

Nietzsche's *Thus Spoke
Zarathustra*

Before Sunrise

Edited by James Luchte



Chapter 1

The Symphonic Structure of *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*: A Preliminary Outline

*Graham Parkes*¹

*You will be able to tell from the Finale [of Zarathustra] what the whole symphony is really saying.*²

The power of music

‘Without music life would be simply an error, exhausting toil, exile’. This well known pronouncement makes a fitting motto for Nietzsche’s life and work.³ He grew up in a milieu pervaded by music. As a teenager, he wrote of his departed father: ‘He would fill his hours of leisure with study and music. In piano playing he attained a significant level of skill, especially in free improvisation.’ Naumburg, where Nietzsche spent his childhood, offered like many towns in Germany at the time an unusually rich array of musical possibilities, from oratorios in the cathedral to chamber music in private homes. The young Nietzsche writes fondly of his best friend, Gustav Krug, and the musical riches of the Krug family home, where the paterfamilias was a good friend of Mendelssohn’s and himself an accomplished amateur composer and musician. As well as playing music together, Nietzsche and the younger Krug would spend hours reading and discussing musical scores.

In his early autobiographical essays, Nietzsche describes several encounters with the sublime in the town’s churches and cathedral while listening to works by Händel, Mozart, Haydn, and Mendelssohn. Piano lessons from an early age developed his own talent on that instrument, and after he left home for boarding school, his correspondence is filled with requests to his mother to send him musical scores. In an autobiographical fragment ‘On Music’ he writes: ‘Music often speaks to us more urgently in tones than poetry does in words, engaging the most secret folds of the heart. . . . May this glorious gift from God always be my companion on the pathways of life.’ Once when an illness deprived him of piano playing, he wrote to his

mother from boarding school: 'Everything seems dead to me when I can't hear any music.'⁴ In another letter from the same period: 'I look for words for a melody that I have, and for a melody for words that I have, and these two things I have don't go together, even though they come from the same soul. But such is my fate!'⁵ Nevertheless, during his teens and twenties he wrote prolifically for piano and voice, producing close to a hundred compositions, most of them short piano pieces and *Lieder* somewhat in the style of Schubert and Schumann.⁶

Nietzsche's desire to compose music seriously remained strong, though it was of necessity dampened in the course of his decade-long friendship with Richard Wagner, the world's most famous composer at that time. Nietzsche's joy in composing reasserted itself through his presenting compositions to Wagner's wife, Cosima, and sustained a violent setback when Cosima's former husband, the conductor Hans von Bülow to whom he had given one of his stormier scores, famously called it 'a rape and violation of Euterpe [the muse of music]'. – Ouch. More charitable was Heinrich Köselitz, one of Nietzsche's longest standing and most faithful friends, and a composer (under the artistic name Peter Gast) of fairly undistinguished operas. Nietzsche and Köselitz discussed music constantly during their years of correspondence, and whenever they met in person they would play music together if there was a piano available. After eventually giving up composing, Nietzsche continued to play the piano when the opportunity arose, and he remained a frequent concert- and opera-goer throughout his career. As far as social intercourse was concerned: 'In the whole history of philosophy it would be impossible to find another philosopher who frequented musicians [composers, conductors, pianist, musicologists, music publishers] to such an extent.'⁷

Nietzsche's aesthetic attitude towards existence is exemplified in his idea that we are tasked as human beings to make our lives into works of art, and in some cases works of music. Writing about the way certain rare moments in life 'speak to our hearts', he talks of 'the symphony of actual life'. In denigrating 'idealist' thinkers who reject that this world revealed to the senses in favour of 'the cold realm of ideas', he claims: 'A genuine philosopher [in those days] could no longer hear life, insofar as life is music, and so he *denied* the music of life.' For Nietzsche, insofar as all life is will to power, which manifests itself through the drives (*Triebe*) or affects that operate mostly beneath the level of consciousness, music can reveal those operations:

Only now is the human being coming to realize that music is a sign-language of the affects: and we shall later learn to recognize clearly the

drive-system of a musician from his music. . . . There are many more languages than one thinks . . . What does not speak to us! – but those who hear are becoming ever fewer.⁸

Even after having admitted to himself that the proper medium for his work was the language of words rather than tones, Nietzsche still hoped to attain some kind of fusion between the two. In 1887 he wrote to Köselitz: ‘Beyond a doubt, in the very depths of my being I would like *to have been able* to compose the music that you yourself compose – and my own music (books included) was only done *faute de mieux*.’⁹ And when he writes two years later that ‘one becomes more of a philosopher the more one becomes a musician’, he is clearly referring to himself as one whose musicianship had infused his philosophizing.¹⁰ When Nietzsche wrote in a letter to the conductor Hermann Levi, ‘Perhaps there has never been a philosopher who was so fundamentally a musician as I am’, the only possible exception that comes to mind is Rousseau.¹¹ What is certain, however, is that Nietzsche’s writings have inspired the composition of more music than have those of any other philosopher – which is some measure of the success of his efforts to infuse his philosophy with music. By 1975, over 170 composers had created some 370 musical settings of 90 texts by Nietzsche, among them 87 pieces that are settings of excerpts from *Zarathustra* or are explicitly inspired by the text as a whole.¹²

‘The whole of *Zarathustra* might perhaps be reckoned as music’, Nietzsche writes in retrospect about his favourite book, ‘– certainly a rebirth in the art of *hearing* was a precondition of it’. The first mention of the idea that inspired this work, the eternal recurrence of the same, occurs in a notebook entry marked ‘Beginning of August 1881 in Sils-Maria.’¹³ It is significant that in the letter to Köselitz which announces this inspiration he also writes: ‘I have been forced to give up reading scores and playing the piano once and for all.’¹⁴ Shortly thereafter, a notebook entry mentions a projected work with the title *Midday and Eternity* and a first sentence that begins: ‘Zarathustra, born near Lake Urmi, in his thirtieth year left his home . . .’ The work will consist of four parts, and the sketch begins: ‘*First Book* in the style of the first movement of [Beethoven’s] *Ninth Symphony*.’¹⁵

Nietzsche recounts in *EC* that the first part of *Zarathustra* came to him – ‘and above all Zarathustra himself, as a type . . . *overwhelmed me*’ – shortly after he had moved to Rapallo, a small town on the Ligurian coast east of Genoa.¹⁶ In a letter to Köselitz from Rapallo, Nietzsche discusses the problem, raised by Wagner but still unsolved, of ‘how a whole act of an opera could achieve a symphonic unity as an organism’.¹⁷ A crucial

point is 'that the flow of affects, the whole structure of the act has to have something of the schema of the movement of a symphony: certain responses and so forth'. Three weeks later, another letter to Köselitz announces the completion of 'a small book . . . my *best*. . . It is to be called: *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*. With this book I have entered into a new *Ring*'. The allusion to Wagner's *Ring of the Nibelungen*, not to mention the challenge to the world's longest, if not greatest, opera, is not as far-fetched as it sounds.¹⁸ When on the same day he writes to his best friend, Franz Overbeck, to tell him about the new book, he adds: 'I am now engaged for a couple more days with the *Nagelprobe* revisions, a work requiring refined *hearing*, for which one cannot be sufficiently alone' (324). The mix of metaphors is significant: *Nagelprobe* alludes to the Latin *ad unguem*, which refers to the sculptor's practice of running a fingernail across a surface to test its smoothness – and yet Nietzsche is testing the perfection of his language by *listening* to it.¹⁹

Two months later, when he asks his Köselitz, 'Under which rubric does this *Zarathustra* really belong?' he reverts to the symphonic in answering his own question: 'I almost believe that it comes under "symphonies". What is certain is that with this I have crossed over into another world.' Finally, after finishing the third part he refers to it several times as 'the finale of my symphony'. And at the same time he writes to Köselitz: '*Music* is by far the best thing; now I want more than ever to be a musician.'²⁰

Why does Nietzsche insist on calling this work a *symphony*? Given that the protagonist not only speaks but also sings at crucial junctures in the book, then why not an opera – a new *Ring* in a different medium? Or, given the predominance of *Zarathustra*'s voice over all the others, why not an oratorio with a dominating soloist, or even a concerto with *Zarathustra*'s voice as the solo instrument? Yet no lesser authority than Gustav Mahler confirms Nietzsche's claim about his favourite work: 'His *Zarathustra* was born completely from the spirit of music, and is even "symphonically" constructed.'²¹ Given that Mahler understood the structure of the classical symphony as well as any human being that ever lived, this comment demands to be taken seriously.

The word 'symphony' (or *sinfonia*) was first used in the musical sense to refer to an instrumental prelude for, or interlude in, an opera or oratorio.²² The classical symphony grew out of several different musical forms and especially from the French overture (as perfected by Lully) and the Italian *sinfonia* (with Scarlatti as exemplary). When these forms became independent works, they usually consisted of three movements, in a pattern of fast – slow – fast. The pre-classical symphony, as developed by numerous

composers in Paris, northern Italy, Mannheim, and Vienna, favoured this three-movement structure until the 1760s. After 1770, four movements became standard, with the insertion of a minuet between the second, slow movement and a final, dance-like movement in rondo form. Half of Haydn's early symphonies (Nos. 1–30), for example, are in three movements, while almost all of those he wrote after the mid-1760s have four.

The world of *Zarathustra* scholarship divides into those who think the work properly ends at the conclusion of Part III (which Nietzsche certainly thought was the end at the time he finished it) and those who think it includes fourth part, which he wrote around a year later but chose not to publish. If one is of the three-part persuasion, the book's structure would reflect the pre-classical symphony in three movements: a first movement in *sonata-allegro* form; a second, slow movement (*andante* or *adagio*) usually consisting of a theme and variations; and a third movement either 'in the tempo of a minuet' (sometimes minuet or scherzo and trio) or else in a faster dance-like tempo (*allegro* or *presto*). For those who include the fourth part, the form would be that of the later classical symphony in four movements, where the third would be a *minuet and trio* in ternary form, and the final movement dance-like in *rondo*. But since Nietzsche writes of 'the finale of [his] symphony' in four different letters after completing Part III, it makes sense to compare the structure of the first three parts of *Zarathustra* with that of the early classical symphony in three movements.

As a young boy, Nietzsche used to play piano transcriptions of Haydn symphonies for four hands, some of which would have been in three movements.²³ For his thirteenth birthday, he requested a score of Mozart's *Symphony No. 4* 'with fugue', which is one of 20 among Mozart's 41 symphonies that have three movements. Seven years later, he heard that symphony in concert, and also Mozart's *Symphony No. 31* ('Paris') which, like *No. 38* ('Prague'), is an epitome of the three-movement form.²⁴ It is probable that Nietzsche had one or more of these works in mind when he pronounced the symphony of *Zarathustra* completed after the third movement.

First movement

The first movement of this symphony is in *sonata-allegro* form – which often has an *introduction* leading into the first part, the *exposition*, after which a transition leads to the *development*, which is followed by a closing section leading to a *recapitulation*. The introduction to the first movement tends to

set a serious tone and establish a grand scale that sets the tone for later stages of the work. This is certainly the function of 'Zarathustra's Prologue', which introduces the major places and themes to follow: the solitude of Zarathustra's mountain-top cave, 'the death of God', his descent and return to human beings, the problem of the audience, the last human, and his teaching concerning the Overhuman.²⁵ The first of Zarathustra's speeches, 'On the Three Transformations' (1.1), is like a second, much shorter introduction, insofar as it depicts a general process, invoking through vivid imagery three transformations of the spirit to be exemplified in the three sections (exposition, development, recapitulation) of the First Part. Taking chapters 1.8 ('On the Tree on the Mountainside') and 1.15 ('On the Thousand Goals and One') as transitions, the exposition, development, and recapitulation would each consist of six chapters (2–7, 9–14, 16–21), with the last chapter (16.22) understood as a coda.

The exposition in a symphony's first movement presents two or more themes, or groups of themes, which are often repeated after a shift in key. The exposition chapters (2–7) correspond to the 'camel' stage of the spirit insofar as they discuss traditional teachings concerning human existence. The first theme, *virtue*, is sounded by the 'wise man' who occupies a professorial chair for that subject, advocating the practice of virtue as a means to sound sleep. Zarathustra wryly comments on the splendidly soporific effects of these rote prescriptions. The next two speeches, 'On Believers in a World Behind' and 'On the Despisers of the Body', introduce the second theme or group of themes: the way suffering and weariness of will prompt people to invent Gods and 'worlds behind', and to denigrate the earth and the living body as the loci of suffering.

The next two speeches, 'On Enjoying and Suffering the Passions' (1.5) and 'On the Pale Criminal' (1.6) resume the theme of the virtues, but in a different key, insofar as the audience of 'brothers' for the speech 'On Believers in a World Behind' has now shrunk to a singular 'brother' to whom a more intimate form of address is appropriate, and the despisers of the body have been replaced by the narrower class of 'judges and sacrificers'. Zarathustra now revises the virtues as transformations of the passions, of drives originating from the body – though the *Triebe* (drives) are not mentioned by name until the eighth speech.

The last two speeches of the exposition, 'On Reading and Writing' and 'On the Tree on the Mountainside', intimate Zarathustra's response to the second theme, whereby spiritual transcendence to a divine realm beyond this world is replaced by an ecstatic flight within this world occasioned by the dancing of a God (Dionysus) through the human body.

'On the Tree on the Mountainside' introduces a closing theme with a cadential function by showing the reaction of a young man who has been powerfully drawn to Zarathustra's teaching: namely hatred and envy of Zarathustra as 'one who can fly', incited by what Zarathustra will call 'the spirit of heaviness'. For the first time we hear a dialogue between teacher and student, and we are shown a milder aspect of Zarathustra as he explains to the young man that he is still ensnared by conflicting drives that have not yet been mastered. The conclusion to his speech effects a transition to the next section insofar as he exhorts the young man to emulate the noble man and avoid succumbing to the despair that enveloped noble types who lost hope: 'Hold sacred your highest hope!'

The next six chapters (9–14) make up the 'development' section, in which Zarathustra elaborates the themes of the exposition in a more combative set of speeches addressed mostly to an audience he refers to as 'my brothers', attacking in the spirit of the lion such adversaries as priests and politicians. 'On the Preachers of Death' opens forcefully, with a direct attack on the priests of the old religions:

There are preachers of death: and the earth is full of those to whom rejection of life must be preached.

Full is the earth of the superfluous; corrupted is life by the all too many.
Let one use 'eternal life' to lure them away from this life!

The speech revisits the theme of suffering as a reason for rejecting life, and now shows 'furious labour and distraction' and the desire for 'what is fast, and new, and strange' as symptoms of the drive to escape from suffering. Zarathustra ends the speech with the wish, whether one calls it death or eternal life, that the preachers of death would just pass on to it quickly taking their disciples with them.

In the next speech, 'On War and Warrior Peoples' (1.10) Zarathustra incites his 'brothers in warfare' to become 'warriors of understanding' and to wage spiritual and intellectual warfare – 'war for your own thoughts' – against the traditionally entrenched teachings. He sets a good example by attacking the institutions of the state and its public sphere in his next two speeches, showing how their suppression of vital originality promotes death and destruction rather than life and creativity. In the following two speeches, which are softer in tone, Zarathustra revalues the virtue of chastity and the institution of friendship by revealing the repressed vice that often lurks behind chastity and the need for enmity in friendship.

Zarathustra's next speech, 'On the Thousand Goals and One' (1.15), constitutes a transition to the recapitulation, in which the previous themes are revisited in the spirit of the spontaneity of the child and in the light of the overcoming of the human by way of the Overhuman. 'On the Thousand Goals and One' is a crucial speech that brings together the first movement's two theme areas by inquiring into the origins of the virtues and moral evaluations such as good and evil – and finding them to come not from some God or heavenly realm but from interpretations of peoples in the form of 'will to power' (first mention in the book).

The recapitulation returns to themes laid out in the exposition and also alludes to their elaborations in the development section. Whereas two chapters in the exposition and two in the development mention the Overhuman, four chapters do so in the recapitulation. There is for the most part a close correspondence with the six chapters of the exposition. 'On Love of One's Neighbour' (1.16) is a response to the 'wise man's' maxim, 'Peace with God and one's neighbour' (1.2), which exposes love of the neighbour as false selflessness and 'bad love of oneself' and commends instead love of the friend and thereby the Overhuman. 'On the Way of the Creator' (1.17) replaces the suffering creator God of chapter 1.3 ('On Believers in a World Behind') with a suffering human creator, who corresponds on the level of the solitary individual to the creator peoples discussed in 'On the Thousand Goals and One'. Now, the 'creating, willing, valuing I' of the third chapter is replaced by a multiplicity consisting of 'yourself and your Seven Devils'. The next speech, 'On Old and Young Little Women' (1.18) counters the despisers of the body (1.4) who are 'no bridges to the Overhuman' with a woman in whose love the light of a star shines, and whose hope is to 'give birth to the Overhuman'.

The next two chapters correspond to the next two of the exposition in reverse order. 'On the Bite of the Adder' (1.19) revisits the theme of justice first announced in 'On the Pale Criminal' (1.6), except that the criminal who was earlier the victim of a petty and vengeful justice, is replaced by the solitary Zarathustra, for whom 'a little revenge is more humane than no revenge at all', and who demands a justice that is 'love with seeing eyes' and that wittily gives to each his – Zarathustra's – own. 'On Children and Marriage' (1.20) reprises the discussion of the virtues in 'On Enjoying and Suffering the Passions' (1.5): whereas the singular 'brother' in the earlier chapter was liable to become 'a battle and battlefield of virtues' driven by 'envy and mistrust and calumny', Zarathustra's later question for 'you alone, my brother' is whether he is ready for marriage through having become 'commander of the senses, master of your virtues'. To have one's

animal passions turn into virtues is a first step, after which the human as virtuous is to be overcome (1.5); but now marriage can help raise sexual love above the level of ‘two animals finding each other out’ to ‘a sympathizing with suffering and disguised Gods’ and thereby ‘an arrow and yearning for the Overhuman’ (1.20). Lastly, the speech ‘On Free Death’ (1.21), with its exhortations to welcome ‘death at the right time’ as ‘a festival’ and thereby ‘love the earth more’, harks back to the ‘courage that wants to laugh’, that can kill with laughter ‘the Spirit of Heaviness, through whom all things fall’ and all mortal creatures are brought down and back into the earth (1.7).

The final speech, ‘On the Bestowing Virtue’ (1.22), is a kind of coda, set outside the town, in which Zarathustra takes leave of his disciples (first mention of them as ‘disciples’) – but not before speaking to them of ‘the highest virtue’. He recapitulates several main themes from Part I: the body as something that ‘goes through history’ incorporating error as well as reason; the will (to power) as ‘the origin of virtue’; the exhortation to his brothers to ‘stay true to the earth’. Then he finishes by encouraging his disciples to question his teachings and reject him as a teacher: ‘Now I bid you lose me and find yourselves.’ The climax of the speech amplifies and exalts the ineffectual image from his first speech to the people in the marketplace, ‘The human is a rope fastened between beast and Overhuman’, by confidently proclaiming the advent of ‘the Great Midday’:

when the human stands in the middle of its path between beast and Overhuman and celebrates its way to evening as its highest hope; for it is the way to a new morning.

Second movement

The second movement of the early classical symphony is a slow movement, usually consisting of a *main theme* which recurs in alternation with *variations* in two or more ‘episodes’ which develop and transform the theme rhythmically, melodically, and harmonically. The slow movement often begins with an introduction, and ends with a *coda* that is distinct from the main theme. Taking *wisdom* as the primary theme, the structure of Part II would look like this: introduction (chapter 1), main theme (2), first episode (3–7), main theme developed (8–12), second episode (13–19), final statement of main theme (20), coda (21–22). The motto that stands at the head of

Part II of *Zarathustra* is a repetition of a sentence-and-a-half from the last page of the previous part:

‘ . . . and only when you have all denied me will I return to you.

Verily, with different eyes, my brothers, shall I then seek my lost ones; with a different love shall I then love you.’

Nietzsche comments in a letter to Köselitz: ‘From this motto there emerge – it is almost unseemly to say this to a musician – different harmonies and modulations from those in the first part. The main thing was to *swing oneself up to the second level* – in order from there to reach the *third*.’²⁶ The upswing happens through Zarathustra’s departure from his disciples for the solitude of his mountaintop cave, followed by a sojourn in a site far from the marketplace and town of Part I: the Isles of the Blest. According to Hesiod, these islands are inhabited by departed heroes who ‘live untouched by sorrow in the isles of the blest along the shore of deep swirling Ocean, and for whom the grain-giving earth bears honey-sweet fruit flourishing thrice a year, far from the deathless gods’.²⁷ A suitably serene setting, then, for the slow exposition of the theme of wisdom. Whereas all the chapters in Part I bear titles beginning with ‘On . . .’ as befitting their status as speeches, Part II begins with ‘The Child and the Mirror’ and ‘Upon the Isles of the Blest’, alluding to a mythic story and a mythical place or state of mind, respectively.

The beginning of ‘The Child and the Mirror’ (2.1) echoes the beginning of the Prologue, with Zarathustra spending ‘months and years’ in his mountaintop solitude until one morning he is awakened by a frightening dream, in which a child shows him his reflection in a mirror. This alludes to the story about the infant Dionysus (Zagreus) whom the envious Titans distract by giving him a mirror to play with, so that they can kill, dismember, and devour him. Concluding that his friends have denied him and that he should therefore return to them, Zarathustra resolves to go back down – by way of an Orphic-Dionysiac dissolution into forces of nature: he becomes a mountain torrent plunging into the valleys and a hailstorm with lightning-laughter pealing into the depths. There is a lot of Dionysiac *Rausch* here for the beginning of a slow movement – conveyed in the German by a steady stream of sibilants (a surge of initial ‘s’ and ‘sh’ sounds over a page-and-a-half) – but it eventually resolves into the calmer image of Zarathustra’s ‘Wild Wisdom’ in the form of a lioness wanting to put her young to bed on the soft greensward of his friends’ hearts. Zarathustra’s Wild Wisdom will be contrasted with the various traditional wisdoms it will replace.

Nietzsche later quotes the slow opening of the speech 'Upon the Isles of the Blest' (2.2):

The figs are falling from the trees, they are good and sweet; and as they fall, their red skins burst. A north wind am I to all ripe figs.

And thus, like figs, these teachings fall to you, my friends: now drink their juice and their sweet flesh! Autumn is all around and clear sky and afternoon.

In *EH*, he writes of these lines: 'From an infinite fullness of light and depth of happiness there falls drop after drop, word after word – a tender slowness is the tempo of these speeches.'²⁸ A tender slowness indeed, in which Zarathustra's wisdom presents itself as an understanding that God is a thought, a supposition, while the Overhuman is a possibility that can actually be created by humans, though only through hard work and pain and suffering, joyful begetting and the pangs of giving birth. He also catches a glimpse of the wisdom that regards *creating* as 'the great redemption from suffering' and *willing* as the ultimate 'liberator and joy-bringer'.

The next five speeches (2.3–7) constitute the first 'episode' by introducing variations on the theme of wisdom, drawn from the Judeo-Christian and modern democratic perspectives. Zarathustra understands these perspectives because he himself has inhabited them earlier in his life, but he now finds them wanting. In 'On Those Who Pity', he proposes that his friends favour 'great love [which] overcomes forgiveness and pitying'; in 'On the Priests' he confesses his being related to those brethren, and gently ridicules their susceptibility to 'those whom the people call redeemers'. In 'On the Virtuous', he apologizes to them for depriving them of the ideals of their immaturity – 'reward', 'retribution', 'punishment', 'righteous revenge' – while promising that the next wave from the sea of ideas will shower them with 'new colorful seashells' with which to play. Turning to what Nietzsche sees as the extension of Christianity (as 'Platonism for the people') into the modern period in the form of egalitarian democracy, 'On the Rabble' laments the way the rabble's pretensions towards ruling and creating have co-opted politics and culture. 'On the Tarantulas' exposes the 'preachers of equality' as vengeful spiders compensating for their own impotence by poisoning the efforts of those more gifted than they. Near the beginning of his exposé, Zarathustra sounds a note of hope that anticipates the return to the main theme, when he says, *fortissimo*: 'That humanity might be redeemed from revenge: that is for me the bridge to the highest hope and a rainbow after lasting storms' (2.7).

With 'On the Famous Wise Men' and the next four chapters (2.8–12), Zarathustra returns to the theme of his Wild Wisdom. Here for the first time he directly addresses his predecessors in the philosophical tradition as 'You famous wise men.' His speech is direct to the point of bluntness, insofar as he accuses them (Leibniz, Kant, Hegel, Fichte, Schelling?) of pandering to the people and the people's rulers while merely feigning a 'will to truth'. Having 'made of wisdom a poorhouse and hospital for wretched poets' and being now 'not driven by any strong wind or will', they are incapable of following Zarathustra's Wild Wisdom which goes across the sea 'like a sail, rounded and swollen and trembling from the violence of the wind [and] of the spirit' (2.8).

At the beginning of the next three chapters – 'The Night-Song', 'The Dance-Song', 'The Grave-Song' – Zarathustra suddenly bursts into a new mode of discourse: singing rather than speaking. Slow movements are usually lyrical, and this section is as lyrical as philosophy can become. In *EH*, Nietzsche calls the Night-Song 'the language of the *dithyramb*', the song sung at ancient Greek festivals in honour of Dionysus.²⁹ He writes of it as 'the immortal lament that, through an abundance of light and power, through one's *sunlike* nature, one is condemned not to love' – and then he quotes the Night-Song (all 74 lines of it) in its entirety. 'Thus suffers a God, a Dionysus', is his comment. 'The response to such a dithyramb of sunlike-isolation in light would be "Ariadne"' – and we hear it near the symphony's end, in 'On the Great Yearning' (3.14).

Zarathustra characterizes the Dance-Song (2.10) as 'a mocking-song on the Spirit of Heaviness, my supreme and most powerful Devil', and he sings it for the God Cupid, or Eros, and some young maidens as they dance together on a green meadow. There is no actual mention of the Spirit of Heaviness in the song, though we do hear two new voices – those of Life and Zarathustra's Wisdom personified as feminine figures – as Zarathustra tries to decide between them, and concludes that, while he is fond of Wisdom, it is ultimately Life that he loves. (He is the opposite of the traditional Platonic philosopher, who loves wisdom so much as to demean life.) His song mocks the Spirit of Heaviness presumably because Zarathustra loves Life as 'changeable and wild and in all things a woman, and not a virtuous one' – even though he is going to have to leave her in the end. So, as he asks his friends when the song is over: 'Is it not folly to go on living?'

In 'The Grave-Song', (2.11) his wise mockery of the Spirit of Heaviness (representative of Platonic-Christian wisdom) continues as he leaves the Isles of the Blest and sails to the Isle of the Graves, where he will sing to the

'visions and apparitions of [his] youth' who are buried there. In singing this song, Zarathustra becomes aware of his *will* as 'something invulnerable, unburialable, within', something that can 'continue to break through all graves!' Appropriately directed, the will can resurrect 'what is unredeemed from his youth', thereby making a mockery of the Spirit of Heaviness that brings everything down to an earthy grave.

This reprise of the theme of wisdom culminates in the chapter 'On Self-Overcoming' (2.12), where Zarathustra addresses his most select audience, 'you who are wisest', and intimates to them what Life has taught him (what is the profoundest philosophical teaching in the book): that all life is will to power, and that Life herself claims to be – in her own words, *fortissimo* – 'that which must always overcome itself' As perpetual self-overcoming, life takes form in the wise as a constant process of reinterpretation which annihilates old and creates new values.

The second episode (2.13–18) examines various pretensions to wisdom: about beauty and the sublime on the part of thinkers like Kant ('On Those Who Are Sublime'), about culture and education by 'men of the present' ('On the Land of Culture'), about abstract knowledge of the world which is untainted by passion ('On Immaculate Perception'), about the world in general by scholars ('On the Scholars') and poets ('On the Poets'), and about the future on the part of political revolutionaries ('On Great Events'). With quiet irony, Zarathustra shows, Socrates-like, all these pretensions to be empty.

Then suddenly, without warning: ' . . . and I saw a great mournfulness come over humankind'. Another speech by one other than Zarathustra, 'The Soothsayer' (2.19). Zarathustra is transformed by hearing the darkly nihilistic tidings: 'All is empty, all is the same, all has been!' For three days 'he took neither drink nor food, had no rest, and lost his speech', fell into a deep sleep, and when he awoke he recounted a terrifying dream that echoes, in a minor key, as it were, themes from 'The Grave-Song'. As 'a night- and grave-watchman in the lonely mountain-castle of death', he is guarding 'glass coffins [containing] life that had been overcome' when a wind breaks open the castle gates and casts before him a black coffin which bursts open and spews forth 'a thousand peals of laughter from a thousand masks of children, angels, owls, fools, and child-sized butterflies'. His favourite disciple offers an optimistic interpretation to the effect that Zarathustra is himself the wind and the coffin, and will overcome by means of laughter all nihilistic death-weariness. But Zarathustra refuses this interpretation, knowing that nihilism is not so easily overcome.

The next chapter, 'On Redemption' (2.20), shows the culmination of Zarathustra's wisdom in Part II, which affirms his premonition at the beginning of the movement (2.2) of *creating* as 'the great redemption from suffering' and *willing* as the ultimate 'liberator and joy-bringer'. Now he can proclaim to his disciples: 'To redeem that which has passed away and to re-create all "It was" into a "That is how I wanted it!" – that alone should I call redemption!' The bridge to the highest hope, 'that humanity might be redeemed from revenge' (2.7), might be crossed now that Zarathustra realizes revenge's profoundest form: 'the will's ill-will toward time and its "It was"'. The question remains – keeping this section in a minor key – whether Zarathustra has recovered from the tarantula's bite, which threatened to make *his* 'soul whirl with revenge' (2.7). After all, he confessed in 'The Night-Song' to devising revenge himself (2.10). But his wisdom asserts itself in the last sentences of his last speech in this chapter, which contain the last mention in the book of 'will to power' and bring that idea together with the thought of eternal recurrence: 'Something higher than any reconciliation the will that is will to power must will – yet how shall this happen? Who has taught it to will and want back as well?'³⁰ No one as yet – though Zarathustra will, as soon as his own will can 'unlearn the spirit of revenge'.

The last two chapters of Part II, 'On Human Prudence' and 'The Stillest Hour' (2.21–22), constitute a kind of coda to the slow movement. Having given direct voice to his wisdom in the speech 'On Redemption', Zarathustra now lowers the volume and intensity to talk about three instances of a more modest attribute: his 'human prudence'. And in the final chapter the mood becomes quieter still as he prepares to leave his 'friends' again and return to his solitude, telling them of another dream, in which he is addressed by his Stillest Hour who speaks to him 11 times – but always 'without voice'. She urges him to say what he has learned from Life and Wisdom and 'command great things', but to do so *piano* (or *pianissimo*) rather than *forte*, on the grounds that: 'It is the stillest words that bring on the storm. Thoughts that come on doves' feet direct the world.' But he claims not to be ready, and after a bout of weeping he takes leave of his friends once again.

Third movement

The third and last movement of the early classical symphony assumes a variety of forms – sonata-allegro, minuet (and trio), or scherzo and trio, or rondo – though the tempo is always fast (*allegro* to *presto*) and usually

dance-like. While it is possible to regard Part III of *Zarathustra* as having a minuet/scherzo and trio structure (with chapters 9–11 as the trio), it is more illuminating to see it as having the form of a *rondo* (A-B-A-C-A) with chapters 1–4, 9–11, 13–16 sounding the main theme (A) of eternal recurrence, and chapters 5–8 and 12 supplying contrasting episodes (B and C).

‘The Wanderer’ (3.1) shows Zarathustra speaking to his heart (as Odysseus often does) while climbing the ridge of mountains on the Isles of the Blest, standing on top contemplating the other sea on the far side, and descending to the foot of the cliffs on the farther shore. When his Hour says to him, ‘Summit and abyss – they are now joined in one!’ this anticipates the finale with its conjunction of opposites that comes from thinking the thought of eternal recurrence: ‘the farthest to the nearest and fire to spirit and joy to pain and the wickedest to the kindest’ (3.16 §4).

The scene for the next three chapters (3.2–4) is on board a ship that takes Zarathustra over the open sea back to the mainland. In ‘On the Vision and Riddle’ he recounts to the seafarers on board (‘whoever has embarked with cunning sails upon terrifying seas’) his first vision of eternal recurrence, in which the thought is intimated through a series of questions: ‘Are not all things knotted together so tightly that this moment draws after it *all* things that are to come?’ ‘Must we not eternally come back again?’ ‘*Who* is the shepherd into whose throat the snake thus crawled [and] all that is heaviest and blackest will crawl?’ (3.2). The answer will come at the beginning of the main theme’s final iteration in ‘The Convalescent’ (3.13 §2). In the next speech, ‘On Blissfulness Against One’s Will’, Zarathustra speaks to his ‘jubilant conscience’ and rebuffs the ‘blissful hour’ that has approached him, since he knows that he has yet to find ‘the lion’s voice’ strong enough to summon up the thought of eternal recurrence.

In ‘Before Sunrise’ (3.4), still out on the open sea, he addresses the open Heaven above him shortly before dawn. Nietzsche later characterizes this speech too as a dithyramb: ‘Let one hear how Zarathustra talks to himself *before the sunrise*: such emerald happiness, such divine tenderness was never given voice before me.’³¹ The speech touches on the profoundest matters, insofar as Zarathustra evinces the supremely affirmative attitude towards the world which comes from the thought of recurrence:

But this is my blessing: to stand over each and every thing as its own Heaven, as its round roof, its azure bell and eternal security . . .

For all things are baptized at the fount of eternity and beyond good and evil.

The speech ends with an affirmation of still deeper wisdom:

The world is deep – and deeper than ever the day has thought.

The next four chapters (5–8) find Zarathustra back on terra firma, eager to discover whether humanity has become greater or smaller during his absence, and addressing an unspecified audience about what he finds. In ‘On the Virtue That Makes Smaller’, he derides the people’s ‘doctrine of happiness and virtue’, which has diminished human stature. As ‘Zarathustra the Godless’, he brings his speech to a climax by fulminating like an Old Testament prophet against the pathetic weariness of the people: ‘Oh blessed hour of lightning! Oh mystery before midday! – Raging fires will I yet make of them one day and heralds with tongues of flame.’

The quietly lyrical interlude that follows, ‘Upon the Mount of Olives’ (3.6), was originally called ‘The Winter Song’ and still ends with the refrain ‘Thus sang Zarathustra’. The song recounts how he has learned to survive in public by concealing his ‘sun and unshakeable solar will’ beneath a veil of wintry silence. Zarathustra addresses the last part to ‘You snow-bearded silent winter Heaven’, echoing his ecstatic apostrophe to the light-abysse of Heaven before sunrise and thanking the winter Heaven for teaching ‘the long and luminous silence’.

‘On Passing By’ brings our speaker to ‘the great city’, where the foaming fool known as ‘Zarathustra’s ape’ delivers a harangue on ‘the slaughterhouses and soup-kitchens of the spirit’ (3.7). Zarathustra’s response deprecates the revenge evidenced by the fool’s harangue, culminates in another Old Testament fulmination: ‘Woe unto this great city! – And would that I might already see the pillar of fire in which it will be consumed!’ But it ends with a sudden drop in volume, with Zarathustra’s wise advice: ‘Where one can no longer love, there one should – *pass by!* –.’ This sets the tone for the last speech in the episode, ‘On Apostates’, in which he chides with gentle humour his former disciples who have ‘become pious again’. He tells of how the Gods laughed themselves to death when one of them claimed, ‘There is one God! Thou shalt have no other God before me!’ In response all the Gods laughed, shouting: ‘Is just this not Godliness, that there are Gods, but no God?’

With ‘The Return Home’ (3.9), Zarathustra comes back to the solitude of his cave and to another feminine figure, Solitude – so he is not alone – and he remains there until the end of Part III. This move also marks a return to the theme of eternal recurrence (though it is not mentioned by name), since in his solitude Zarathustra is able to speak, and hear himself speak,

a different language – one that often speaks itself. As he says to his Solitude: ‘Here the words and word-shrines of all Being spring open for me: all Being wants to become word here, all Becoming wants to learn from me here how to talk.’ Practice in listening for and speaking such words is necessary for his being able to summon and give voice to the thought of eternal recurrence.

The speech ‘On the Three Evils’ (apparently addressed to his Solitude) begins with a dream in which Zarathustra weighs the things of the world anew, and revalues traits that have traditionally been denigrated: sensuality, the lust to rule, and selfishness. In the light of eternal recurrence, which affirms ‘the innocence of becoming’, these apparent vices can be seen to be virtues. Once more the culmination is biblical in tone (though now New Testament): ‘But for all these [world-weary cowards and cross-spiders] the day is now at hand, the transformation, the sword of judgment, *the Great Midday*: then shall much be revealed!’

In the next speech, ‘On the Spirit of Heaviness’ (3.11), Zarathustra takes on his arch-enemy whose task is to impede the self-love and self-knowledge that are necessary for affirming eternal recurrence. Since ‘much that is in the human being is like an oyster: namely, disgusting and slippery and hard to grasp’, the self-knowledge that is the prerequisite for self-love is difficult to attain – not least because the Spirit of Heaviness wants to impose a fixed, traditional standard upon all. ‘But he has discovered himself who can say: This is *my* good and evil; with that he has struck dumb the mole and dwarf who says: “Good for all, evil for all”.’ In the light of eternal recurrence, one realizes that (one’s) evil is necessary for and necessarily connected with (one’s) good, so that to affirm one is to affirm the other. Yet, what is to be cultivated is affirmation on the basis of taste, to avoid the slack quietism of ‘all-contentment’, which is inclined ‘to chew and digest everything – truly the way of swine!’ Cultivation of taste requires a questioning and trying out of many ways, which leads to the statement of judicious pluralism with which this speech and section conclude:

‘This – is just *my* way: – where is yours?’ Thus I answered those who asked of me ‘the way’. For *the* way – does not exist!

The next chapter, ‘On Old and New Tablets’ (3.12) is by far the longest in the book, though its division into 30 short sections lends it a tempo suitable for an episode in the fast final movement of a symphony. While the first five sections seem continuous with the preceding three chapters,

insofar as Zarathustra is 'recounting himself to himself' in solitude, the tone changes with the sixth, which begins 'O my brothers', and ushers in a long series of speeches in which Zarathustra addresses an imaginary audience of his brothers in preparation for going down to humanity once again.³² Some two dozen previous themes return here, some appearing on old tablets that are to be broken, others on new tablets that are to be brought down to humanity, even the occasional new tablet that already deserves to be shattered. Remember that such tablets are the 'voices of will to power' (1.15). Towards the end of the episode, Zarathustra's voice reaches its highest pitch when he inveighs against 'the good and the righteous' who 'crucify [the creator] who writes new values on new tablets' (3.12 § 26). The good and the righteous thus pose 'the greatest danger for all human future', so Zarathustra shouts *fortissimo*: 'Shatter, shatter for me the good and the righteous! – O my brothers, have you understood these words too?' (§ 27). Surely the hardest tablet for his imagined disciples to swallow. But with the last speech, which Zarathustra addresses to his Will, comes a *diminuendo* – although the wild richness of the poetic imagery here reaches an intensity as high as anything in the book.

The last four climactic chapters (13–16) return to the theme of eternal recurrence, as we see Zarathustra finally confront and incorporate the thought. The confrontation nearly kills him, and it takes seven days for the supine 'convalescent' to recover – just enough time for a Buddha to attain Enlightenment or a God to create a world (3.13 §2). His eagle and serpent speak for the first time in the book, addressing seven speeches to Zarathustra in which they encourage him to sing instead of speak, and to fashion a new lyre for his new songs. He replies to the first six, but by the time they finish the seventh – 'he lay still with his eyes closed . . . conversing with his soul'. That conversation is recounted in the next chapter, 'On the Great Yearning' (3.14).

The last three highly lyrical chapters show us a Zarathustra who has successfully confronted and incorporated the thought of eternal recurrence. They also echo, in sequence, the previous three most lyrical chapters in the book, the 'Night-Song', 'Dance-Song', and 'Grave-Song' from Part II, which anticipated the transformation of Zarathustra's will as a force that will 'break through all graves' and resurrect 'what is unredeemed from [his] youth' (2.11). The original title of 'On the Great Yearning' (3.14) was 'Ariadne', which signals that the 'great releaser' that Zarathustra tells his soul (Ariadne) to anticipate is Dionysus. After he reminds his soul of all he has given her, she replies to the Night-Song's lament over 'the wretchedness of all who bestow' by asking him: 'Should

the giver not be thankful that the taker has taken? Is bestowing not a need? Is taking not – being merciful?’ In ‘The Night-Song’, he had called his soul ‘the song of a lover’, and now at the end of ‘The Great Yearning’ he exhorts her to sing. She obliges with ‘The Other Dance-Song’ (3.15) in which Zarathustra, wearing the mask of Dionysus, asserts his mastery over the Maenad Life.

The tempo of this song, with its rhyming couplets in irregularly syncopated rhythms, calls attention to its briskness at the end, when Zarathustra sings: ‘You shall dance and also scream to my whip-crack’s brisk tempo! I did not forget the whip, did I? – No!’ The song also has overtones of the duets between Don José and Carmen in Bizet’s opera (perhaps ‘the best opera there is’), which Nietzsche heard many times in the two years before he wrote this chapter.³³ Life then confesses her love for Zarathustra and her jealousy of his Wisdom – yet is candid in admitting that, if his Wisdom were to leave him, she would too. After all, so she claims, Zarathustra is not true enough to her, entertaining thoughts of leaving her, of dying, whenever he hears the ‘ancient heavy heavy booming-bell’ strike the 12 strokes of midnight.

Each of the first 11 strokes precedes a line of the most famous poem Nietzsche wrote, ‘O Mensch! Gieb Acht!’ which Gustav Mahler set to profoundly haunting music in his *Third Symphony*. But after the twelfth stroke is silence, the silence of the grave which precedes the joyful and triumphant final song, ‘The Seven Seals (or: The Yea- and Amen-Song)’, which hymns the resurrection and mystic marriage of Zarathustra/Dionysus and Life/Ariadne in a finale that recalls numerous themes from throughout the work. Since this is now Zarathustra’s ultimate victory over the Spirit of Heaviness, the last words are spoken by the ‘bird-wisdom’ of the one who has finally learned to fly: ‘Are all words not made for those who are heavy? Do all words not lie for one who is light! Sing! speak no more!’ And then, sung for the seventh time, the refrain:

Oh how should I not lust after eternity and after the nuptial ring of all rings – the ring of recurrence?

Never yet have I found the woman from whom I wanted children, except for this woman whom I love: for I love you, O Eternity!

For I love you, O Eternity!

This love is not of the ‘eternal life’ promised by the New Testament for ‘the world to come’,³⁴ but is rather love for this radically ephemeral life that eternally recreates itself at every moment.

Coda

Therefore, what do we learn from trying to read and hear *Zarathustra* as music, and to discern its symphonic structure? When Nietzsche tells us that a condition for understanding the wisdom in the book is that 'One has above all to *hear* properly the tone, this halcyon tone, that issues from [Zarathustra's] mouth', he is suggesting that the meaning of the text is conveyed not only by the syntax and semantics of the language but also by its music. In the book that he wrote to elucidate the meaning of *Zarathustra*, Nietzsche emphasizes the importance of listening with 'the *third ear*' if one is to appreciate 'the *art* in every good sentence':

A misunderstanding of its tempo, for example – and the sentence itself is misunderstood! Let there be no doubt about the rhythmically decisive syllables . . . let us lend a subtle and patient ear to every *staccato*, every *rubato*, let us divine the meaning in the sequence of vowels and diphthongs and how delicately and richly they can take on colour and change colour as they follow each other.³⁵

This passage suggests we are unlikely to divine Nietzsche's meaning unless we read *Zarathustra* aloud, paying close attention with the reading ear to how the sentences sound over time in the imagination. Taking our cue from Nietzsche's claim, 'I have always written my writings with my whole body and life', we can try reading with more of our bodies than usual.³⁶ We can enlist the musculature in the process of reading by letting the pitch and tempo of the imagery faintly innervate a play of the muscles, in a variation of the 'ideokinesis' practised by dancers. At the beginning of the book, Zarathustra is said to 'walk like a dancer', and at the end we hear, as if from a new book of Revelation, his Alpha and Omega: 'that all that is heavy become light, all body become dancer, all spirit become bird'.³⁷

The better one's sense of *Zarathustra's* symphonic structure, the more, quite simply, one can appreciate the work. Some aspects of the book's structure remain indistinct: why, for instance, is this particular chapter right here, following that chapter and preceding the one after? To the extent that one can imagine the kind of symphony Nietzsche had in mind when he was writing *Zarathustra*, one can more fully experience, somatically as well as imaginatively, the myriad interrelations and correspondences that inform the book.

Considerations of space restrict the amount of resolution possible in this chapter, which is just a preliminary outline – but one that calls for other eyes and ears to make out, and other voices and hands to fill in, the worlds of detail in Nietzsche's masterpiece.

Notes

Introduction

- ¹ Translation from *Also Sprach Zarathustra*, Friedrich Nietzsche: Werke in Zaei Banden, Munich: Carl Hanser Verlag, p. 659.
- ² Carnap, Rudolf (1959) 'The Elimination of Metaphysics through Logical Analysis of Language', *Logical Positivism*, ed. by A.J. Ayer, Glencoe, IL: Free Press.
- ³ Luchte, J. (2007) 'Wreckage of Stars: Nietzsche and the Ecstasy of Poetry', *Hyperion: The Future of Aesthetics*, Nietzsche Circle; (2003) 'Preface', *The Peacock and the Buffalo: The Poetry of Nietzsche*, trans. by J. Luchte and E. Leadon, Lampeter: Fire & Ice Publishing.
- ⁴ Schacht, R. (1983) *Nietzsche*, London: Routledge & Kegan Paul.

The Symphonic Structure of *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*: A Preliminary Outline

- ¹ In early 2005, an undergraduate student from Norway, Brage Brakedal, asked if he could take a directed reading course with me on Z. When I suggested exploring the work's symphonic structure with the help of Laurence Lampert's study, *Nietzsche's Teaching: An Interpretation of 'Thus Spoke Zarathustra'*, he agreed with alacrity, and ended up with a very plausible articulation. I depart from Mr Brakedal's picture in some details of the first and second parts/movements, and in regarding the third part as a final movement in rondo form rather than a third of four in scherzo and trio.

In a discussion of *Zarathustra* in his *Nietzsche Biographie*, Curt Paul Janz asks in a section heading, 'Is *Zarathustra* a "Symphony"?' His conclusion is, 'To a certain extent, but one must first completely forget about the formal conception of "the symphony" in favour of the musical in general.' (Curt Paul Janz, *Nietzsche Biographie* [Munich 1978], 2: 211, p. 220.) Michael Allen Gillespie is more sanguine, saying that 'Nietzsche employs musical forms to coordinate the various aphorisms within a larger whole' in his late works and 'probably in *Zarathustra*'. ('Nietzsche's Musical Politics', in *Nietzsche's New Seas*, ed. by Michael Allen Gillespie and Tracy B. Strong [1988], Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, p. 119.) I regret that Gillespie's insightful essay, which beautifully demonstrates that *Twilight of the Idols* is composed in sonata form, came to my attention only after this contribution of mine was already in galley proofs.

- ² Nietzsche, letter to Franz Overbeck, 6 February 1884 (*KSB* 6: 475).

- ³ Letter of 15 January 1888 (*KSB* 8: 232); a shorter version, 'Without Music Life Would Be an Error', is in *TI*, 'Maxims and Arrows' § 33. Among studies of this topic, Georges Liébert's *Nietzsche and Music* is especially to be recommended, despite the author's occasional testiness with respect to the first of his two subjects. See also the section 'The Musicality of *Zarathustra*' in the Introduction to my translation of *Z* (Oxford, 2005).
- ⁴ Hans Joachim Mette (1994) (ed.) *Friedrich Nietzsche Jugendschriften*, five vols, 1: 1–2; 1: 12–13; 1: 18; 1: 27, Munich: Beck.
- ⁵ Letters of 27 April 1863 (*KSB* 1: 238) and 6 September 1863 (1: 253).
- ⁶ See Curt Paul Janz (1976) (ed.) *Der musikalische Nachlass/Friedrich Nietzsche*, Basel: Barenreiter-Verlag.
- ⁷ André Schaeffner, cited in Liébert, *Nietzsche and Music*, p. 1.
- ⁸ Nietzsche, *HHI*: 586; *The Joyful Science*, 373; *KSA* 10: 7[62].
- ⁹ Letter to Köselitz, 22 June 1887 (*KSB* 8: 95).
- ¹⁰ *CW*, § 1.***
- ¹¹ Letter of 20 October 1887 (*KSB* 7:***).
- ¹² David S. Thatcher (1975) 'Musical Settings of Nietzsche-Texts: An Annotated Bibliography', *Nietzsche-Studien*, 4: 284–323; (1976) 5: 355–383.
- ¹³ *KSA* 9: 11[141].
- ¹⁴ Letter of 14 August 1881 (*KSB* 6: 113).
- ¹⁵ *KSA* 9: 11[195, 197].
- ¹⁶ *EH*, 'Zarathustra', § 1.
- ¹⁷ Letter of 10 January 1883 (*KSB* 6: 316).
- ¹⁸ Letter of 1 February 1883 (*KSB* 6: 321). In another letter to Köselitz six months later, Nietzsche writes that it should be easy to recognize 'that the first part comprises a ring of feelings that is a *presupposition* for the ring of feelings that make up the second part' (*KSB* 6: 442). For an intelligent articulation of the ways in which *Zarathustra* is a challenge to *The Ring* (as well as to *Parsifal*), see Roger Hollinrake (1982) *Nietzsche, Wagner, and the Philosophy of Pessimism*, London: Allen & Unwin.
- ¹⁹ Letter of 1 February 1883 (*KSB* 6: 324). In an earlier letter to Lou Salomé, Nietzsche uses the expression *ad unguem* to refer to his work on revising *The Joyful Science*. 'The final decision on the text requires the most scrupulous "hearing" of every word and sentence. Sculptors refer to this last phase of the work as *ad unguem*' (*KSB* 6: 213). Horace uses the expression *ad unguem*, recommending that one 'condemn that poem which/many days and many erasures have not pruned and/revise and chastened ten times to the nail' (*Ars Poetica*, pp. 292–294). Some think it refers to the phase of polishing in which the sculptor perfects the very fingernails of the statue.
- ²⁰ Letter of 2 April 1883 (*KSB* 6: 353); 18 January 1884 (*KSB* 6: 466); 6 February 1884 (*KSB* 6: 475); 30 March 1884 (*KSB* 6: 491); 25 February 1884 (*KSB* 6: 480).
- ²¹ As quoted by Bernard Scharlitt (1920) 'Gespräch mit Mahler', *Musikblätter des Anbruchs* II, Verlag, p. 310.
- ²² Ralph Hill cites the introductory *sinfonia* to Peri's opera *Eurydice* of 1600, which may be the first significant instance. Ralph Hill (1949) *The Symphony*, Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, p. 11.

- ²³ For the Christmas after his twelfth birthday Nietzsche received a folio of 12 four-handed symphonies of Haydn (*Friedrich Nietzsche: Chronik in Bildern und Texten* [Munich and Vienna, 2000], p. 38). Six years later, he notes: 'During the first part of the year played 12 Haydn symphonies' (*Friedrich Nietzsche Jugendschriften*, 2: 333).
- ²⁴ *Friedrich Nietzsche: Chronik*, pp. 41, 121, 123.
- ²⁵ Nietzsche, Z, trans. by Graham Parkes (Oxford 2005).
- ²⁶ Letter of 13 July 1883 (*KSB* 6: 397).
- ²⁷ Hesiod and Theognis (1979) *Works and Days*, line 116, trans. by Dorothea Wender, New York: Penguin Books, p. 116.
- ²⁸ *EH*, Preface, § 4.
- ²⁹ *EH*, 'Zarathustra', § 7.
- ³⁰ The term *Zurückwollen* can also mean 'willing backwards', but I have included 'wanting back' to emphasize the allusion to the willing of eternal recurrence. Compare the recurrence of this verb at the end of section 10 of 'The Drunken Song' (4.19).
- ³¹ *EH*, 'Zarathustra', § 7.
- ³² The last 25 sections are addressed explicitly to 'my brothers', with the exceptions of § 17 (to 'you who are world-weary') and the last section (to 'my will'). There is no mention of 'my brothers' in §§ 22 and 23, but they seem to be addressed to the usual, imagined audience.
- ³³ Nietzsche's early evaluation in a letter to Köselitz from December 1881 – 'I am close to thinking that *Carmen* is the best opera there is; and as long as we live it will be on all the repertoires in Europe' (*KSB* 6: 147) – made at a time when Bizet's opera was relatively unknown has turned out to be highly prescient.
- ³⁴ Mark, 10: 30.
- ³⁵ Nietzsche, Friedrich (1990) *BGE*, trans. by R.J. Hollingdale, Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, p. 246.
- ³⁶ *KSA* 9: 4[285] (1880).
- ³⁷ *Zarathustra*, Prologue § 2; Revelation 1: 8; *Zarathustra*, 3: 16 § 6.

Thus Spoke Zarathustra as Nietzsche's Autobiography

- ¹ *EH*, 'Why I Am a Destiny', p. 3. Compare also the rather different statement, *KSA* 11, 25[148], from early 1884, written while reading Renan's *Vie de Jésus*.
- ² *EH*, 'Zarathustra', p. 8.
- ³ However, Nietzsche once, in a letter to Overbeck, 7 May 1885, states that 'Do not believe that my son Zarathustra speaks *my* views. He is one of my preparations and intermissions' (compare letter to Elisabeth, 20 May 1885), which was the expression of Nietzsche's hope and desire to go beyond *Also sprach Zarathustra*, which he never fully managed to do. I discuss this below, in the penultimate section, and have done so in more detail in my article, 'Nietzsche's *Magnum Opus*', *History of European Ideas*, 32 : 278–294 (2006).
- ⁴ 'Aus meinem Leben', *BAW* 1, 1–32 and *KGW* 1.1, 281–311.
- ⁵ Letter to Brandes, 8 January 1888.
- ⁶ Letter to Knortz, 21 June 1888.