, the circulation of what will always come back. The result is that the thought that indicates and affirms the image of this circulation is no longer one that attempts to supply another or superior sense of being with respect to the sense of the circulation itself. The anxiety of nihilism or its completion in the substitution of ontic for ontological measures is no longer threatening within an awareness that sees that, within the structural indication of the recurrence of all that happens, there is never too little meaning but always too much.[67] Under the sign of the eternal recurrence, that is, there is always *more* sense than can be grasped by means of finite procedures, always *more* truth than can be captured by resemblance or representation, always *more* time than is counted by the empirical clock.

Under this sign of the eternal recurrence, ontological thought thus indicates the principle of a circulation of the infinite, an unlimited becoming of sense and things at the structural basis of all principles of fixity and determinate orders of equivalent exchange. What kind of response is invoked here *on the level of action* to the characteristic problems of our time, which present themselves as the problems of the *totalization* of the world, the total pursuit of total enframing or the absolutization of the claim of technological means and practices over the circulation of life on the earth? Here we should think not only of the narrowly specified, though very real, problems of the exhaustion of resources and the verified and increasingly urgent disharmony of the global climate which push to crisis, but also of the internal "problems" of what Marx already discussed as the ongoing and ever more total circulation of life and energy in the planet's metabolism under the condition of capitalism, which could, for all we know, go on for a very long time to come.

As we have seen, the ontological thinking of the temporal significance of the eternal recurrence, along with the specific structure of the undecidable infinite that is thereby indicated within it, points to the affirmation of this unlimited becoming. The point here is not the restoration of a "natural" balance or a local or global modification of practices, still determined within the overarching form of capital and technological/effective solutions, which allow species and natural habitats to be maintained a bit longer. With respect to the totalization of the world which these solutions will always themselves have both presupposed and promulgated, the affirmation of the eternal return is the affirmation a circulation that can never be total at all, at least not within any form of consistency: it is this circulation which then provides the indication, and principle, of an affirmed possibility and the *scholium* of an education in a planetary life to come. The sense of this education is the clarified life that no longer either uses up the earth or saves it, but is finally able to live on and with it.

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[67] Cf. Deleuze (1969, p. 71): "Structure is in fact a machine for the production of incorporeal sense (skindapsos). But when structuralism shows in this manner that sense is produced by nonsense and its perpetual displacement, and that it is born of the respective position of elements which are not by themselves 'signifying', we should not at all compare it with what was called the philosophy of the absurd: Carroll, yes; Camus, no. This is so because, for the philosophy of the absurd, nonsense is what is opposed to sense in a simple relation with it, so that the absurd is always defined by a deficiency of sense and a lack (there is not enough of it …). From the point of view of structure, on the contrary, there is always too much sense: an excess produced and over-produced by nonsense as a lack of itself."

In the temporal indication that ontological thought gives with the idea of the eternal recurrence, there is, as we have already seen, nothing any longer to decide. There is no closing or opening here, no demand to open a world or pursue its sense in the cultural decisions of peoples or the institution of their differences.   This means also that here world is no longer here opposed, or opposable, to earth in the exigency of their mutual strife; rather, it may first be possible, with and in the specific thought of the structure of the temporal infinite as implied in the eternal return, to see the earth itself under the aspect of the infinite plenitude of sense and becoming that inhere in it and circulate around and through it. Here might be indicated the specific sense of what the ontological/temporal problematic gives to be thought in our time, as well as the contemporary implication of a discourse that, in addition to the eternal return, once sought to teach us, who have never known it, the meaning of the earth. The pursuit of the indication as the intimation of what today gives itself to thought in the circulation of life and its communication with the infinite cosmic flows that precede, traverse and animate it would apparently involve, among other things, a determinate rereading of the texts of philosophy, not this time as metaphysics or as the unfolding of presence but under a the different conception or sign of the recurrence of all that it thinks. Such a rereading could draw resources from the essential forms in which the limited and limiting configuration of the logical thought of being as the thinkable gathering of the *koinon* were first defined and announced as the specific ontological sense of time. It here becomes possible to think of reading, in particular, the limited and limiting circulation permitted by the *logos* and the specific adventure of its history differently, in the broader context of the finite and infinite flows of sense and becoming that surround and envelop it at every side, wherein it is just *one* history and one adventure, among many others. The trace of such an alternative determination might still be available, and give itself in the texts of the "tradition" to be read and thought as an indication of the life of the earth and its communication with the cosmic surrounding that precedes and envelops it. Such an indication would point to a meaning of circulation that is not confined to these limited and limiting forms, but is rather the meaning of the circulation of the infinite in the life of the earth as such.

It is pointed to in a specifically mythical discourse, in which the dying Socrates evokes or invokes the transit of the soul and the inherence of the thinkable, of the forgetting of what was once known and its eventual recovery, in the figure of its circulation around and through the earth, which still (and still today) does not give itself to be known.   For as was once said:

> There are many strange places upon the earth, and the earth itself is not such as those who are used to discourse upon it believe it to be in nature or size, as someone has convinced me.[68]

> And:

> Further, the earth is very large, and we live around the sea in a small portion of it between Phasis and the pillars of Heracles, like ants or frogs around a swamp; many other peoples live in many such parts of it. Everywhere about the earth there are numerous hollows of many kinds and shapes and sizes into which the water and the mist and the air have gathered. The earth itself is pure and lies in the pure sky where the stars are situated, which the majority of those

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[68] *Phaedo*, 108c

who discourse on these subjects call the ether. The water and mist and air are the sediment of the ether and they always flow into the hollows of the earth.[69]

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[69] *Phaedo,* 109a-c