

The Eternal Recurrence of “*l’effroyablement ancien*”


excerpted from “The [Convulsive] Enigma of *Eternal Recurrence* in de Chirico’s ‘Architecture,’” (1998)¹

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De Chirico's "metaphysical" representations of architecture (1910-1917) reiterate repetition and recurrence as a disturbing "alterior" history, a dis(re)membered Nietzschean classicism of "awe, joy, and terror" suspended in proximity to modern figures and representation. As both a supplement to the discourse of architecture, and as an interruption, the paintings executed by de Chirico in the "metaphysical" period position architecture as a "disquieting" subject matter, transgressing the traditional representation of architecture as knowable, measurable, and reactive to context and chronology. The potential effect of architecture to radically disrupt the stable and rational foundations of the subject, and its repetition in the "metaphysical" work becomes the basis for recuperative theory of the unspoken and unhinging origin and end of architecture – as “*l’effroyablement ancien*” (the terrifyingly ancient).

Concerning origins, Tafuri returns to Foucault, who returns to Nietzsche:

In posing the problem of an 'origin,' we presuppose the discovery of a *final* point of arrival: a destination point that *explains* everything, that causes a given 'truth,' a primary value, to burst forth from the encounter with its originary ancestor. Against such an infantile desire to 'find the murderer,' Michel Foucault has already counterpoised a history that can be formulated as a *genealogy*: 'genealogy does not oppose itself to history as the lofty and profound gaze of the philosopher might compare to the mole-like perspective of the scholar; on the contrary, it rejects the metahistorical deployment of ideal significance and indefinite teleologies. It opposes itself to the search for 'origins.'³

"The insignificance of the origin increases with the full knowledge of the origin."⁴ Foucault offers "the  in lies at a place of inevitable loss, the point where the truth of things correspond to a truthful discourse, the site of a fleeting articulation that discourse has obscured and finally lost."⁵ In de Chirico's architecture, and perhaps in all discourse, the origin merely conceals another origin. The origin as locus of truth and source of the discursive power of history is a contrivance of reason under the spell of Socratic time.⁶ History itself is rendered nonsense in the thought of eternal recurrence; origin and end become fleeting vanishing points.

How then to begin? Genealogically, to go beyond de Chirico we must go before de Chirico, before the origin/s. In the absence of the origin, Deleuze wishes for an originary point:

... the point at which the ultimate origin is overturned into an absence of origin (in the always displaced circle of eternal return). An aleatory point is displaced through all the points on the dice, as though one time for all times. These different throws which invent their own rules and compose the unique throw with multiple forms and within the eternal return are so many imperative questions subtended by a single response which leaves them open and never closes them.⁷

¹ This dissertation is sitting in the architecture library at the Georgia Institute of Technology College of Architecture. A full PDF version, excluding images, can be obtained from <http://www.lib.umi.com/dissertations/>, after filling in a few questions (author's name Mical, dissertation number AAT 9912552).

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³ Foucault, "Nietzsche, Genealogy, History," p. 140 in Tafuri, *The Sphere and the Labyrinth*, pp. 3-4.

⁴ Nietzsche, *The Dawn*, section 44 cited in Vattimo, "The End of Modernity: The End of the Project," p. 21.

⁵ Foucault, "Nietzsche, Genealogy, History," p. 143.

⁶ This Socratic time, an extension of the Socratic reason Nietzsche was opposed to, is implicated in Nietzsche's discussion in *Twilight of the Idols*, "The Problem of Socrates," section 10: "when one finds it necessary to make a tyrant out of *reason*, as Socrates did, then there must be no small danger that something else should play the tyrant. At that time rationality was surmised to be a *rescuer*... they had to make *this* choice: either to be destroyed, or - to be *absurdly rational*..."

⁷ Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, p. 283.

"The origin of that which has no origin is the origin of the work of art."⁸ De Chirico's representation of architecture is close to the Derridean supplement that masks this impossible origin:

the infrastructure of supplementarity, by knotting together into one structure the minus and the plus, the lack of origin and the supplementation of that origin, does not choose between either one of them but shows that both functions are dependent on one another in one structure of replacements, within which 'all presences will be supplements substituted for an absent origin...'⁹

THE VISION OF *ETERNAL RECURRENCE*, THE FIRST TIME

The vision of eternal recurrence the first time is an unhinging vision: Waite postulates, "Nietzsche's own first encounter with his 'thought' apparently had the force of an inarticulate traumatic experience."¹⁰ Klossowski reads the unpublished search for scientific proof of the doctrine of recurrence as Nietzsche's attempt to disprove madness: "for this idea to be both horrible and exhilarating, there was also a second factor... for who was capable of receiving such an idea? Only a delirious intelligence."¹¹ This irrational thought is more than a thought - it is a profoundly disturbing effect for Nietzsche, unhinging and unable to be reasoned away. Nietzsche's "greatest weight" actively "suspends the very principle of reality."¹² Bataille writes

Nietzsche's thought, which resulted in the sudden ecstatic vision of the eternal return, cannot be compared to the feelings habitually linked to what passes for profound reflection. For the object of the intellect here exceeds the categories in which it can be represented, to the point where as soon as it is represented it becomes an object of ecstasy - object of tears, object of laughter.¹³

Klossowski reiterates this oscillation of reactions to this convulsive thought, founded upon the suddenness (the stopped time) of this unhinging vision (like the suddenness of iron filings snapped into place instantly by a concealed magnet):

In short, the Eternal Return, originally, is not a representation, nor a postulate proper, it is an experienced fact and as thought, a *sudden* thought: phantasy or not, the Sils-Maria experience exercises its constraints as ineluctable necessity: terror and mirth in turn, within this felt necessity, will underlie from this instant Nietzsche's interpretations.¹⁴

"Bataille here names the ecstatic experience suffered by Nietzsche l'expérience *intérieure*."¹⁵ "Inner Experience is no more an experience than it is inner;" as it is always in excess - "thus that which Nietzsche named the eternal return has nothing fundamental about it: based on it, nothing is fundamental any longer, it is the loss of a foundation, the irruption of the bottomless."¹⁶ Klossowski's research examines this vision of eternal recurrence the first time from immediacy and surprise, asking, after Nietzsche -

⁸ Taylor, *Alterity*, p. 246.

⁹ Derrida, *Dissemination*, p. 167 imbedded in Gasché, *The Tain of the Mirror*, p. 210.

¹⁰ The citation concludes in sinister though not inappropriate, language "...he subsequently intended this sublime trauma to be replicated in other people" in Waite, *Nietzsche's Corpse*, p. 318. He continues examining this traumatic reading with terms such as "otherness, timelessness, outside the range of comprehension" only to reveal the source of this reading as contemporary scholarship on the Holocaust. The relation between eternal recurrence and the holocaust, identified in the works of Vattimo and alluded to in Blanchot's *Writing the Disaster* (perhaps) requires the mediation of Heidegger, and hence falls outside the scope of this work.

¹¹ Klossowski, *Nietzsche and the Vicious Circle*, p. 97. Significantly, it is Heidegger who relies on these unpublished notes to fabricate his interpretation of The Eternal Return of the Same, frequently as odds with the selectively published fragments Nietzsche wrote.

¹² Klossowski, *Nietzsche and the Vicious Circle*, p. 104.

¹³ Bataille, *Visions of Excess*, p. 220.

¹⁴ Klossowski, "Forgetting and Anamnesis in the Experience of the Eternal Return of the Same," p.148. Some critics have acknowledged indifference as an appropriate response if everything must repeat infinitely, specifically Ivan Soll: "the prospect of the infinite repetition of the pleasure or pain of one's present life entailed by the doctrine of eternal recurrence should actually be a matter of complete indifference" (Soll, "Reflections on Recurrence: A Reexamination of Nietzsche's Doctrine, die Ewige Wiederkehr des Gleichen," p. 339).

¹⁵ "Inner Experience," later the title of one of Bataille's books. See Taylor, *Alterity*, p. 144.

¹⁶ Hollier, "From Beyond Hegel to Nietzsche's Absence," in *On Bataille* (ed. Boldt-Irons), p. 70.

what am I at the instant I am seized by this thought?¹⁷ The answer is an alterity, "otherness," - for Klossowski this terrifying thought constitutes a multiple alterity of the self, a perpetual metamorphosis.¹⁸

The Eternal Return is in a way simply the mode of its display: the feeling of vertigo results from the *once and for all* in which the subject is surprised by the round of *innumerable times: once and for all* disappears: intensity emits something like a series of infinite vibrations of being: and it is these vibrations which project *outside itself* the individual self as so many *dissonances*: all reverberate until is re-established the consonance of this same instant in which these dissonances are reabsorbed anew.¹⁹

Kaufmann is the first interpreter to write this enigma in proximity to the body: "to understand Nietzsche it is important to realize how frightful he himself found the doctrine and how difficult it was for him to accept it. Evidently, he could only endure it by accepting it joyously, almost ecstatically. That is what he said more indirectly when he finally presented the idea in 'the greatest weight.'"²⁰ Nietzsche's troping of weight is clarified by Kundera, who contends, "in the world of eternal return the weight of unbearable responsibility lies heavy on every move we make. That is why Nietzsche called the idea of eternal return the heaviest of burdens (*das schwerste Gewicht*)."²¹ Weight (and severity), a heaviness posited by Parmenides as the negation of lightness, is reversed in the "spirit of gravity" of eternal recurrence. Here "the question of weight or lightness is not insignificant. To the contrary, it is the question of significance itself. Meaning presupposes iteration - what recurs is significant (weighty) and what does not is insignificant (immaterial)."²² "The only certainty is: the lightness/weight opposition is the most dangerous, most mysterious of all."²³ Lightness and heaviness, ascending and descending, these degrees of tethered-ness to time's passage eternalized in the vision of eternal recurrence the first time allow this vision to isolate and identify the body as the primary ground of eternal recurrence. Gravity and perishing temporality (previously external to the body) are reconfigured as the interior forces of this convulsive thought.

The significance of this sudden vision for Nietzsche was also both instantaneous and lasting: "immortal is the moment in which I engendered the Recurrence. For the sake of this moment, I endure the Recurrence."²⁴ Nietzsche later wrote "if it is true, or rather: if it is believed to be true - than everything changes and spins around, and all previous values are devalued" and "when you incarnate the thought of thoughts, you will be transformed [*verwandeln*]."²⁵ Eternal recurrence comes as possession: Nietzsche believed "if this thought gained possession of you, it would change you as you are, or perhaps crush you."²⁶ This partially explains why the "anxiously shaken and secretively cautious way in which Nietzsche's letters and notes report on the emergence of 'his' idea. This idea is at first not conceived, but rather is an ecstatic 'experiment in thought'..."²⁷ "In his letters to Gast and Overbeck, written shortly after

¹⁷ see Klossowski, "Forgetting and Anamnesis in the Experience of the Eternal Return of the Same," p. 139.

¹⁸ see *Ibid.*, p.146.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, p.148

²⁰ Kaufmann's introduction to Nietzsche, *The Gay Science* (trans. Kaufmann), p. 19.

²¹ Kundera, *The Unbearable Lightness of Being*, p.3. Kundera relies on the thought of Parmenides in evaluating the thought of eternal recurrence, with its great weight, as a negative in comparison with "the unbearable lightness of being." There is more to this simple retelling than meets the eye: Nietzsche, in his *Philosophy in the Tragic Age of the Greeks*, first opposes Parmenides, first author of "being," in *agon* with Heraclitean (and Nietzschean) concept of "becoming" (pp. 70-1). Nietzsche then proposes to correct the Parmenidean error of "taking heavy and light, for example, light (in the sense of 'weightless') was apportioned to light, heavy to dark, and thus heavy seemed to him but the negation of weightless, but weightlessness seemed a positive quality" with the rebuke (significantly in corporal terms) "heaviness surely seems to urge itself upon the senses as a positive quality; yet this did not prevent Parmenides from labeling it as a negation" (pp. 71-2).

²² Taylor, *Tears*, p. 147

²³ Kundera, *The Unbearable Lightness of Being*, p. 6.

²⁴ Nietzsche, cited in Waite, *Nietzsche's Corpse*, p. 328.

²⁵ Nietzsche, in private correspondence to Overbeck, cited and translated in Löwith, *Nietzsche's Philosophy of the Eternal Recurrence of the Same*, p. 87 and Nietzsche cited in Strong, *Friedrich Nietzsche and the Politics of Transfiguration*, p. 271.

²⁶ Nietzsche cited without reference in Wood, "Nietzsche's Transvaluation of Time," p.46

²⁷ Löwith, *Nietzsche's Philosophy of the Eternal Recurrence of the Same*, p. 63.

the event, Nietzsche, without betraying the thought of thoughts, was already speaking of the effect its disclosure would produce... its disclosure *would break the history of humanity in two*.²⁸

This vision of eternal recurrence searches for words; a riddle that "can't be asked twice," eternal recurrence is always a symmetrical enigma (of origins, identity, and time).²⁹ The distinction between the experience (vision) and thought of eternal recurrence is that of a "first time" and a "not the first time."³⁰ The primacy of the unhinging vision repeated in the text as a search for its effect places forgetting at the center of this speaking, a forgetting of the same species preceding the "first time": "I had to forget that revelation [of the eternal recurrence] for it *to be true*."³¹ This *anamnesis* coincides with the revelation of the return: how does the return not bring back the forgetting?³² Eternal recurrence (the first time), a forgetting of the self, predicated on a historical-self awareness, is a sudden forgetting of origins. In Nietzsche's first "convulsive" vision, this forgetting is a forgetting also of the origins and history of the thought itself.

To experience this unhinging thought of eternal recurrence the first time, Nietzsche forgets the impossible origin(s) of this thought – though there is a "bewildering array of candidates for ancestors" to the thought of eternal recurrence.³³ When Klossowski writes "isn't forgetting the source and indispensable condition not only for the appearance of the eternal return but for transforming the very identity of the person to whom it appears?" it is implicit that this self (Nietzsche) must also forget the previous known models of recurrence for it to occur "the first time."³⁴ "Nietzsche defines the faculty of forgetting as 'no mere *vis inertiae* as the superficial imagine; it is rather an active and in the strictest sense positive faculty of repression', 'an apparatus of absorption', 'a plastic regenerative and curative force'.³⁵ This "memory that knows how to forget" consumes its origin(s), to make itself original.³⁶ Klossowski notes "to adhere to the return is also to admit that forgetfulness alone enabled us to undertake old creations as new creations *ad infinitum*." - including the unique identity of the "terrible thought" itself.³⁷

In the Stoic doctrine of *ekpyrosis*, this world ends as it begins, in a total (apocalyptic) fire. The subsequent world that returns will be identical to the prior, the same necessary and fated events repeat as new only within their world-cycle. This conflagration in fire is the periodic return of *ekpyrosis*, the interval between its return the "great year." There is no "time" in any meaningful sense before or after the world-cycles of this cosmology.³⁸ Its genealogy is traced in Nietzsche's time to the (lost) writings of Heraclitus.³⁹

"Fire, having come suddenly upon all things, will judge and convict them" - for Heraclitus fire consumes all; "cosmic justice and symmetry require that at some point all things return to the source from which they emerged."⁴⁰ The instability of fire, its apparent caprice and metastatic power is in

²⁸ Klossowski, *Nietzsche and the Vicious Circle*, p.93.

²⁹ The symmetry of this enigma lies in the homology of its structure, content, and effect. As an enigma, it reveals itself as the answer and origin of this enigma, nothing more. For an examination of these citations concerning Nietzsche's "great thought," see Strong, *Friedrich Nietzsche and the Politics of Transfiguration*, p. 262 and p. 268.

³⁰ See for example, Kundera's brief explanation of the insubstantiability of something done once (*einmal ist keinmal*) in Kundera, *The Unbearable Lightness of Being*, p. 8.

³¹ Klossowski, "Forgetting and Anamnesis in the Experience of the Eternal Return of the Same," p. 140.

³² *Ibid.*, p. 138.

³³ Moles identifies the obvious Heraclitean and Stoic options, but adds a separate genealogy from Epicurus to Lucretius to Hume, who ridiculed it as "the most absurd doctrine ever conceived." Moles, in a footnote, identifies forty-four authors from antiquity to his contemporaries, all unknown to Nietzsche, and seventeen contemporaries that he may have known of, though of these only Blanqui is mentioned in his writings. See Moles, *Nietzsche's Philosophy of Nature and Cosmology*, p. 286 and fn. 7 on p. 405.

³⁴ Klossowski, "Nietzsche's Experience of the Eternal Return" in *The New Nietzsche*, p. 108.

³⁵ Nietzsche, *On the Genealogy of Morals*, book II section 1 cited in Deleuze, *Nietzsche and Philosophy*, p. 113.

³⁶ This initial citation concerning the ahistorical memory is from Magnus, *Nietzsche's Existential Imperative*, p. 38.

³⁷ see Klossowski, "Nietzsche's Experience of the Eternal Return" in *The New Nietzsche*, p. 115.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 282.

³⁹ For a brief discussion of this Stoic "great year," see Eliade, *Cosmos and History: the Myth of the Eternal Return* p. 122.

⁴⁰ Heraclitus, Fragment LXVI cited and translated in Robinson, *Heraclitus*, p. 45 and thereafter Kahn, *The Art and Thought of Heraclitus*, p. 273. Robinson notes: "if Heraclitus did believe in a periodic conflagration of the cosmos, a time-period for this may have been 10,800 years, what he apparently called a 'great year.' But so specific a conception may in fact be a Stoic importation, and should be treated with caution" (Robinson, *Heraclitus*, p. 101). Kahn's text does not support this caution (p. 158).

Heraclitus localized in the tropai of fire, their irrational turning points.⁴¹ Nietzsche writes "before his eye not a drop of injustice remains in the world poured all around him... it constructs and destroys, all in innocence... from time to time it starts them anew... such is the game that the *aeon* plays with itself."⁴²

How? Heraclitus writes "the beginning and the end are shared in the circumference of a circle," and this is read by Nietzsche (and his interpreters) as an esoteric figure of time.⁴³ This possibility of time cannot remain linear (teleological, transcendental, rooted in Being), metaphorical machinery of the universe - "the path of the carding wheel is straight and crooked."⁴⁴ The time of the world is a difficult proposition in this world of "becoming," exemplified in Heraclitus' most cited fragment: "one cannot step twice into the same river, nor can one grasp any mortal substance in a stable condition, but it scatters and again gathers; it forms and dissolves, and approaches and departs."⁴⁵ The young Nietzsche initiates a lifetime affinity for this revelation: "Heraclitus will always be right in this, that *being* is an empty fiction."⁴⁶ Being, initiated by Parmenides, contra Heraclitean becoming. Within Heraclitean *becoming* there is a premonition of Nietzsche's later experience of eternal recurrence the first time: "the everlasting and exclusive coming-to-be, the impermanence of everything actual, which constantly acts and comes-to-be but never is, as Heraclitus teaches it, is a terrible, paralyzing thought."⁴⁷ Paralyzing because in Heraclitus it is the irrefutable (game-like) "innocence of becoming" - that nothing is intended by becoming.⁴⁸ Voided teleology = voided metaphysical time = "the labyrinth of recurrence."

NIETZSCHE'S "CLASSICAL" LABYRINTH: APOLLONIAN RECURRENCE

If Nietzsche's decision against everything previously believed in is an explosive that breaks in two the history of European humanity so far, he harks back (in anticipation of the history that comes after him) behind the history that precedes him, 'with a voice that bridges millennia.' Accordingly, in *Twilight of the Idols* he explicitly attributes his teaching to what he 'owes the ancients.' Therewith he repeats the 'tragic mentality' of antiquity; the restoration and 'transposition' of that mentality into a philosophical pathos was already the theme of *The Birth of Tragedy* and of *Philosophy in the Tragic Age of the Greeks*. By means of this return to the old world, Nietzsche thought he had found the exit 'from whole millennia of the labyrinth.'⁴⁹

This labyrinth of time broken by the return of the classical is itself a classical construct, in that its entrance and exit are the same. The early Greek model of recurrence is turned (reversed) in Nietzsche: the classical is the distant exit to this (modern) labyrinth. Duplicating the structure and function of eternal recurrence, the Nietzschean "classical" returns to overturn the labyrinth it originated.

Within the classical, three modes of representation recur: epic, lyric, and tragic. Weiss claims "the eternal recurrence is the extreme epic philosophy... a cosmic therapy against the terror of the passing of every moment, a vanishing into nothingness, into absolute oblivion."⁵⁰ Kundera identifies two possible interpretations (of eternal recurrence) as epic and lyrical, but he excludes the mode closes to the early

⁴¹ see Robinson, *Heraclitus*, p. 98.

⁴² Nietzsche, *Philosophy in the Tragic Age of the Greeks*, p.62. Significantly (for this research) Nietzsche adds "The child throws its toys away from time to time - and starts again, in innocent caprice.... only aesthetic man can look thus at the world, a man who has experienced in artists and in the birth of art objects... how necessity and random play, oppositional tension and harmony, must pair to create a work of art,"

⁴³ Heraclitus Fragment XCIX cited and translated in Kahn, *The Art and Thought of Heraclitus*, p. 75. See also Heraclitus Fragment CIII: "The way up and down is one and the same."

⁴⁴ Heraclitus Fragment LXXIV in Kahn, *The Art and Thought of Heraclitus*, p. 63. See p. 190-2 for an examination of this enigmatic fragment.

⁴⁵ Heraclitus Fragment LI cited and translated in Kahn, *The Art and Thought of Heraclitus*, p. 53.

⁴⁶ Nietzsche, *Philosophy in the Tragic Age of the Greeks*, p.51

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 54.

⁴⁸ Stambaugh, *Nietzsche's Thought of Eternal Return*, p. 100.

⁴⁹ Löwith, *Nietzsche's Philosophy of the Eternal Recurrence of the Same*, pp. 109-10.

⁵⁰ Erich Heller, "Nietzsche's Terrors: Time and the Inarticulate," p. 185.

Nietzsche, the tragic mode.⁵¹ The promise of Nietzsche's *The Birth of Tragedy* is the return of the tragic to occupy the center and exit of this labyrinth. From this text "European intellectual history thus appears as the ebb and flow of a single motif that circles around or undulates between ascent, descent, and return."⁵²

The Birth of Tragedy "is not only a manifesto on the polarity between the Apollonian and Dionysian artistic drives, but is itself the result of the interplay of energies that are both raging and resistant, intoxicating and precise."⁵³ The Apollonian is "representation and formalism' in the mode of repetition; it "dissimulates the terrors of the Dionysian abyss..."⁵⁴ Tragedy is a "monstrous" relation between these two images of the gods.⁵⁵ "In truth, the polarity between Apollo and Dionysus is not a turbulent opposition that vacillates freely between two extremes; we are dealing much more here [tragedy] with a stationary polarity that leads to a clandestine doubling of the Apollonian."⁵⁶ This doubling of Apollo is also the doubling of his effects.

Apollo "adjusts distances to things," he is "a cold, always-distant god, the god of the horizon, the god of the far-reaching gaze."⁵⁷ Apollonian time is horizontal, smooth, cold and reflective, a distancing of time tending towards the absolute degree zero of the spacing of time (as it was in the beginning). The horror of eternal recurrence is a question of duration.⁵⁸ Apollonian time is also the time of the immobile labyrinth - time is stopped, emptied, deferred - tending towards eternity. It seizes and possesses by vision, though only the self-same vision returns, the mask of Apollo returning the image of Apollo. Within this labyrinth, the self searches for an exit from the horrors of time, for a true fate. In the "coils" and "loops" of the labyrinth of Apollonian recurrence, every move is a fatal move.⁵⁹

The manifold detours between interiority and exteriority, between the moment-interval and eternity are the labyrinthine effects of the thought of (Apollonian) recurrence. The construction of time that returns to return the self to the beginning is this labyrinth that Nietzsche names "*circulus vitiosus deus*."⁶⁰ This vicious circle "suppresses every goal and meaning, since the beginning and the end always merge with each other;" "there is *no point* of the Circle that cannot be *beginning at the same time as end*;" it "is grounded in the *forgetfulness* of what we have been and will be."⁶¹ Within this circle, what is forgotten? That everything must return - the "possibility of "lightness" is exiled outside the labyrinth, and also everything that would prevent eternal recurrence from seizing the self for "the first time."

Blanchot, speaking in a fragmentary writing, states: "the 're' of the return inscribes as the 'ex', opening of all exteriority: as if the return, far from putting and end to it, marks exile, the commencement in its recommencement of exodus. To return, that would be to return again to ex-centering oneself, to

⁵¹ These first two categories are discussed as seeking the ideal in every single case (lyrical) and tiring of this ideal and collecting curiosities (epic), though not initially explored in relation to the thought of eternal recurrence. See Kundera, *The Unbearable Lightness of Being*, p.201. Nietzsche's concern with the tragic appeared as the topic of his first book, *The Birth of Tragedy*, and would continue throughout his writings. The later move towards a purely Dionysian view of the world is here suspended to isolate the earliest "tragic" view of the classical he expounded, as it formed the basis for the *Stimmung* of de Chirico's "metaphysical" work.

⁵² Sloterdijk, *Thinker on Stage: Nietzsche's Materialism*, p. 20.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, p. 15.

⁵⁴ Weiss, 'The Body Dionysian', p. 29

⁵⁵ see Sallis, *Crossings: The Space of Tragedy*, p. 17.

⁵⁶ Sloterdijk, *Thinker on Stage: Nietzsche's Materialism*, p. 25.

⁵⁷ Goux, *Oedipus, Philosopher*, pp. 105-6. "Apollonian mimesis produces distancing images" (Sallis, *Crossings: Nietzsche and the Space of Tragedy*, p. 97).

⁵⁸ Stambaugh, *Nietzsche's Thought of Eternal Return*, p. 17.

⁵⁹ This fatality is not necessarily the fatalism of stoic recurrence, but Nietzsche's "existential imperative" to make any move as if you would have to repeat it an infinite number of times. Concerning the significance of the eternal recurrence as composed of loops and coils, see Wood, "Nietzsche's Transvaluation of Time," pp. 40-1.

⁶⁰ "As Walter Kaufmann points out in his translation of *Beyond Good and Evil*, this Latin sentence is ambiguous. It can mean: 'A vicious circle is made god.' Or: 'God is a vicious circle.' Or 'The circle is a vicious god.' - translators note in Löwith, *Nietzsche's Philosophy of the Eternal Recurrence of the Same*, p. 261. This term also forms the core argument of Klossowski's writings on Nietzsche's eternal recurrence.

⁶¹ Klossowski, *Nietzsche and the Vicious Circle*, pp. 30 and Klossowski, "Forgetting and Anamnesis in the Experience of the Eternal Return of the Same" p.148 and finally Klossowski, *Nietzsche and the Vicious Circle*, pp. 55-6.

erring. Only the *nomadic* affirmation remains.⁶² This detouring of the labyrinth is written by Nietzsche as a (double) recoil:

In Nietzsche's writing... we find a double recoiling action: there is the claimed eternal recoiling again of each event before it springs forward again, expending itself, burning out and slowly coiling again in an unthinkable return of life force to the event's constellation; then there is the coiling again in the claims of the eternal and the return, of the early Greek image of time, the conflict of meaning and meaninglessness, the peculiar Western anxiety over death and loss, the twin anxieties of keeping and releasing... these composing elements are coiled again in Nietzsche's metaphor [the return as a circle].⁶³

Within the labyrinth of recurrence, the circle circumscribes the question of the identity of the self, as Blanchot contends: "the circle, uncurled along a straight line rigorously prolonged, reforms a circle eternally bereft of a center."⁶⁴ Recurrence can never be a simple circle.⁶⁵ Klossowski reads this void in the core of recurrence as existence without signification: "the circle opens me to inanity and encloses me within the following alternative: *either* all returns because nothing has ever made any sense whatever, *or else* things never make any sense except by the return of all things, without beginning or end... by itself, the circle says nothing, except that existence has sense only in being existence, or that signification is nothing but an intensity."⁶⁶ Apollo, the labyrinth, circles and recurrence are each avatars of an intense Nietzschean "classicism," which originate and end the question of time. Eternal recurrence of the (classical) past is, for Deleuze, therefore not an impossibility of passage but "an answer to the problem of passage."⁶⁷

The Apollonian labyrinth conceals a "terrible" secret at its center. The (architectural) instruments of repetition, exteriority, and emptying construct this architecture of the self's place in time - as a vertiginous depth. The center is the origin of erosive time. Time here means "in time," in the devouring that is time.⁶⁸ Bataille's reflection on this depth in the Nietzschean revaluation of time is in the words of this labyrinth's center:

[before the idea of eternal recurrence] only the object of his vision - which made him laugh and tremble - was not the return, but what the return (and not even time), but what the return laid bare, the impossible depth of things. And this depth, should one reach it by one path or another, is always the same... perceiving it, there is nothing left to do but collapse (become agitated right to the point of fever, lose oneself in ecstasy, weep).⁶⁹

The center is the place of the spirit of gravity (of time's labyrinth). In *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, in a section entitled "The Vision and the Riddle," the "spirit of gravity" has words, it speaks that "time is a circle."⁷⁰ Zarathustra seeks a more exact answer, proposing that at the threshold called moment, two eternities extend beyond the horizon, one past, one future, indistinguishable - eternity is horizontal (Apollonian). The vertical must be the moment, the pure interval; they cross at the center of the labyrinth, in the shape of the chiasmus. Paradox, aporia, inversion of opposites do not describe the severity of this improbable crossing.⁷¹ What lies beneath the center of the labyrinth, what is marked by the "x" that originates the

⁶² Blanchot, *Le Pas au Delà*, p. 49 cited and translated in Taylor, *Alterity*, p.239

⁶³ Scott, "Masks of Self-Overcoming," p. 221.

⁶⁴ Blanchot, *Writing the Disaster*, p. 2.

⁶⁵ Nietzsche, in *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, has Zarathustra speak against his dwarf that time conceived as a circle is too simple an image. This caveat is sustained in many close readings of this text. See for example Hatab, *Nietzsche and Eternal Recurrence: the Redemption of Time and Becoming*, pp. 94-5 and Stambaugh, *The Problem of Time in Nietzsche*, p.174.

⁶⁶ Klossowski, "Nietzsche's Experience of the Eternal Return," pp. 113-4.

⁶⁷ Deleuze, *Nietzsche and Philosophy*, p. 48

⁶⁸ see Stambaugh, *Nietzsche's Thought of Eternal Return*, p. 104.

⁶⁹ Bataille, *Inner Experience*, p. 154 in Hollier, "From Beyond Hegel to Nietzsche's Absence," p. 69.

⁷⁰ Nietzsche, *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, "Of the Vision and the Riddle;" this synopsis continues without citation from this primary source.

⁷¹ In a provocative fragment, Nietzsche writes "since Copernicus, man rolls from the center into an X." This unpublished fragment, and its relation to Nietzsche's analysis (in Löwith, *Nietzsche's Philosophy of the Eternal Recurrence of the Same*, p. 52) of nihilism would (perhaps) take us outside our genealogy. Nihilism's relation to

labyrinth of time? "Nietzsche thinks that our experience of time as succession has its root in our fear of destruction. Trying to avoid death, we play for time."⁷² This insight finds its echo in Freud's later *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*, where from a condition of "perpetual recurrence of the same thing" he identifies the function of repetition, "these circuitous paths to death, faithfully kept to by the conservative instincts."⁷³

THE MOMENT/UM OF REPETITION

In the eternal recurrence the "eternalized" moment is "intensified" as "a standing together of temporal moments" convulsively in the "horizontal axis of succession" of eternity.⁷⁴ The moment, thus configured spatially, posits the inseparability of spatial and temporal possibilities (as does the labyrinth of the "classical," in recurrence). The possibility of eternity, as an exteriority that interrupts the moment of interiority, is unstable in Nietzsche's writings, appearing as "endless duration," an "eternal present," the "simultaneity of all moments," or as "timelessness."⁷⁵ Eternity "is that in which occurrence ends"; in Nietzsche's "great thought" the moment ends vertically into eternity.⁷⁶

The totality of moments, like the totality of spaces, is not extensively infinite, even though the displacement of moments never ceases... and thereby implies "that there is a colossal depth to each moment, which multiplies its significance to infinity. Instead of thinking of time as merely successive - what might be called the 'horizontal' conception of it - Nietzsche's vision of a recurrent universe leads us to think of it also as 'vertical.'

This is shown in his frequent references to the 'well.'⁷⁷

Nietzsche's depictions of the "well of eternity" impart a "quasi-vertical dimension to each moment" and "opens up the possibility of depth, and, experientially, intensity."⁷⁸ Eternity intersects the moment, eternalizing it, not as a doubling of time, but as an instantaneous eruption of time, an arising and perishing of instants without procession, effects a self-consumption of moments without goal.⁷⁹

"Eternal recurrence seems merely to be a very powerful modification or extension of seriality...."each individual moment acquires membership of an additional, transversal series [vertical depth]."⁸⁰ Deleuze writes "and what would eternal return be, if we forget that it is a vertiginous movement endowed with a force: not one which causes the return of the Same in general, but one which selects ...Nietzsche's leading idea is to ground the repetition in eternal return on both the death of God and the dissolution of the self."⁸¹ That which the eternal recurrence extends (eternalizes) is the moment/um of repetition, as when Nietzsche writes "if only one moment of the world recurs - said the lightning - all moments must recur... whoever wants to have a single experience again, must wish for everything again."⁸²

eternal recurrence made most explicit in the posthumous collection of fragments published as Nietzsche's *The Will to Power*.

⁷² Moles, *Nietzsche's Philosophy of Nature and Cosmology*, p. 224.

⁷³ Freud, *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*, pp. 23 and 46.

⁷⁴ Magnus, *Nietzsche's Existential Imperative*, p. 154; Stambaugh, *The Problem of Time in Nietzsche*, p.180; and Wood, "Nietzsche's Transvaluation of Time," pp. 40-1. Stambaugh's influential analysis of the problem of time in Nietzsche's thought of eternal recurrence is here used to articulate the crossing of the horizontal and vertical axes of time in the experience and thought of eternal recurrence.

⁷⁵ Stambaugh, *Nietzsche's Thought of Eternal Return*, p. 108. Though these possibilities are examined in his unpublished writings, it is significant that the necessary concept of eternity inherited from the classical predecessors of eternal recurrence remains an unstable identity; a difficult thought crossed with the possibility of the moment of insight of recurrence, itself a difficult to articulate, as we have seen.

⁷⁶ Stambaugh, *Nietzsche's Thought of Eternal Return*, pp. 125 and 114.

⁷⁷ Moles, *Nietzsche's Philosophy of Nature and Cosmology*, pp. 295-6.

⁷⁸ Wood, "Nietzsche's Transvaluation of Time," p.42.

⁷⁹ Stambaugh, *Nietzsche's Thought of Eternal Return*, p. 117 and Magnus, *Nietzsche's Case: Philosophy as/and Literature*, p.29.

⁸⁰ Wood, "Nietzsche's Transvaluation of Time," p.41

⁸¹ Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, p.11.

⁸² Nietzsche cited and translated in Stambaugh, *Nietzsche's Thought of Eternal Return*, p. 197.

Repetition is the return of the "untimely" from the well of eternity (in the labyrinth of eternal recurrence) prohibiting both stasis and closure "by willing the never-ending repetition of finitude and time, no longer seeking a ground in absolutes beyond the negativity of the world-processes."⁸³

"Reconciliation with time occurs as willing back. This could mean either of two things: (1) to will backward into time, so to speak, turning time around, reversing it, or (2) to will things and events back, to will them to come again, to return."⁸⁴ To the old irreversibility of time, Nietzsche proposes "Zarathustra's remedy: to re-will the *non-willed* insofar as he desires to assume the accomplished fact - thus to render it *inaccomplished*, by rewilling it *innumerable times*."⁸⁵ "In the case of Nietzsche: liberate the will from everything that binds it by making repetition the very object of willing."⁸⁶

In this aspect of eternal recurrence, the relations of past and present, within the moment, are no longer categories of time but instruments of repetition. "He who repeats so that time will come back has already separated himself from time."⁸⁷ Nietzsche writes

[in] Greek thought... repetition is erroneously what one calls 'mediation'...for what is repeated, has been; otherwise, it could not be repeated; but precisely the fact that it has been, makes the repetition into something new... repetition is the interest of metaphysical and at the same time the interest on which metaphysics founders.⁸⁸

It is the clothing that cannot be worn out.⁸⁹

Eternal recurrence is Apollo expressing Dionysus, therefore recognizing appearance as appearance, and itself as appearance. But what distinguishes eternal recurrence from Greek tragedy is that eternal recurrence explicitly recognizes and reveals the eternal value of appearances, i.e. as *repeatable*.⁹⁰

Blanchot concludes that the moment of eternal recurrence is the "moment when *logos* comes to an end - affirming itself and always new again without novelty, through the obligation - the madness - of repetition."⁹¹

Deleuze, in *Difference and Repetition*, exhaustively thinks through the thought of repetition bound to the question of eternal recurrence: "repetition is a condition of action before it is a concept of reflection."⁹² Initially, originally, "the form of repetition in the eternal return is the brutal form of the immediate."⁹³ Deleuze contends the old linear notion of time that "distributes a before, a during, and an after... is already repetition in itself, in the pure form of time... repetition no longer bears (hypothetically) upon a first time which escapes it, and in any case remains external to it..."⁹⁴ In the irrational "law" of eternal recurrence, repetition is not "secondary in relation to a supposed ultimate or originary fixed term," but present at the origin, before the origin: "the before or first time is no less repetition than the second or third time."⁹⁵

After Nietzsche, (Nietzsche's who speaks in double-figures), repetition is two. Following from Freudian repetition, under the aspect of "perpetual recurrence of the same thing," repetition is originally

⁸³ Hatab, *Nietzsche and Eternal Recurrence: the Redemption of Time and Becoming*, p. 99. Repetition and "its dark precursor" (see Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, p.291) as both the content and form of the doctrine of eternal recurrence, and anticipates the use of repetition in the itinerary of De Chirico's architectural representations.

⁸⁴ Stambaugh, *The Other Nietzsche*, p. 85.

⁸⁵ Klossowski, "Forgetting and Anamnesis in the Experience of the Eternal Return of the Same," p. 145. The observation continues: *Ruse* which removes from the event its '*once and for all*' character: such is the subterfuge that the Sils Maria experience (unintelligible) in itself first offers to reflection: the latter is in this way centered on the will."

⁸⁶ Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, p. 6.

⁸⁷ Irigaray, *Marine Lover of Friedrich Nietzsche*, p. 11.

⁸⁸ Löwith, *Nietzsche's Philosophy of the Eternal Recurrence of the Same*, pp. 170-1.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.* p. 170.

⁹⁰ Hatab, *Nietzsche and Eternal Recurrence: the Redemption of Time and Becoming*, p. 106

⁹¹ Blanchot, *The Infinite Conversation*, p. 271.

⁹² Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, p. 90. Deleuze reads the polyvocal status of repetition within recurrence through the supplement of Freudian repetition, and to a lesser degree Marxist, not as competing thoughts, but as a scaling of regimes of thought.

⁹³ Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, p. 7.

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 294 and 295.

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 105 and 295.

"habitus... repetition as a binding" and secondarily "Eros-Mnemosyne... repetition as *displacement* and *disguise*."⁹⁶ Original repetition "is prolongation, continuation, or that length of time which is stretched into duration: bare repetition."⁹⁷ Clothed repetition is "the reprise of singularities, the condensation of singularities one into another... repetition is this emission of singularities."⁹⁸ From these two repetition Deleuze announces the "third repetition or *repetition within the eternal return* ... it is here that the freeze-frame begins to move once more, of that the straight line of time, as though drawn by its own length, re-forms a strange loop which in no way resembles the earlier cycle, but leads into the formless..."⁹⁹ This third repetition of recurrence is "repetition by excess which leaves nothing intact... it is by itself the third time in the series, the future as such... as Klossowski says, it is the secret coherence which establishes itself only by excluding my own coherence, my own identity, the identity of the self."¹⁰⁰ Deleuze acknowledges "if repetition exists, it expresses... an eternity opposed to permanence. In every respect, repetition is a transgression."¹⁰¹

Repetition in a series produces an effect of detouring and uneasy signification - the repetition of an act or scene creates doubles it as both scene and representation (signifier). This signification through repetition becomes a secondary (alterior/anamorphic) repetition.¹⁰² The self is rendered as alterior, as tending towards anamorphosis, in the repetition(s) of recurrence. Deleuzian (neo-Nietzschean) repetition is opposed "to particularities of memory... it is in repetition and by repetition that forgetting becomes a positive power."¹⁰³ Forgetting is also the forgetting preceding and produced by eternal recurrence. Put simply, repetition invokes eternal recurrence through repetition and remembering.

Freud, in *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*, thinking not of eternal recurrence but of repetition as an abnormal compulsive behavior, begins with a distinction between (pathological) repetition and (casual) remembering.¹⁰⁴ This text identifies the compulsion to repeat as a wish to conjure up what has been forgotten and repressed, told as Nietzsche would, through a parable.¹⁰⁵ The fable of "fort-da" is an old story. Freud's insight into the "fort-da" experience, as the experience of loss and the mastery over loss through repetition (as compulsion) echoes Nietzsche's (and de Chirico's) willing of the return of the "classical" - the "classical" is their repetition-compulsion. Tafuri and Teyssot write, "classicism is the art of the eternal recommencement, of repetition and synechdoche."¹⁰⁶ The proper repetition-compulsion "serves to present and represent the repressed through content by proxy, through indirection, through oblique reflection, through the cast and casting of shadow play, through the mask of disguise..."¹⁰⁷ These terms recur in Nietzsche's writing of the (tragic) "classical," symptomatically. Repetition, as signification and obscurity, is bound to language with an immediacy that eternal recurrence is not. After the *fort-da* observation of loss, the (Freudian) compulsion to repeat is a compulsion to metaphor.¹⁰⁸ In Freud, the

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 108.

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 201.

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 201.

⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 297.

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 90.

¹⁰¹ Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, pp. 2-3. Deleuze continues, in terms appropriate for the three genealogies in de Chirico's work: "It puts law into question, it denounces its nominal or general character in favor of a more profound and more artistic reality."

¹⁰² The alterity is posited on the discrepancy between two identical events, one present and one locked in the past; this anamorphic thinking of signification, a "Doppler effect" is produced by the selfsame event in discretely separate times, significant to thinking the repetition and return.

¹⁰³ Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, p. 7.

¹⁰⁴ Repetition as a tendency to "repeat repressed material as a contemporary experience" (transference neurosis) is opposed to "remembering it as something belonging to the past." (Freud, *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*, p.19). This text, coming after Nietzsche's writings and in a suspicious state of professed ignorance of Nietzsche, is paramount in Deleuze's analysis. It is included here, not to drag the whole deterritorializing apparatus of Freudian analysis to de Chirico (as Foster in *Compulsive Beauty* has done), but to specifically and narrowly reiterate the significant origin (and identical conclusion) of repetition.

¹⁰⁵ Freud, *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*, p. 37.

¹⁰⁶ Tafuri and Teyssot, "Classical Melancholies," p. 25. The repetition in its synechdoche is explained: "this figure of speech, which is a form of metonymy and which, if we believe the entomologists, corresponds to the way in which ants see things, invests the part with authority to indicate the whole."

¹⁰⁷ Chapelle, *Eternal Recurrence: A Psychological Essay on the Compulsive Return of Fixed Experience Patterns*, p.155.

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 162.

compulsion to repeat is also a compulsion of destiny.¹⁰⁹ In Nietzsche, it is a compulsion *to* destiny. He writes, "the moment is immortal where I produced return. For the sake of this moment I *bear* the return."¹¹⁰

Beyond the Pleasure Principle thinks towards an unanticipated conclusion, that instinctive repetitions an urge towards the "old state of things," the initial state or origin that is identified as death (*thanatos*).¹¹¹ "Life under the sign of the repetition compulsion thereby becomes the tale of a continuous death and rebirth, the tale of the eternal return of an ego-consciousness that refuses to be annihilated and compulsively comes back to haunt its own death."¹¹² "By repeating the impossibility of presence, the law of Eternal Return implies the inescapability of death."¹¹³ For Deleuze, within the repetition in eternal recurrence, "death does not appear in the objective model of an indifferent inanimate matter to which the living would 'return'; it is present in the living in the form of a subjective and differentiated experience endowed with its prototype... having renounced all matter, it corresponds to a pure form - the empty form of time."¹¹⁴

For Nietzsche, the "classical" is this "prototype." After Nietzsche's experience of eternal recurrence (itself a "classical" thought that returns through forgetting), repetition is an affirmation of recurrence, this emptying of time. Nietzsche's "classical" is also the repetition that masks, "which disguises itself in constituting itself, that which constitutes itself by disguising itself. It is not underneath the masks, but is formed from one mask to another, as though from one distinctive point to another, from one privileged instant to another, with and within all variations. The masks do not hide anything but other masks."¹¹⁵ The *compulsive* willed return of the "classical" past is a re-willing of its every detail: its (Apollonian) luminous immanence and intensity; its *ethos* of dread; its laws of fate as chance and repetition ("those iron hands of necessity which shake the dice-box of chance play their game for an infinite length of time: so that there have to be throws which exactly resemble purposiveness and rationality of every degree") - that compose the innocence of becoming of the "classical" abyss - the masked "deadly risk and secret" at the center of the labyrinth.¹¹⁶

THE SONG OF LOVE – ERRING

¹⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 165.

¹¹⁰ Nietzsche cited and translated in Stambaugh, *Nietzsche's Thought of Eternal Return*, p. 197.

¹¹¹ see Freud, *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*, pp. 41-5.

¹¹² Chappelle, *Eternal Recurrence: A Psychological Essay on the Compulsive Return of Fixed Experience Patterns*, p. 232.

¹¹³ Taylor, *Alterity*, p. 241

¹¹⁴ Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, p. 112.

¹¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 17.

¹¹⁶ Nietzsche, KSA III, p. 122 cited and translated in Babich, *Nietzsche's Philosophy of Science*, p. 161. Knesl writes: truly classical architecture is a symbol that holds out a threatening but also life-giving challenge, presents a deadly risk and secret"" in Knesl, "Architecture and Laughter," n.p.



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Nietzsche, in considering the place of history within art (and architecture), speaks of the close proximity of death:

Art as conjurer of the dead - art incidentally performs the task of preserving, even touching up extinct, faded ideas; when it accomplishes this task it weaves a band around various eras, and causes their spirits to return. Only a semblance of life, as over graves, or the return of dead loved ones in dreams, results from this...¹¹⁸

This description, known by de Chirico and anticipating his "metaphysical" work, identifies the return of past times as that which haunts the "subject" of representation - rendering it always incomplete. Implicit is the dissolution of the *telos* of history in art - dis(re)membred history returns as a diminished death-effect (for "any high emotion is a death effect, a dissolution of the completed, of the historical").¹¹⁹ In de Chirico's work, history is no longer linear, a *telos*, but an *ethos*.¹²⁰

In *The Song of Love*, this *ethos* and death-effect is produced through an enigmatic and uncertain arrangement of discrete luminous objects - an architectural scene.¹²¹ De Chirico's work, as a "representation of humanity via its toys, constructions, sacred values, and mystery," exposes the artifice of history, the Nietzschean "purely aesthetic conception of history."¹²² Deliberately obscure objects, here the decapitated bust of Apollo, a glove, a ball, a wall, and a perspectival architectural fragment, radiate an "intensity of meaning with which children invest their playthings," and "living life '*sub specie aeterni*' -

¹¹⁷ image from <http://www.geocities.com/Athens/6163/love.html>; original is held by the Museum of Modern Art, New York.

¹¹⁸ Nietzsche, *Human, All Too Human*, section 147

¹¹⁹ This death-effect, identified here by Lyotard in relation to eternal recurrence, is significant in pairing the completed with the historical, as if each term duplicates the other, both dissipated in the high emotion of eternal recurrence. See Lyotard, "The Return and Kapital," p.51.

¹²⁰ This *ethos*, extending from the "stimmung" (atmosphere in a moral sense) is identified first by Cocteau, who noted his interest not in De Chirico's aesthetics, but ethics. See Cocteau, "Giorgio De Chirico," p. 103 and Rainbow-Vigourt, *The Vision of Giorgio de Chirico in Painting and Writing*, p. 307 fn. 473.

¹²¹ Any of De Chirico's "metaphysical" paintings could stand within this definition - this specific work will be utilized to illustrate the Nietzschean relation of history to art (and architecture) within De Chirico's *oeuvre*.

¹²² Rainbow-Vigourt, *The Vision of Giorgio de Chirico in Painting and Writing*, p.260 and Hayden White, *Metahistory*, p. 373.

under the aspect of eternity."¹²³ Blanchot clarifies the difficulty of the continuity or singularity of the meaning of these objects: "not only is the image of an object not the sense of the object, and not only is it of no avail in understanding the object, it tends to withdraw the object from understanding by maintaining it in the immobility of a resemblance which has nothing to resemble."¹²⁴

These objects are visual (and temporal) tropes. Here Nietzsche's *grand style* of classicism becomes the style/me that cuts the body (and architecture) into discrete impulses. The difficult and tenuous cohesion of the "subject," posited as *telos*, an identical historical continuity in representation (given the mark of permanence in stopped time), is simultaneously dis(re)membred. Both artifacts and their "subject" follow the logic of Nietzsche's "monumental history" to an extreme.¹²⁵ They share "the danger that monumental history conceals, when it does not imply rupture" - "that of becoming somewhat distorted, beautified, and coming close to free poetic invention."¹²⁶

The enframed scene of *The Song of Love* projects this enigmatic "subject" into the viewer through the complicity of architecture (on many levels) as disruptive effect. Here, as in the other paintings, there can be no single unified meaning, just as there cannot be a single unified "subject" of representation.¹²⁷ Each interpretation further establishes the "subject" as incomplete; the subject's relation between architecture and history is simultaneously displaced and deferred. Consider the following (lengthy but incomplete) interpretations of *The Song of Love*:

- As a chance set of objects, an oracular arrangement of objects in the permanence of chance, in painting, as signs to be interpreted
- As a riddle of the origin of time, "the beginning again in the absence of any beginning" and "the eternity of the return, repeated infinitely by the fragmentary"¹²⁸
- As a riddle of the origin of art, like Oedipus' search for origins: as Blanchot's schema for the origin of art - "the work moves from the erected stone, from the rhythmic and hymnlike cry where it announces the divine and makes the gods real, to the statue where it gives them form, to the productions in which it represents men, before becoming a figure of itself"¹²⁹
- As a riddle of the origin of architecture, as a sacrificial body dis(re)membred, the violence of the classical world directed towards its ideal
- As a riddle of the origin of gaze, a reflective gaze condensed around objects in a display of the incompleteness of exteriority within the gaze, and the inability of an appended interiority to complete the scene

¹²³ Soby, *The Early Chirico*, p. 33, and Moles, *Nietzsche's Philosophy of Nature and Cosmology*, p. 244. Moles comment, an examination of this classical concept in relation to eternal recurrence in Nietzsche's thought, inserted here describes the persistence of these classical forms in *The Song of Love* as a question of time and recurrence, and proposes the aspect of eternity that is the death-effect of De Chirico's classical fragments (outside teleological reason).

¹²⁴ Blanchot, *The Space of Literature*, p. 260

¹²⁵ Nietzsche identifies monumental history as "the great moments in the struggle of the human individual constitute a chain, that this chain unites mankind across the millennia like a range of human mountain peaks, that the summit of such a long-ago moment shall be for me still living, bright, and great." Nietzsche writes the "present man... learns from it that the greatness that once existed was in any event once possible and may thus be possible again." Written in 1874, eight years before the thought of eternal recurrence, Nietzsche goes on to describe the only possibility of such a repetition in words strikingly similar to the early Greek notion of eternal recurrence: "that which was once possible could present itself as a possibility for the second time only if the Pythagoreans were right in believing that when the constellation of the heavenly body is repeated the same things, down to the smallest event, must also be repeated on earth: so that whenever the stars strand in a certain relation to one another a Stoic again joins with an Epicurean to murder Caesar, and when they stand in another relation Columbus will again rediscover America. Only if, when the fifth act of the earth's drama ended, the whole play every time began again from the beginning, if it was certain that the same complex of motives, the same *deus ex machina*, the same catastrophe were repeated at definite intervals, could the man of power venture to desire monumental history in full icon-like veracity, that is to say with every individual peculiarity depicted in precise detail..." (Nietzsche, *Untimely Meditations*, "On the Uses and Disadvantages of History for Life," section 2 - italics mine). Here the connection between monumental history, eternal recurrence, and icon-like catastrophic intervals implicit in De Chirico's work is here made explicit. Significantly, Nietzsche goes on to describe the effect of such a monumental history, its "effects in themselves," recognizing the disruptive effect of eternal recurrence long before the idea came to him. This production of effects from pure monumental history, alluded to in *The Song of Love*, cannot be overstated.

¹²⁶ Lacoue-Labarthe, "History and Mimesis," p. 226. A similar sentiment concerning Nietzsche's revaluation of history by White is: "The important point is that the historical field be regarded, in the same way that the perceptual field is, as an oscillation for image-making, not as a matter for conceptualization." (Hayden White, *Metahistory*, p. 372).

¹²⁷ In that the pictorial subject is uncertain and enigmatic, it projects this uncertainty into the subject it constructs visually that the viewer steps into when viewing this (or any) work. "Subject" here indicates this double-image, both the meaning of the painting and the viewer it constructs. In this work, the multiplicity of one destabilizes the unity of the other.

¹²⁸ Nelson, *Maurice Blanchot: The Fragment and the Whole*, p. 58.

¹²⁹ Blanchot, *The Space of Literature*, p. 231.

- As the impossibility of a truth that will not perish in time
- As a grammar of causality, a Nietzschean grammar - rhetoric as tropes, tropes as architectural trophies
- As the image of the classical body after eternal recurrence, turned to stone, eternalized in the medusa-head and medusa-effect of eternal recurrence, profound in its silence
- As an epistemic body-space figuration, the irrational Nietzschean "other" of the classical Vitruvian body-space, The Nietzschean classical "torn" incompleteness of subject¹³⁰
- As an epistemic absence of the body, the presence of the absent subject of classical representation, man as the absent symbol masked by distancing fragments
- As the Apollonian vision of architecture, "a brilliant will return to earth to the divine accuracy of the dream"¹³¹
- As the body wounded in re-membering; where "the whole is already in the past (eternally)"¹³²
- As an analeptic scaling of times, of discrete signs of separate Nietzschean "it was," as multiple horizons and scales of distance, the fragmentary writing of the spacing of time as time-lapse, intervals, and detours
- As the spirit of gravity, a portrait of that which must return (and what is forgotten)
- As differential perspectival falls
- As an image of interiority, the autonomous semiosis of impulses interior to the body, troped as exteriority
- As the structural form of enigma - the visible masking the concealed, the estrangement of objects inserted into anterior contexts that change their meaning
- As the Nietzschean void masked by representation
- As the return of the blindness that originates rational seeing, the dual presence and dual absence of objects as an unanswerable question
- As the image of time surprised, or also the image of empty time/s,
- As the scene of multiple hinges that unhinge vision: modern/classical, interior/exterior, proximate/distant, past/future
- As the *pathos* of distance/s shred of bodies
- As the return of the origin or end of "metaphysical" absence
- As a table (of law), proclaiming the return of catastrophe
- As the persistence of memory that overcomes the possibility of history; "what endures, what persists, cannot 'come', and certainly not come again"¹³³
- As a monument and memorial to overcome death, and a monument that by definition must expose death - the transparency of fatality, and its lamentation: "calm, tranquility, even serenity, but in this serenity, as in an eternal lamentation, all *pathos* known until now..."¹³⁴
- "As an oracle, as an enigma, the past only bears and offers this single indication: the future is to be constructed," as in Nietzsche "when the past speaks it only speaks as an oracle: only if you are an architect of the future and know the present will you understand it"¹³⁵
- As the return of classicism in the modern; classical architecture as the first expression of enigma of becoming"¹³⁶
- As the perishing of classicism, where" there are no eternally enduring substances"¹³⁷
- As an image of architecture as witness - of this ruin of time
- As the opaque plane of representation within representation, a dis(re)membered classical *episteme* with "unified language around the function of representation"¹³⁸
- As discrete regimes of repetition; history doesn't exist, merely repetition does¹³⁹
- As the grand style/me of Nietzschean classicism, or also the dissolution of the grand style
- As the modern image of the gods as absent: "it seems that art was once the language of the gods, it seems, the gods having disappeared, that art remains the language in which their absence speaks"¹⁴⁰
- As Nietzschean revenge against time, where the will wills backwards¹⁴¹
- As the transparency of fatality in architecture, as when Nietzsche proclaims "the airy labyrinthine fabric man has constructed for himself is not a safe enclosure"¹⁴²

¹³⁰ Abel, "George Bataille and the Repetition of Nietzsche" in *On Bataille*, p.54

¹³¹ Bataille, *Visions of Excess*, p. 207.

¹³² Nelson, *Maurice Blanchot: The Fragment and the Whole*, p. 47.

¹³³ Stambaugh, *he Problem of Time in Nietzsche*, p.192

¹³⁴ De Chirico, "Eluard Manuscript" in *Hebdomeros*, p. 180.

¹³⁵ Lacoue-Labarthe, "History and Mimesis," p. 226.

¹³⁶ Knesl, "Laughter of the Gods," n.p.

¹³⁷ Nietzsche, *The Gay Science*, section 109

¹³⁸ Schrift, "Foucault and Derrida on Nietzsche," p. 137.

¹³⁹ Julian Young, *Nietzsche's Philosophy of Art*, p. 39.

¹⁴⁰ Blanchot, *The Space of Literature*, pp. 217-8.

¹⁴¹ Stambaugh, *Nietzsche's Thought of Eternal Return*, p. 10.

¹⁴² See Miller, "Dismembering and Dis(re)membering," p. 50:

- As the world of alterior bodies, as phantasms and stones: "in the museum the appearance of the statue is different, there it is its phantom-like side that strikes us, as when one notices people in a room previously thought empty"¹⁴³
- As the after-image of tragic hypotaxis, and the labyrinth of recurrence that is a theatrical architecture, a tragic accomplice.

There should be others. Amongst all these incomplete interpretations, de Chirico offers one of the most powerful: "the revelation we have of a work of art, the conception of a picture must represent something which has sense in itself, has no subject, which from the point of view of human logic means nothing at all."¹⁴⁴ A multiplicity of meanings or an absence of meaning, art (as "conjurer of the dead") exposes the impossible rigidity of event to meaning in history.¹⁴⁵ In this above illustration of perspectivism, the undecidability of this painting is only partially explained by the undecidability of (its) language. The labyrinth of eternal recurrence, rendering history a fragmentary writing, proposes such enigmas.

Nietzsche writes "there are no eternal facts, nor are there any absolute truths."¹⁴⁶ In the absence, or impossibility of a *telos* or truth, all history, all interpretation is erring.¹⁴⁷ Each interpretation is a detour, an error. "Torn between an ideal past that is no longer and a perfect future that is not yet," the "subject" of monumental history is disrupted, moved from the center.¹⁴⁸ Nietzsche, writing on "the origin of knowledge," offers an articulation of the errors of thought and interpretation (the root of historical thinking):

Ever immense periods of time the intellect produced nothing but errors... such erroneous articles of faith, which were continuously inherited, until they became almost part of the basic endowment of the species, include the following: that there are enduring things; that there are equal things; that there are things, substances, bodies; that a thing is what it appears to be... it was only very late that truth emerged - as the weakest form of knowledge... the strength of knowledge does not depend on its degree of truth but on its age...¹⁴⁹

"Nietzsche's purpose was to destroy belief in a historical past from which men might learn any single, sustainable truth."¹⁵⁰ There is no truth in de Chirico's perspectiv/ism: the truth-function of history disappears into its own vanishing point of subjectivity - the impulsive/convulsive body. Klossowski notes the Nietzschean departure from historical time into eternity, as an experience of forgetting (Lacoue-Labarthe identifies this as metaphysical forgetting) is simultaneously a loss of the language of truth.¹⁵¹ *The Song of Love* re-presents this Nietzschean disappearance, the "enigma of truth's nonpresence."¹⁵²

For Nietzsche, and de Chirico, the enigma that stands in the place of truth is perhaps the most extreme enigma - the eternal recurrence. The eternal recurrence that acknowledges no "truth" (not even its own) admits no metaphysical ground to truth, and no truth outside itself is the masked and convulsive possibility and risk of representation of the classical. It is this "menacing proximity of a vague and

¹⁴³ De Chirico, "Statues, Furniture, and Generals" in *Hebdomeros*, p. 243.

¹⁴⁴ De Chirico, "Eluard Manuscript" in *Hebdomeros*, p. 187.

¹⁴⁵ Contrast this to Tafuri's self-described project: "not to forge history, but rather to give form to a neutral space, in which to float, above and beyond time, a mass of weightless metaphors" (Tafuri, *The Sphere and Labyrinth*, p.15). The multiple meanings of the word forge in this context are significant. The discrete separation of event and meaning in history in this context should both function like De Chirico's enigmatic artifacts and their meanings. Tafuri is not proposing something entirely different, though he continues with a discussion of the limits of language, implicit in this discussion. The contrast between weightless metaphors and De Chirico's semiosis are both necessary within a Nietzschean perspectivism. In both cases, it is a question of selection that prevents the proliferation of interpretations from approaching a totality, a totality conceptually impossible in perspectivism.

¹⁴⁶ Nietzsche, *Human, All Too Human*, section 2

¹⁴⁷ This notion of erring is indebted to Taylor's *Erring: A Postmodern A/theology*. See pp. 11-12 for an etymology of the word erring, concluding with "the semantic branches of err spread to errancy, erratic, erratum, erre, erroneous, and errant."

¹⁴⁸ Taylor, *Erring: A Postmodern A/theology*, p. 151. Taylor concludes this description of the subject, in words reminiscent of Nietzsche's "monumental history," with "the unhappy subject is forced to acknowledge the undeniable transcendence of the 'ought.'"

¹⁴⁹ Nietzsche, *The Gay Science*, section 110

¹⁵⁰ Hayden White, *Metahistory*, p. 332. Though most of White's analysis of Nietzsche is contradicted by the writing, the tenuous assertion here is supported by the above citation from Nietzsche.

¹⁵¹ See Lacoue-Labarthe, *The Subject of Philosophy*, p. 6.

¹⁵² Derrida, *Spurs: Nietzsche's Styles*, p. 89.

empty outside" that constitutes art - the "subject" of de Chirico's "metaphysical" work.¹⁵³ Art, and de Chirico's enigmatic representation of architecture, masks the necessary absence of truth.

In *The Song of Love*, there is no song, only the silence of visual lyricism of undecidable artifacts; in place of love there is fatal chance, *amor fati*.¹⁵⁴ When Vattimo writes "traditional aesthetics is a destiny for us," it is not a call to rote (antiquarian) historicism, but a question of the fatal chance of *The Song of Love* as aesthetic phenomena.¹⁵⁵ The "truth" of *The Song of Love* may only be what Nietzsche, in *The Birth of Tragedy*, claims: "that existence and the world seem justified only as aesthetic phenomena."¹⁵⁶ When de Chirico writes of truth in art, it is as sensation and effect, a "profound and silent fashion... filled with terror... should I perhaps call such an experience a truth?"¹⁵⁷

Seen through Nietzsche's eyes, there can be no truth in history, or painting - only effects. Seen through *The Song of Love*, there can be no truth in architecture - the truth in architecture is erring.

(LINGUA MORTA) THE FUNERARY DISCOURSE OF ARCHITECTURE

De Chirico's architecture, as "conjurer of the dead," is the repetitive search for an original history.¹⁵⁸ In *The Song of Love* the fragmentary ruin of architecture is torn between two times, two scenes. The origin of the analeptic image of architecture in the perspectival vanishing point of the distant past is visually projected into the perishable interiority of the "subject" (as its death-effect). Death is proximate to the unknowable origin of this architecture, and its unknowable historical function. For Bataille, "architecture retains of man only what death has no hold on."¹⁵⁹ De Chirico's architecture projects this excess as a disruptive effect (of history); in the absence of a teleological truth or progressive history, repetition is repetition of the past, the unknowable origin, and architecture appears as a *lingua morta* (dead language). De Chirico's architecture, immersed in the tragic and free of the burdens of *telos* and the metaphysical lie, re-presents the Nietzschean imperative to die "at the right time." Its *lingua morta*, a tangible condensation of the perishable body of time in stone, constructs architectural history as a document of loss in a closed, dead language, "the impossibility of being new," as effect.¹⁶⁰ De Chirico's classical repeats because it can do no other; the Nietzschean *ethos* replaces *telos*; *fatal* (infinite) repetition replaces the diachronic.¹⁶¹ History becomes fatal.¹⁶²

¹⁵³ This citation, from Blanchot, *The Space of Literature*, pp. 242-3 is presented in relation to Rilke's work, but specifically situates the death-effect of repetition, eternal recurrence, and the origin of art within this void. It is here widened to include the void left in the place of history in the work of art, thought it implicates also the blocked access to a metaphysical other-world that comprises De Chirico's work, the void behind representation, eternal recurrence as the concealed portion of enigmatic architecture, and countless other absences possible within De Chirico's paintings.

¹⁵⁴ Following this Nietzschean critique of teleological (historical) truth, this reading, and all others, err.

¹⁵⁵ Vattimo, "The End of Modernity," p. 60.

¹⁵⁶ Nietzsche, *The Birth of Tragedy*, sect. 5

¹⁵⁷ De Chirico, "Eluard Manuscript" in *Hebdomeros*, p. 184. Note the hesitancy in identifying a truth in De Chirico's words, here the only time the word is used in the writings contemporaneous with the "metaphysical" paintings of 1911-17. The privileging of this effect of silent terror over rationally constructed truth is enhanced by the following text, "but such truths do not talk, they have no voice; still less do they sing; but sometimes they look at one, and at their glance one is forced to bow one's head and say, yes, that is true. What results - a picture, for example, always has a music of its own; that is inevitable, that is the mysterious destiny of all things to have a thousand souls, a thousand aspects" (p. 184).

¹⁵⁸ This history that searches for origins through repetition, not exegesis, is inseparably bound to the question of fatality and death.

¹⁵⁹ Hollier, *Against Architecture*, p. 55.

¹⁶⁰ Grassi, *Architecture Dead Language*, p.139

¹⁶¹ Repetition that facilitates the escape from *telos* overturns the diachronic through analeptic suspensions, back-wards looking scenes that are *dischronic*, not *synchronic*.

¹⁶² Nietzsche writes in "The Advantage and Disadvantage of History for Life" (section 1) of the unhistorical animal "it is contained in the present, like a number without any awkward fraction left over; it does not know how to dissimulate, it conceals nothing and at every instant appears wholly as what it is... man, on the other hand, braces himself against the great and ever greater pressure of what is past.... death at last brings the desired forgetting."

The probable origin of history lies in the funeral eulogy, as loss.¹⁶³ This originary limit-experience is a temporal accounting, involving promises, memories, indebtedness and reparations - it speaks of loss, of the incomplete, but not of the cause. Funerary speech signifies death through a silence. For Blanchot, all language itself brings death, "and we speak only from it... before any speech, there is the offering of a dying and the offering of my own dying."¹⁶⁴ "For Blanchot, the annihilation through which signification comes about in language is in the last resort a function of a human being's mortality."¹⁶⁵ Blanchot writes

My speech is a warning that at this very moment death is loose in the world, that it has suddenly appeared between me, as I speak, and the being I address: it is there between us as the distance that separates us, but this distance is also what prevents us from being separated, because it contains the condition for all understanding.¹⁶⁶

The origin of history in death, as a discourse to overcome the significance of death, is revealed in de Chirico as a *panegyric* history.¹⁶⁷ "The drama of history stages the flight from death."¹⁶⁸ The remains of history in de Chirico's architecture, after repetition and recurrence, reverse this flight, offering a fatal history "in which beginning and end mirror each other."¹⁶⁹ The suppressed fatal origin of history returns in every repetition in de Chirico's architecture, rendering history panegyric and alterior, with loss as the transparent center. It speaks around death, "the last form of the problematic, the source of problems and questions, the sign of their persistence over and above every response."¹⁷⁰ De Chirico writes of architecture, "there is no use citing history and the causes of this and that; this describes, but it explains nothing for the eternal reason that there is nothing to explain, and yet the enigma always remains."¹⁷¹ This enigma of architecture is present in the spaces of death, the empty theaters, the silent spacings of exile as the "dwelling-place of the absence of the gods."¹⁷²

De Chirico's *ateleological* architecture, its history as a closed language, in dying without decease, exiles the "subject" in the possibility of death (as origin). "The experience of exile and estrangement presupposes an understanding of lack as loss or defect(ion)... 'exile' is 'original' and is not subsequent to an antecedent time that was unsustainable by the agony of 'loss' and untainted by the tension of

¹⁶³ Nietzsche, writing of the necessity of incompleteness in art, turns towards this precedent: "incompleteness as an artistic stimulation - incompleteness is often more effective than completeness, especially in eulogies... completion has a weakening effect" (Nietzsche, *Human, All Too Human*, section 199).

¹⁶⁴ Fynsk, "Crossing the Threshold," p. 73.

¹⁶⁵ Gasché, "The Felicities of Paradox," p. 52.

¹⁶⁶ Blanchot, *The Gaze of Orpheus*, p. 43.

¹⁶⁷ After Cicero, the panegyric mode of rhetoric (in Greek *epideictic*) is proper to funerals, as a balancing of (ethical) accounts.

¹⁶⁸ Taylor, *Erring*, p. 151.

¹⁶⁹ Taylor, *Erring*, p. 153. This description of the narrative tripartite historical schema of "creation, fall, redemption" in Taylor's work is challenged with the concept of alterity (erring, estrangement) that negates the power of origins and ends, and especially teleological thought. De Chirico's exposure of suppressed origins, as that which must return, appears to follow this structure, yet the presence of repetition (finite and infinite) is the disruptive cause of *ateleological* thought. Repetition, as considered in Freud's *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*, as a tendency towards an originary (fatal) state, problematizes any simple historical schema. The suppressed origin of history in death return in every repetition in De Chirico, as both panegyric and alterior "history," with loss at the transparent center.

Klossowski describes the effect of eternal recurrence as a "new fatality" he names the "vicious circle," "which suppresses every goal and meaning, since the beginning and the end always merge with each other" (Klossowski, *Nietzsche and the Vicious Circle*, p. 30).

¹⁷⁰ Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, p. 112. Deleuze here utilizes Blanchot's writing about death within language to understand the death within repetition. He cites Blanchot on the second aspect of death, the impersonal that is the risk of the personal: "it is inevitable but inaccessible death; it is the abyss of the present, time without a present, with which I have no relationships; it is toward which I cannot go forth, for in it I do not die, I have fallen from the power to die. In it they die, they do not cease, and they do not finish dying..." (Blanchot, *The Space of Literature*, pp. 106, 154-5).

¹⁷¹ De Chirico, "Eluard Manuscript" in *Hebdomeros*, p. 186.

¹⁷² The full Blanchot citation concerns specifically the work of art "in the work of art the gods speak, in the temple the gods dwell, but disguised, but absent... the work utters the gods, but utters them as unutterable, it is the presence of the absence of the gods and, in this absence, it tends to become itself present, to become no longer Zeus, but a statue... and when the gods are overthrown, the temple does not disappear with them, but rather it begins to appear, it reveals itself by continuing to be what before it was only unknown to itself: the *dwelling-place of the absence of the gods*" (Blanchot, cited without reference in Teyssot, "Fragments of a Funerary Discourse," p. 13). The language of this text recalls clearly the "metaphysical" works of De Chirico.

'estrangement'.¹⁷³ The fatality of *ateleological* history returns to collapse the mimetic distance of the "subject" and its "others" within architecture's funerary discourse. The history of this architecture is the history of internment.

The possible eternity of stone (funerary) architecture dis(re)members the classical body of flesh: "the funerary monument recomposes the sign of the body... as the prosthesis of memory."¹⁷⁴ In Nietzsche, "memory is always in some ways the loser in its bargains with time; and the most profitable compromise with its rapacious flights into forgetfulness may well be those in which the material to be stored up has been gradually changed into *forms* that are, as articulations, more durable."¹⁷⁵ De Chirico's bodies tending towards architecture tend towards the discursive image of their deaths - the medusa-effect. As "phantasmic" statues they haunt the *topos* of death, the "metaphysical" scene locked in repetition. The rupture of pure exteriority into the interior space of the "subject" is the enigma of fatality that is both the effect of architecture (and the promise of eternal recurrence).

The tragic is distinct from history, yet in both the topography of body is structured around places of death.¹⁷⁶ In "the modern correspondence between function and sign," funerary discourse is a correspondence "in the same place between *sema* (the sign of the body: tomb, grave) and *soma* (the corpse), a new thinking machine that unites... the topological, the semiotic, and the somatic."¹⁷⁷ Death, as a building type, is de Chirico's arch-type - re-assembled fragments of (alterior) time troped in architectural stone.¹⁷⁸ Between the tragic and modern, between stone and flesh lies alterity.

When Aldo Rossi states "architecture becomes the vehicle for an event we desire," he does not indicate if this event is future or past.¹⁷⁹ In de Chirico's work, the ruin of the body in time reciprocates the ruin of time in the recurrence of classical architecture. The ruin, as incomplete, constructs a space of waiting.¹⁸⁰ In de Chirico's tragic *polis*, the near-proximity of the unseen is awaited, either the impending catastrophe or "for time to become meaningful again."¹⁸¹

The architectural type of death bears witness, outside time: it is always there before us, witnessing our perishing. For Bataille, its ideal form was the pyramid "taking on the immobility of stone and watching all men die, one after the other... transcend the intolerable void that time opens up under men's feet... they maintain what escapes from the dying man."¹⁸² In Nietzsche's metaphoric architecture, the pyramid retains traces of life - the compulsive architecture of death is Nietzsche's "Roman columbarium."¹⁸³ They retain everything of man, as ashes: "ashes mean that any effigy has been

¹⁷³ Taylor, *Erring*, pp. 154-5. Taylor's description of this alterior history presupposes an acknowledged relation between "the death of God, the disappearance of the subject, and the ends of history" (p.154), a relationship derived partially from Nietzsche's insights, and relevant to the question of the place of death within architectural history painted by De Chirico.

¹⁷⁴ Teyssot, "Funerary Discourse," p. 6.

¹⁷⁵ Erich Heller, "Nietzsche's Terrors: Time and the Inarticulate" in *The Importance of Nietzsche*, p. 178.

¹⁷⁶ See Loraux, *Tragic Ways of Killing a Woman*, p. 49.

¹⁷⁷ Teyssot, "Funerary Discourse," p. 6.

¹⁷⁸ The arch as proto-type duplicates the Nietzschean gateway as an enigma of fatality, and is here always present in De Chirico's representations of architecture. Outside of the constraints of functionalism, they propose a compelling question of their signification, and death as a type is intended to describe this network of relations.

Kofman proposes a reading of Nietzschean (monumental) history that replaces the "evolutionary" model of history with a "typological" one utilizing Nietzsche's privileging of the Presocratic philosophers: "the Presocratics belong to a rare type; they are irreducible to any other. To reconstitute their image, it is best to 'paper the walls with them a thousand times'" (Sarah Kofman, "Metaphor, Symbol, Metamorphosis" in *The New Nietzsche*, p. 212). De Chirico's history is here also typological, and death is the originary apparatus.

¹⁷⁹ Rossi, *Scientific Autobiography*, p. 2.

¹⁸⁰ see Grassi, *Architecture Dead Language*, p.135

¹⁸¹ This observation is from Soby, *The Early Chirico* (p.38); it is left unexplored in the text, and occurs in relation to the painting *Melancholy of Departure*. This effect is not localized to this painting, but the majority of De Chirico's work.

¹⁸² Bataille, *Visions of Excess*, p. 216.

¹⁸³ See Kofman, *Nietzsche and Metaphor*, pp. 66-7. Nietzsche uses the metaphoric Roman columbarium to illustrate the complete exhaustion of logical systems of classification, contra his perspectivism: "whereas each perceptual metaphor is individual and without equals and is therefore able to elude all classification, the great edifice of concepts displays the rigid regularity of a Roman columbarium and exhales in logic that strength and coolness which is characteristic of mathematics. Anyone who has felt this cool breath will hardly believe that even the concept... is merely the residue of a metaphor, and that the illusion which is involved in the

completely effaced, any singularity volatilized... the columbarium ends up burying its constructor."¹⁸⁴ De Chirico paints no pyramids (no transcendence); he paints no columbariums (no classifications) but a repetitive *lingua morta* that foregrounds alterity before typological (*ateleological*) history. In place of the Vitruvian man, de Chirico's architecture centers the ruin of time in recurrence, as a document of loss.

Eternal recurrence problematizes history; in convulsing the *telos* of the historical "subject," history is lost. The eternal recurrence of history is thus the end of history.¹⁸⁵ "Affirming eternal recurrence amounts to performing the exact recurrence of history to any variation on it."¹⁸⁶ The singularity of history thus volatilized, its origin in death is exposed in the fate of the perishable body, a perishing that is infinitely repeated. This fatality replaces history with the time of the chance combination, with a repetition of repetition. Forgetting and sacrificial violence at the origin of architecture return in the dead language of de Chirico's architectural discourse, always at the end of its own history.

The loss of history is the closure of the possibility of differential history, where the originary difference is no longer. "History is completed precisely at the moment when the originary difference no longer functions.. when identity can be reaffirmed in spite of difference: the identity of identity and difference."¹⁸⁷ Foucault notes a similar loss in the origin in discourse: "the origin lies at a place of inevitable loss, the point where the truth of things correspond to a truthful discourse, the site of a fleeting articulation that discourse has obscured and finally lost."¹⁸⁸ For Nietzsche, "the end of history is a non-event marked only by a language that is no longer 'discourse'"; it is the end of closure itself.¹⁸⁹ Blanchot notes that at the end of history, language closed to discourse is "the mark of an interruption or a break there where discourse falters, in order, perhaps, to receive the affirmation of Eternal Recurrence."¹⁹⁰ The originary limit-experience of funerary discourse is also the vanishing point of the originary *telos* of history. The history of loss is reconfigured as the loss of history. The end of history, as a single event, is a loss of memory; the repeated ends of history clear the balance sheet of any concepts or remainders. In Nietzsche's critique of modernity, its historical providence and resolve is undercut most explicitly in the catastrophic thought of eternal recurrence (where time and history are ruined) at the origin. The end of history cannot be another historical event; it erupts in every repetition that erodes identity and difference.

The fatality of de Chirico's architecture posits repetitively the end of history, its disappearance into the vanishing point of the absolute past - to restore the architectural subject into the distant, violent origin of architecture in sacrificial death. Thus history comes to an end, a limit-experience that must be eulogized (and repeated).

THE CONVULSIVE RETURN OF THE TERRIFYINGLY ANCIENT

De Chirico's alterior "architecture" of recurrence, as a *panegyric* history, projects the distant epochs of a dis(re)membered classicism in a near-anamorphic *agon* with the modern. This tearing is a convulsion of pathetic distances, a Nietzschean rupture (of historicity):

this necessity of rupture, of a violent effraction like that of birth, is obviously never tantamount to a rejection of the Greek model. Rupture is always thought,

artistic transference of a nerve stimulus into images is, if not the mother, then the grandmother of every single concept." (Nietzsche, *Philosophy and Truth*, p. 84 cited and translated in Kofman, *Nietzsche and Metaphor*, p. 68).

¹⁸⁴ Kofman, *Nietzsche and Metaphor*, pp. 67. The Roman concept of memory as a treasure-house is inverted in the columbarium, where the grid equalizes all lives as indiscriminate ashes. Nietzsche's use of ashes to signify the exhaustion of metaphors into rigid concepts situates the columbarium as the epitome of perspectival reason, contra De Chirico's architectural dead language that situates the possibility of death within near-anamorphic fatal arcades.

¹⁸⁵ This assertion by Blanchot is the thesis of *The Infinite Conversation*, and this assertion is examined in Nelson, *Maurice Blanchot: The Fragment and the Whole*, pp. 17-20.

¹⁸⁶ Maudemarie Clark, *Nietzsche on Truth and Philosophy*, p. 279.

¹⁸⁷ Lacoue-Labarthe, *The Subject of Philosophy*, p. 4. Lacoue-Labarthe is here examining the Hegelian notion of the end of history through the critique of Nietzsche, specifically by undercutting the "metaphysical" assumptions in teleological history. Nietzsche's eternal recurrence erodes the sanctity of origin and end, positing them as possible identities.

¹⁸⁸ Foucault, "Nietzsche, Genealogy, History," p. 143.

¹⁸⁹ Nelson, *Maurice Blanchot: The Fragment and the Whole*, pp. 34 and 17.

¹⁹⁰ Blanchot, *The Infinite Conversation*, p. 272.

fundamentally, as a rupture with the present... it restores the model to the enigma of the rupture that it itself produced.¹⁹¹

Within the history of seeing, the "point of emergence of a modern and heterogeneous regime of vision" follows "a rupture with Renaissance, or classical, models of vision and the observer."¹⁹² Within the Renaissance, "one antiquity is played off against another, and the result is in all cases a new, third antiquity: the specifically modern."¹⁹³ From this rupture in multiplicity emerges the modern subject; in de Chirico the architectural "subject" is perpetually torn through these two possibilities, two possibilities themselves torn from their histories.¹⁹⁴ The classical model that ruptures the modern, and the modern model that presents itself as rupture.

The hinging of two distinct temporalities, united in their absent origin/s, appears in de Chirico also in the hinging of visual spacing (near-anamorphosis). Blanchot appears to be describing this hinging that is tearing, when he describes:

*between the two - between two orders, two times, two systems of signification and of language: the ordeal, therefore, of what is given neither in the arrangement of the world nor in the form of the work, and thus announcing itself on the basis of the real as derangement, and on the basis of the work as unworking...*¹⁹⁵

We have seen de Chirico's classicism, learned through Nietzsche, is primarily the sum of these effects of architecture. Nietzsche turns to the classical to "know how the edifice is put together [the modern], which portions of it will crumble after particular supports are taken away, which walls might remain standing."¹⁹⁶ For Nietzsche, oracular in/sight allowed this first (cultural) construction, and its return in the modern is an untimely necessity.¹⁹⁷ The epochs of history do not hold; they persist as "untimely." For Nietzsche "the opposition in terms of which philosophy is realized is that of present and non-present, of our time and the untimely" resulting in "a broken succession" whose "discontinuity and repetition do not amount to the eternity of the sky which they cross, nor the historicity of the earth which they fly over."¹⁹⁸

This figure of the self torn between two times repeats in Nietzsche (before de Chirico) as "centaur logic," the figure of Janus *dikranoi palintropos*, even in the Nietzschean gateway "moment" in Zarathustra.¹⁹⁹ The dis-integrated "subject" of "dark and violent" impulses strongly influenced de

¹⁹¹ Lacoue-Labarthe, "History and Mimesis," p. 226. Lacoue-Labarthe argues in this essay that the whole German operation of consigning history to philosophy is most clearly articulated in Nietzsche's "The Advantage and Disadvantage of History for Life." This depiction of the result of Nietzsche's explorations of the philosophy of history follows closely the historical-informed visual rupture that De Chirico proposes in his "metaphysical" work.

Lacoue-Labarthe concludes "historical mimesis, such as Nietzsche conceives it, does not consist of repeating the Greeks but of recovering the analogue of that which was their possibility: a disposition, a force, a power - the capability of extracting oneself from the present..." (p.227). For an examination of this mimesis and alterity in relation to the historical identity of the architectural "subject," see Conclusion, Section 4 "The Histrionic Architectural 'Subject': A Counter-Memory."

¹⁹² Crary, *Techniques of the Observer*, p. 3. In Crary's argument, after Nietzsche "modernity, in this sense, coincides with the collapse of classical models of vision and their stable space of representation" (p.24).

¹⁹³ Panofsky, *Perspective as Symbolic Form*, p. 139.

¹⁹⁴ With the affirmation of the eternal recurrence, both possibilities are deprived of their place within a teleological - their persistence or suspension in repetition speaks of this loss of history, and their persistence is the persistence of the enigma of architecture's dead language at the closure of history.

¹⁹⁵ Blanchot, *The Infinite Conversation*, p. 417.

¹⁹⁶ Tracy Strong, *Friedrich Nietzsche and the Politics of Transfiguration*, p. 137.

¹⁹⁷ For a discussion of Nietzsche's emphasis on the Delphic oracle's place in the emergent classical culture (originally posited in "On the Advantage and Disadvantage of History for Life," section 10) see Tracy Strong, *Friedrich Nietzsche and the Politics of Transfiguration*, p. 138.

¹⁹⁸ Deleuze, *Nietzsche and Philosophy*, p. 107.

¹⁹⁹ Tejera, in *Nietzsche and Greek Thought*, discusses the classical figure of Janus *dikranoi palintropos* in relation to Nietzsche's historical thinking (p. 50).

When Nietzsche, in considering the projection of the classical (tragic) into the modern in *The Birth of Tragedy*, writes "Scholarship, art, and philosophy are growing together inside me to such an extent that one day I'm bound to give birth to centaurs" (Letter to Erwin Rohde, in *Nietzsche: A Self-Portrait from his Letters*, p. 10 cited and examined in Sloterdijk, *Thinker on Stage: Nietzsche's Materialism*, p. 11), this untimely double-figure, half man and half animal (both classical and modern) marks the insight of Nietzsche's larger project: "suddenly, Greek antiquity was no longer a faithful mirror for humanistic self-stylization, nor a guarantee for reasonable moderation and proper bourgeois serenity. In one stroke, the autonomy of the classical subject was done away with. From above and from below, from the numinous and the animal realms, impersonal powers broke into the standardized form of the

Chirico's figures of bodies and architecture, torn in(to) alterity between two times simultaneously (classical – modern, eternity, moment). The "subject" of de Chirico's architecture is a turning back (*palintropos*) to irrational origins.²⁰⁰ In de Chirico's work the fatal vision of eternity must return within the modern, as Nietzsche proclaimed in eternal recurrence:

Nietzsche's teaching of the overcoming of the temporality of time in favor of the eternity of the eternal recurrence of the same is thus neither a mere flight out of time nor a mere praise of transitoriness. The proclamation of a 'new eternity' - new only in relation to the old eternity of timelessness - became Nietzsche's most authentic teaching.²⁰¹

This old eternity posited as new is the void that precedes and supports the thought of time's passing, and therefore a history that captivates and disciplines time's erosive powers. But eternal recurrence is "the turning point of a non-recuperative history."²⁰² De Chirico's fatal architecture, as a return of the old eternity of timelessness, posits the exact return of the constellation of effects associated with this vision of eternity (de Chirico's "pre-history"), to the terror of both forgetting and not forgetting. By repeating the scene of the end of history, the origin of history is perpetually deferred.

Following Nietzsche's critique of historical truth, the coherence of the figure and its originary (temporal) context as a coherence of linear time (before distinct from after) is unworked in the thought of eternal recurrence. The temporal is always guilty before the eternal.²⁰³ When de Chirico describes the origin of his art in the "sacred shudder," "a feeling of cold, as if I had been touched by a winter wind from a distant, unknown country" (as the wish to create a god), it is this origin that returns as the effect of eternity.²⁰⁴ In returning, it proposes two times, and the eternal recurrence is always between two times, presented otherwise.²⁰⁵

"The terrifying between is not only unseeable, it is also unspeakable. The beauty of classical architecture is constructed to repress 'the negative pleasure' of terror."²⁰⁶ A "deadly risk and secret," "classical architecture...is revealed as an expression of anxiety, negativity, and fear" - it is constructed from an abyss that it masks.²⁰⁷ De Chirico's re-membered classical architecture as an exteriority, as a distancing image isolates the individual as an interiority. Between terror and mimesis, between modern and classical, the excess of time is produced in their hinging. The fear of this excessive return of time constitutes the *ethos* of dread in de Chirico's "metaphysics," the possibility of the hypotaxic moment. The Socratic *ethos* that initiates blindness to this dread, that allows the seeing and knowing of visual art, is reversed into an *ethos* of *dread* through the revelation of classical architecture.

The void preceding this architecture and its *ethos* (de Chirico's "pre-history") is also Blanchot's "the terrifyingly ancient [*l'effroyablement ancien*]."²⁰⁸ "What has not been present cannot be re-presented. In this rereading of Nietzsche's eternal return, the 'unrepresentable before' is what Blanchot describes as

personality and turned it into a tumbling mat for dark and violent energies, an instrument of anonymous universal forces" (Sloterdijk, *Thinker on Stage: Nietzsche's Materialism*, p. 14).

For a discussion of Nietzsche's centaur as the hybrid textual style of the classical reciprocated with the modern, and Nietzsche's own later critique of this style, see Silk and Stern, *Nietzsche on Tragedy*, p. 122.

²⁰⁰ The term *palintropos* from Heraclitus is a "back-turning" that implicates the "back-stretching" of the double-figure of the bow, discussed in relation to Apollo (see Kahn, *The Art and Thought of Heraclitus*, pp. 195-9). The *atelological* classical suspended in visual tension with the modern is a type of this stretching or turning, (which also is a form of troping). The origin and end of both epochs is here posited as identical.

²⁰¹ Löwith, *Nietzsche's Philosophy of the Eternal Recurrence of the Same*, p. 9. Löwith subsequently discusses "Nietzsche's repetition, on the peak of modernity, of the ancient view of the world" in relation to the overcoming of nihilism (p. 156).

²⁰² Boothroyd, "Nietzsche's Future Perfect and the Eternal Return: Toward a Genealogy of Ideas," p. 129.

²⁰³ Mouw, *The Tragic Insight and the Economy of Sacrifice: Nietzsche, Dionysus, and the Death of God*, p. 40.

²⁰⁴ De Chirico, "Eluard Manuscript" in *Hebdomeros*, p. 190.

²⁰⁵ Strong, *Friedrich Nietzsche and the Politics of Transfiguration*, p. 283.

²⁰⁶ Taylor, "Nuclear Architecture..." , p. 17.

²⁰⁷ Knesl, "Laughter of the Gods," n.p. See also Hersey, *The Lost Meaning of Classical Architecture*, p.44, in which he cites Nietzsche's revaluation of classical architecture: "but taboo is not just a question of attraction and repulsion; the dangers and blessings involved are so powerful that the actions to be performed can only be approached with the most extreme ceremony. Let us note that the classical orders are similarly beset. This I believe is what Nietzsche meant when he described 'the atmosphere of inexhaustible meaningfulness' that hung about the ancient temples 'like a magic veil...the basic feeling of uncanny sublimity, of sanctification by magic or the gods' nearness...the *dread* [that] was the prerequisite everywhere."

²⁰⁸ Taylor, *Alterity*, p. 240.

'the terrifyingly ancient'.²⁰⁹ As the profound silence of a devouring time before time (a depth without bottom anticipating the fall), this concept binds eternal recurrence to art (and architecture):

where has art led us to? To a time before the world, before the beginning. It has cast us out of our power to begin and to end; it has turned us toward the outside without intimacy, without place, without rest. It has led us into the infinite migration of error... it ruins the origin by returning it to the errant immensity of an eternity gone astray.²¹⁰

The terrifyingly ancient as the originary vanishing point, under the sign of eternal recurrence prohibits all origins, all ends, all *telos* - proposing only deferral - the twin terror of forgetting and not forgetting (the only unified vanishing point).

This disruption of the historical continuity of the architectural subject is an effect of history, an effect exposed in the absence (end) of history. In Nietzsche

history becomes 'effective' to the degree that it introduces discontinuity into our very being - as it divides our emotions, dramatizes our instincts, multiplies our body and sets it against itself. 'Effective' history deprives the self of the reassuring stability of life and nature... it will uproot its traditional foundations and relentlessly disrupt its pretended continuity. This is because knowledge is not made for understanding; it is made for cutting.²¹¹

The architectural subject, isolated from a teleological history and descended into its dark and violent origin/s, dis-integrates into discrete spacings of time. The Nietzschean "loss of the subject in absence of the object" is in de Chirico a deranging of the subject in the repetition of fatal architecture.²¹²

Deleuze characterizes the Nietzschean landscape of recurrence (in term appropriate to de Chirico's work):

If there is, in Greece or elsewhere, a genuine knowledge of eternal return, it is a cruel and esoteric knowledge which must be sought in another dimension, more mysterious and more uncommon than that of astronomical or qualitative cycles and their generalities... Nietzsche thereby links eternal return to what appears to oppose it or to limit it from without - namely, complete metamorphosis, the irreducibly unequal. Depth, distances, caves, the lower depths, the tortuous, and the unequal in itself form the only landscape of the eternal return.²¹³

The fate represented in de Chirico's work is a bad one - perishing too early, or too late, always untimely - never a true "present" time, but tending towards anamorphic time. This time, always multiple and without history is not the "corrosive irreversibility of historical events" but a corrosive "ruin of temporality."²¹⁴ Eternal recurrence, "as the most acid attack possible on teleological history and history that traces the significance of past events into the future," erodes the integrity of the self through eroding the "present-ness" of time.²¹⁵ In eternal recurrence,

The absence of the present gives place to a complete dispersion, not only of time, but of the categories of unity and identity as well, since neither unity nor identity is possible without some simultaneity of and in the present...with the present torn out, there is no longer anything to hold time together. Time is ruined in the eternal return. The

²⁰⁹ Taylor, *Tears*, p. 81.

²¹⁰ Blanchot, *The Space of Literature*, pp. 244 and 257 cited in Taylor, *Alterity*, p. 246.

²¹¹ Foucault, "Nietzsche, Genealogy, History," p. 154.

²¹² Hollier writes of Bataille's examination of this Nietzschean loss "the failure to recognize the unknown reacts upon the recognition of the known. The fabric is not repaired; on the contrary, it is ripped apart and in the place of an identity of the subject and of the object, the absence of the object is shown as fading thought: 'Nietzsche alone described it in the 'death of God'." (Hollier, "From Beyond Hegel to Nietzsche's Absence" in *On Bataille*, p. 72).

²¹³ Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, p. 242.

²¹⁴ The first characterization of corrosive history is from Eliade, *The Myth of the Eternal Return*, p.74, in contrast to the primitive myth of eternal recurrence. Nietzsche's eternal recurrence, in stripping history of telos and offering only repetition, creates a differential corrosion, of the self's identity (as enigma). The "ruin of temporality" in eternal recurrence is Blanchot's reading in Nelson, *Maurice Blanchot: The Fragment and the Whole*, p. 118.

²¹⁵ Ackermann, "Return" in *Nietzsche: A Frenzied Look*, p. 156-7.

exclusion of the present provokes not only a rupture, but 'temporal ruin' - the ruin of temporality itself.²¹⁶

The temporal "excess," the ruins of recurrence, are an architectural image of exile (and repetition) of forgetting - de Chirico's tragic architectural landscape, where he proclaims "art is the fatal net which catches these strange moments."²¹⁷

The thought of eternal recurrence, like de Chirico's repetitive architecture, cannot be finished once and for all - it staggers.²¹⁸ Like de Chirico's architecture, the thought of eternal recurrence suspends and isolates the risk of death away from time. "By repeating the impossibility of presence, the law of eternal return implies the inescapability of death."²¹⁹ In painting, the death that eternal recurrence conceals can only be repeated, as absence.²²⁰ Art is always a beginning again, a repetition, a fatal return.²²¹

THE END

De Chirico never wrote of eternal recurrence, though his eyes had seen the words.²²² There is no direct evidence (in Nietzsche, evidence is only interpretation; in de Chirico it is an enigma) that eternal recurrence is the thought convulsed in de Chirico's enigmatic architecture, only the repetition of its effects (chance encounters with Nietzschean ideas). "Repetition says the detour wherein the other identifies itself with the same in order to become the non-identity of the same and in order that the same become, in the return that turns it aside, always other than itself."²²³ As de Chirico's (Nietzschean) alterity. "The eternal return, in a speech strangely, marvelously scandalous, says the eternal repetition of the unique, and repeats it as a repetition without origin, as the re-beginning where what has not yet been begun begins again."²²⁴

* * * *

We expect to find a medusa-head in the center of the classical labyrinth of recurrence, covering the chiasmic "X" of the submerged well of eternity. De Chirico's vision of eternal recurrence the first time is an ancient vision of death in time, of the insignificance of the present in eternity, and simultaneously a reevaluation of the value of this death and this eternity in the possibility of infinite repetition of both.

De Chirico's genealogy of the body is the fragmentary writing of the body's fatal disappearance into the particular form of this "terrifyingly ancient" classicism. This architecture contains the image of the body sacrificed for eternity in stone. The genealogy of vision explains the significance of blindness

²¹⁶ Nelson, *Maurice Blanchot: The Fragment and the Whole*, pp. 118-9.

²¹⁷ De Chirico, "On Metaphysical Art" in Chipp, *Theories of Modern Art*, p. 448.

²¹⁸ Nietzsche, in writing of the primitive form of eternal recurrence, which did not provoke a reevaluation of time and the self as his thought does, still manifests this effect: "even when the coming back again is only a possibility it can stagger and reform us" - Nietzsche K II p.475 cited and translated in Strong, *Friedrich Nietzsche and the Politics of Transfiguration*, p.287.

Deleuze describes this staggering geometrically, as a line convulsed into a circle through the death-effect concealed in the thought of Nietzsche's eternal recurrence, in Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, p. 115.

²¹⁹ Taylor, *Alterity*, p. 241.

²²⁰ Pautrat writes of the death inscribed in eternal recurrence as being legible only in painting, in terms appropriate to De Chirico's representations of (fatal) architecture and oracular dream imagery: "What Zarathustra does not want to see, Nietzsche cannot see. Unless, perhaps, in painting. One will never see... the mortal combat waged between the world and the Gorgon-thought. Though in a sense one sees only this. This combat, before becoming universal, can only be personal and singular, everyone's individually lived rapport to difference and death, one's own death necessarily inscribed in the law of return. A combat between Nietzsche and his great thought. And if there is combat, it is surely because this thought is the coupling, in accordance with the splitting, of desire and reality, caught in the unending sway of denial and acknowledgment. This cannot articulate itself: it can only show itself, as in a dream, revealing itself as a complicated rebus which will activate all the censures and deactivate none, since they are fundamentally contradictory. It can only ever repeat itself: write itself. An insane game, with an absent partner - absence itself" in Pautrat, "Nietzsche Medused" in *Looking After Nietzsche*, p. 171.

²²¹ Blanchot, *The Space of Literature*, p. 244.

²²² The doctrine of eternal recurrence is presented in its poetic form in Nietzsche's Thus Spoke Zarathustra, which De Chirico knew during his formative years as an artist and wrote about in terms of surprise. The ecstatic vision of eternal recurrence the first time that surprised Nietzsche persists in that text, as an oracular revelation.

²²³ Blanchot, *The Infinite Conversation*, p. 159.

²²⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 159.

troped in the expanded definition of the vanishing point, mobilized from the law of the horizon to produce a convulsive urbanism, a Theban landscape of exile from telos and finality that is the genealogy of spacing in the "metaphysical" paintings. The conclusions of the genealogies return to their origins, in the enigma of fatality and as repetitive questions of the possibility of (classical) temporality (in modern representation):

"As a result of the irreconcilable contradiction of "an outside of time in time", the past for which we long 'is' always future and the future we ardently desire 'is' always past. In the absence of a past that was never present, the dream of presence returns eternally to create the nightmare of a future that never arrives. If the encounter with the past has never taken place, the past, paradoxically, is always still to come."²²⁵

With the acceptance of the thought of eternal recurrence as true, historical discourse originates and ends with a vanishing point. "The origin, not the completion, interests de Chirico."²²⁶ Architectural history thus turned against itself repeats the origin - the unstable point named (by Freud and Blanchot as) death. - the "origin and aim [end] of life" repeated in recurrence as a "rupture into infinity making us live as in a state of perpetual death."²²⁷ These concealed messages of eternal recurrence, examined in the preceding pages and outside of de Chirico's visual scenes, are repeated in the (Roman) fatality (of arcades) that is also Nietzschean *amor fati* (an affirmation life). Fatality is an affirmation of life and of (untimely) death, Blanchot's "dying without decease." In de Chirico's work the repetition of this limit-experience is not a nihilism but this ancient affirmation.²²⁸ *Memento mori*: we cannot forget "the aim of all life is death."²²⁹

The reciprocal relation of erasure, repetition, and dis(re)membering between the oscillations of the body and architecture in de Chirico's work is a fragmentary repetition around this question of fatality. "Architecture retains of man only what death has no hold on."²³⁰ De Chirico's architecture is a search for a (modern) language of forgetting, the originary disappearance of the "architectural subject" that concludes where it began: "art was the language of the gods. The gods having disappeared, it became the language in which their disappearance was expressed, then the language in which this disappearance itself ceased to appear."²³¹ Eternal recurrence convulses because of forgetting in the guise of this disappearance, and because of the return of the suppressed "other" into presence: the death in fatality, the body in architecture, or memory in the histrionic moment. "According to the law of return... only the name, the event, the figure of death, would give, at the moment of disappearing into it, a right to presence..."²³² "To arrive at presence, to die, two equally enchanting expressions."²³³ The classical *agon* between poets and philosophers over the sovereignty to proscribe the correct way to die (by extension, the correct way to live) is bound in the unresolved thought of eternal recurrence. The (convulsive) enigma of eternal recurrence, repeated in Nietzsche and de Chirico, should produce Bataille's Nietzschean dance, "the practice of *joy* before death":

I am joy before death. The depth of the sky, lost space is joy before death: everything is profoundly cracked. I imagine the earth turning vertiginously in the sky. I imagine the sky itself slipping, turning and losing itself... everything that exists destroying itself,

²²⁵ Taylor, "Blanchot" (in) *Alterity*, p. 241.

²²⁶ Rainbow-Vigourt, *The Vision of Giorgio de Chirico in Painting and Writing*, p. 154 .

²²⁷ Freud, *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*, p. 46 and Blanchot, *The Step Not Beyond*, p. 12. See also Gasché, "The Felicities of Paradox," p. 64 for a discussion of the instability of Blanchot's notion of death.

²²⁸ Blanchot considers a relation between repetition and death at variance with that in Freud's *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*: "The unique blow of repetitive death. If death takes place only once, it is because dying, reiterating itself endlessly through its essential unaccomplishment, the accomplishment of the unaccomplished, repeats itself, without this repetition being numbered and without this number being numbered...dying, in its repetitive singularity, does not form a true series... while living escapes serial dispersion, in appealing always to a whole, a living all, the living presence of the all of life." (Blanchot, *The Step Not Beyond*, pp. 96 and 110). This acknowledgment of a death that is not a finality corresponds to the Nietzschean affirmation of life without metaphysics contained in the thought of Eternal Recurrence.

²²⁹ Freud, *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*, p. 46.

²³⁰ Hollier, *Against Architecture*, p. 55.

²³¹ Blanchot, *The Space of Literature*, p. 246.

²³² Blanchot, *The Step Not Beyond*, p. 12.

²³³ *Ibid.*, p. 18.

consuming itself and dying, each instant producing itself only in the annihilation of the preceding one, and itself existing only as mortally wounded.²³⁴

²³⁴ Bataille, *Visions of Excess*, p. 238.