

PRESENCES WE LIVE BY: RETHINKING THE ETERNAL RETURN AND TIME
LAPSES BETWEEN NOW AND THEN FROM VICO TO ARENDT

PATRICIA GWOZDZ

gwozdz@uni-potsdam.de

<https://www.patriciagwozdz.de/>

Patricia A. Gwozdz (Dr. phil. habil.) is professor and lecturer at the Leibniz University Hannover at the Institute of Romance Literatures and Cultures. Her main research topics are fictional narratives in life sciences and medical humanities, theory and history of popular science communication, interdisciplinary history of concepts (*figura*), literature, and digital memory studies. Her new lectures focus on queer confessions, motherhood studies, and transareal feminism. New projects will elaborate the theory and history of vulnerable agencies. Recent publications: *Ecce figura: Lektüren eines Konzepts in Konstellationen* (100 v. Chr.–1946) (2023), *Virale Wissenschaft: Über die Grenzen verständlicher Forschung* (2023), *Die Genesenden. Medical Humanities Revisited* (2022).

KEYWORDS

Eternal return, ricorso, history, time, Wiederkunft, Hannah Arendt

PUBLICATION DATE

Issue 15, October 31, 2023

HOW TO CITE

Patricia Gwozdz. “Presences We Live By: Rethinking the Eternal Return and Time Lapses between Now and Then from Vico to Arendt.” *On_Culture: The Open Journal for the Study of Culture* 15 (2023). <<https://doi.org/10.22029/oc.2023.1356>>.

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.22029/oc.2023.1356>



Presences We Live By: Rethinking the Eternal Return and Time Lapses between Now and Then from Vico to Arendt

Abstract

This paper sketches a tour de force of philosophical as well as poetic concepts of time from G. Vico (*ricorsi*), F. Nietzsche (*Wiederkunft*), V. Woolf (*Orlando*), W. Benjamin (*Ur/Sprung*), E. Auerbach (*figura*) and Hannah Arendt (“in-between”). It maps the returns and lapses of time from cycles to spirals, theoretical models, and visualizations which are brought forth to solve the problem of how not to fall back into earlier already overcome stages of development, and to realize the network of strings between now and then in order to make a difference in the future. I will underline the statement that we have no access to the archives of history as long as we are not traveling back to the future. For history is not enclosed in the past, it is reassembled by future tasks: from Vico’s chronological monsters as illegitimate descendants to Zarathustra’s pregnancies as preparation for the return of the unbearable, from the queer feeling of time vibrations in Virginia Woolf’s *Orlando* to Benjamin’s jumping sessions from origin to origin, from Auerbach’s vertical lift to Arendt’s “in-between.”

1_The Future is our Past

Once upon a time a species called human beings created techniques to measure time. This discovery led to the consciousness of causality. Causality led to certain observable effects becoming predicable and recorded by lines and letters in various material manifestations. Time was not just felt any more, it was not only structured by ordinary life and nature’s rhythms. It became an epistemological category of thought, an object of contemplation. But for this contemplation we paid our price: We are not living anymore *in time*, but *out of it*. We jumped out of it like a needle out of a turntable which still is turning around in cycles. Time is passing by, while we are watching it, like a needle without the record to play on. The music of time goes on, but we cannot hear it.

This metaphor is not selected randomly, but intentionally as a philosophical framework. It serves as an illustration of what the subject does when it starts to think: It slides on the grooves of the turntable in spiral movements from one cycle to the next which means from one line of thought to the next without interruption. If we lose the connection to the record because we are disturbed during our immersive thinking, the audible melody of our thoughts vanishes. Music is pure will, as Arthur Schopenhauer points out: “Since music, like all other arts, does not represent the

ideas or stages of the objectivation of the will, but directly the will itself, it can be explained that it directly affects the will, i.e. the feelings, passions and affects of the listener, so that it quickly elevates them or also changes their mood.”¹ I use this reference as an analogy in the following argumentation to show that the equation between time, the homogenous rotation of the record, and will, the needle that touches it to play music, leads to the question raised later by Hannah Arendt, as to where the thinker is located during his thinking. The word *during* marks the crucial point of how to locate something which is floating and has no fixed point in time.

For Schopenhauer the rhythm of music is analogous to symmetry in architecture. Together they build the outermost spectrum of time and space. They are real antipodes.² Thus, we invented visualizations in the form of spirals to imagine time as nature’s swirls.³ Spatialized in art history, architecture, and natural sciences, the spiral visualizes time in form and figured matter. Examples abound, from Lucretius’s depiction of swirls freed from earth, stone, wind, and fire brought together in a painting of nature’s destructive force; to Machiavelli’s account of Fortuna’s unpredictable violence against human civilization and technological achievements; to Leonardo da Vinci’s sketches of all forms of spirals; from engineering to botanical structures and physical structure of humans and animals. We see ourselves folded on a surface created by loops: sometimes disrupted and isolated, sometimes endlessly bound together from one end to the next.⁴ And still in Charles Darwin’s evolutionary sketch of geological records which connect the deep time of the earth with the time of the individual being, we recognize soft lines of circles, as if Darwin’s hands hold back the pressure of the pencil, so as not to disturb the unheard music of time, which surrounds us in silent circles, loops, and spirals.⁵

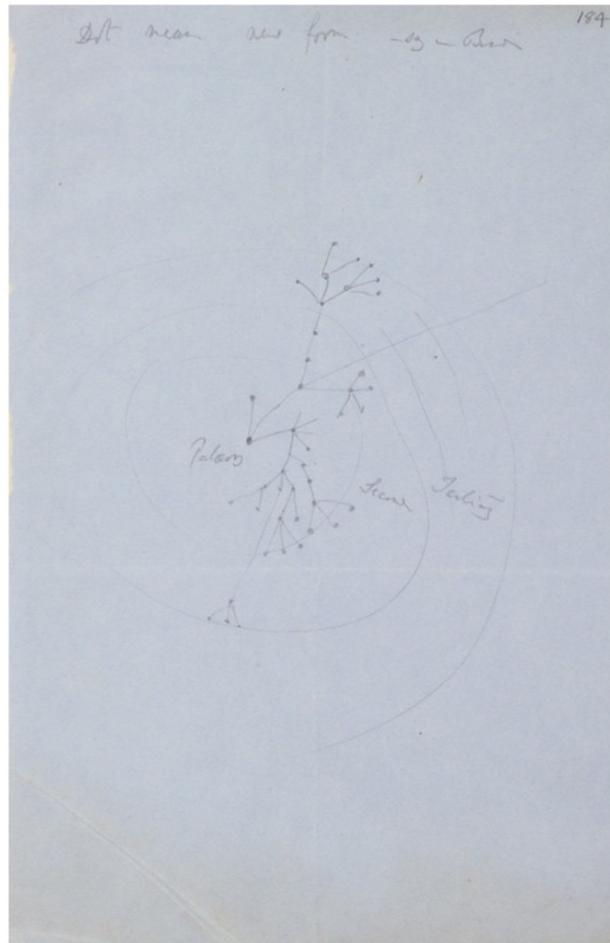


Fig. 1: Dot means new form (Annotated Diagrams of Branching Trees), DAR 205.5, S.184r,
© reproduced with permission of Cambridge University Library

The present is excluded from whatever is recorded because the present is *in the making* of a new record. We do not know where the present begins and where it ends. Tracking time means haunting the ghosts and shadows of our past to understand their return in future times. The answer to the question of why human beings desire to illustrate time seems simple and clear: They are afraid of the unknown. That is why the past has become an obsession and historians build archives to read the future from the realms of *past futures*. Thus, historians who understand their work as archeologists of media (and technical instruments) claim the phrase ‘the archive is burning’: like Knut Ebeling, who says that we do not have access to the archive as a place of history because the archive is ruling the future from the past.⁶ But we could also turn this phrase the other way around: We do not have access to the archive because it is ruled by the future. More precisely, the past is not the closed door behind us, it is the open one in front of us, guarded by a gatekeeper: an allusion to Franz

Kafka's gatekeeper in *Before the Law (Vor dem Gesetz, 1914)*. It is the presence of the future that forces us to choose the right moment to enter. Ironically, as the door is always open, there is nothing to wait for, there is not even something to go into because we are already in it. To fulfill future presences, we must close the door, lock up the past, let the future reassemble history. Thus, I would like to emphasize that the common meanings of *present* and *presence* mutually depend on each other for *present* understood as a single moment in time is connected to a particular state of being which feels its own *presence* in the sense of existing or living. To put it in a nutshell: There is no present without presence, the latter one is the cause of the former.

This essay offers an experiment with time going through different stages of conceptualization. We start in the chambers of 18th-century scholars, who were aware of the troubles of history repeating itself, and of the problem of providence pointing to a future that already exists and so cannot be influenced by present events. In the 19th century, it will be Zarathustra's task to show us how the pre-existing future leads not to nihilism, but to an affirmation of the already known, which relieves us from the chains of past presences and lets us renew future ones. Just a few years later, at the dawn of a new millennium, Virginia Woolf's fictional character called Orlando will drive us through different time zones with the vehicle called consciousness, to show us what it means that time has passed over our bodies and through our minds. Finally, three Jewish scholars of the 20th century—Walter Benjamin, Erich Auerbach, and Hannah Arendt—will fulfill the picture of traveling concepts tracing the chronological movement of time. Benjamin favors achronological constellations and jumping between past and present to create future tasks. Auerbach revives theological thinking to remind us that the process of secularization does not erase providence but forces us to rethink the conjunction of past and future events as birth of one presence divided in two realities simultaneously connected by the subject. Everything flows together in Hannah Arendt's concept of "in-between" as "nunc stans"⁷ of the thinking ego, which is located on the battleground of time where past meets future, conquering present itself.

2_Vico's Chronological Monsters

In a faraway time and place, archaeologists found an old and cryptic manuscript which depicted an allegory of life. Named after its author Cebes, they called it the "Tableau of Cebes."⁸ But unfortunately, this painting as such never existed: it was a text describing a picture of a journey through life which has no real reference or pictorial evidence. However, the depicted landscape shows a man getting access to life by passing by different doors. In front of every door there is a woman, each an allegory of a different lust that the traveler must overcome, to pass on through the rings of life until he reaches the fixed point above all rings where the vices welcome him. Finally, he can rest and look back on his traps and falls, failures, and misunderstandings. But still his journey is not finished yet. He must return to the beginning, the first entrance, where the old man once explained to him all the rules for life required to pass through it easily. The traveler must then travel again through all rings he had passed, to return to the point where he started. The rings of life have become rings in his mind: a journey once again, but this time guided by his memory. The picture of life completes itself in eternal loops of departure and arriving. The *corso* always needs a *ricorso*.

Cebes' ethical allegory of life seemed to be long forgotten until an Italian scholar, Giambattista Vico, included this brief constellation of text and image at the beginning of his own magnum opus, *La Scienza Nuova* (1744).⁹ However, instead of depicting an ethical subject in his figuration, Vico chooses a political one, setting in motion a paradigm shift between philosophy and philology as disciplines of the man-made world. In Vico's *verum-et-factum-convertuntur* principle, human beings are only able to understand things they made by themselves.¹⁰



Fig. 2: Frontispiece of Giambattista Vico's *La Scienza Nuova* (1744)

Vico's first object of contemplation is language. Human beings create their world through poetic forces and mythological interpretations. Homer (not Adam) is the creator of the world full of stories surrounding and explaining the world. Philology is the science deciphering these signs on the surface of all created things.¹¹ Vico's figuration of Cebes is a figure of the text in linear order that moves chronically forward, whereas the image itself shows a constellation of figures that unfold simultaneously in front of the eyes of the viewer.¹²

Two different time zones work in favor of the other: The text moves forward as *corso* from one argument and chapter to the next; the figuration itself works as *ricorso* because it shows all *corsi* compressed into one, and the same constellation. We see history as God's foreseen intention of his will; the figure of Metaphysics, staying on the globus looking towards eternal light which is enlightening her heart; and Homer, caught by the light reflecting between all three figures. But Homer rests in himself, looks to the ground where all man-made things of sciences and arts lay.

Nothing disturbs his attention. His eyes are fixed, his mind is clear. Homer, the king of the world, shapes the world with his poetic mind, beside God's real intentions or Metaphysics' interpretations. For Vico, the figuration is intended for the reader to

better remember the text, to understand the main issue of his argument and the *ricorso* of political history. Yet it is not a mere illustration of the text. The figuration demonstrates what the chronological text could not: that *corso* and *ricorso* happen at the same time, although we read the text from cause to effect, and from effect to new cause, and so on. In the text, we must read backwards as if we were traveling through time again to the beginning. Then the *ricorso* would be a time-traveling shift back to the past. But the shift back is also a jump forward, *back to the future*. The present is nothing but the steppingstone to jump from past to future, and vice versa. The *ricorso* has been fulfilled.¹³

Though it became one of philosophy's major concepts in political history, unfortunately, Vico never clearly defines *ricorso*. As I see it, there is another term that clarifies its hidden meaning. Vico discusses political struggle between the plebeian and patrician classes in ancient Rome—the struggle of legitimizing the plebeian as a class with its own rights—by using the word “monster” for a new table of rules as juridical form of a class in the making.¹⁴ Several times he also uses it for “chronological monsters” such as Orpheus, whose existence cannot be proven, and who pops up in different stories and times as if he were a ghost of time.¹⁵

These strange disruptive phenomena at the beginning of something totally new—which has no order because it is out of time, and so out of chronological order—are signs of future events. They announce something that is coming from the future, but still has no legitimization in the present because there is no connection to the past, and because its existence is only prefigured, but not yet here. I have shown elsewhere that these “chronological monsters” are the point where every *corso* announces itself as *ricorso*, the affirmation of going back in time through consciousness—like Cebes' traveler through life—to jump into the future where the place of its fulfillment is already promised.¹⁶ If there is a connection to Friedrich Nietzsche's “eternal return,” then we have to search for it in Zarathustra's womb and understand his pregnancies as illnesses of the mind that give birth to the eternal return itself.

3_Zarathustra's Pregnancies

Zarathustra is the friend of undead artists like the tightrope walker, preachers, hateful human beings, magicians, poets, beggars, old and young women (*alten und jungen Weiblein*), and many more. All of them are companions and guests in his cave, where

they celebrate the donkey's festival.¹⁷ Once again, they all find their true idol to worship and to adore with its monotone cry of a donkey. What a pity is this for Zarathustra. Nothing has been memorized, all his preaching and teaching of the *Übermensch* has been forgotten. Nothing is left. All disciples turn out to be false children with uneducated minds, falling back into old cognitive structures they seemed to have overcome. Zarathustra has no space to breathe. His guests' talk makes him sick. Again, he feels ill, and with the illness comes a time of recovery.¹⁸ It is his time of being pregnant and giving birth to a new occasion affirming life.

What is the illness he must recover from? The illness that haunts his thoughts is that life is not bearable anymore, that suffering returns in eternal loops, and that every possibility to give life and all its consequences a purposeful meaning turns into a revenge against life. This moment has nothing to do with nihilism. Nihilism is bearable because there is *nothing* to bear. Zarathustra's pregnancy weighs heavier than any nihilist thought that there is nothing left to live for. Zarathustra's illness understood as pregnancy gives him plenty of reasons to live. That is his problem: It is not an absence of reasons to live, but the plenty of life itself, allegorized by a young pregnant woman. Zarathustra's leash forces her to give birth to this abundance. The sexual intercourse and female womb are visual manifestations of Zarathustra's inner world.¹⁹ He leashes himself, he talks to his soul in a monologue. His pregnancy carries him to its lethal threshold between life and death. Nearly dead, he asks for more life, life again with all its consequences and necessities, all its demands and callings. The leash is the midwife of labor. At that point he gives birth to a simple, but also dangerous idea that could be a solution for his chronic disease of having compassion with passionate human beings: Prepare yourself for the next return of the *Why* and try to resist giving your suffering meaning. The only way to overcome nihilism and to recover from the illness of compassion is to prepare for the next round: *ricorso*.

Thus, *ricorso* in Zarathustra's case does not mean *Wiederkehr*, but *Wiederkunft*, understood as *Niederkunft* in gynecological terms.²⁰ The difference between *Wiederkehr* and *Wiederkunft* is often forgotten and trivialized. But it is the most important one for understanding the Dionysian life support system that Zarathustra bears in mind. *Kehre* (to turn) means the view backward in time (*Kehrtwende*); *Kunft* (to come) means both: It is a coming from the future (*Ankunft*) and a coming from the

past (*Herkunft*). Both timelines converge in labor, which is the present moment giving birth to time itself in all three forms instantaneously. Thus, the moment of birth is also the moment of dying. This dying is so imperceptible that Zarathustra's memory has no record of it. He dies without taking notice of it.²¹ That is the transcendental moment of the eternal return, which includes an imperceptible time lapse between now and then. The music of time never stops. It is the will's affirmative choice to enter the spiral rotation of return (*Wiederkunft*) as arrival (*Ankunft*) from which provenance (*Herkunft*) is derived. Recurrence understood as turnaround (*Wiederkehr*) is nothing but the statistical numbering of moments in a constellation of incidents like a dice roll (*Würfelwurf*).²² The point is that the eternal recurrence of past moments must be affirmed *actively* which means not as a *reaction* to the dice roll, but as a return of the dice roll. Giving birth is the proactive affirmation that every dice comes twice from the past and the future to create the present moment as the pregnancy of plenty versions of life. Only in this crossover of timelines both meanings of present and presence emerge and become one: without the presence of a being there is no being in present time. The present time is born from the presence of beings living in time.

Zarathustra's traveling from aphorism to aphorism is like the rings of life in Cebes' tableau, and Vico's chronological order of events crossed by the figuration at the beginning. Every companion returns several times. Every one of them has some remembrance of Zarathustra's arrival and his speeches. Nonetheless, every time, he himself forgets what happened, and returns without having any memories of the *corso* before. Thus, he does not recognize his *corso* as *ricorso*, but as a totally new *corso*. The eternal return is forgotten. Everything happens anew. The time lapse puts everything at the beginning. The needle touches the record. Zarathustra dances again. Is this heaven or hell? Virginia Woolf has the answer.

4_In Search for the Lost Gender: Queering Time with Virginia Woolf

For Orlando—Woolf's human time machine—the time lapses are both: heaven when she sleeps, rests, writes and thinks, hell when she again transforms from one social pattern to the next accompanied by her own writings starting in the 16th century and finished in a new millennium. While Orlando's outward appearance changes—her clothes, her body, her gender (sex)—and while she adopts the fashion of her time and

modifies her behavior slightly, the oak tree of her childhood as well as her book are the constants in a flow of moveable things that manifest as social, cultural, and political history. Photographs picture her as a little boy and as a grown woman. They are documents of objectivity verified by both the biographer and the reader of the biography. Orlando is caught in a test tube of narration, and the one who tells the story is the master of time, the puppeteer who creates the biography by manipulating time, which is self-reflected ironically several times in the novel. We can read the novel as a great allegory about the relativity of sex and gender, about the politics of identity, but the word *queer*, as used in this novel, has more to do with time and consciousness.

She feels it in her body, her skin, and her bones, as if she were an instrument, and time is playing her:

Meanwhile, she became conscious, as she stood at the window, of an extraordinary tingling and vibration all over her, as if she were made of a thousand wires upon which some breeze or errant fingers were playing scales. Now her toes tingled; now her marrow. She had the queerest sensations about the thigh bones.²³

It is a poetic flight through the epochs *to make time queer*, or if we put it that way: a *queering of time*.²⁴ Where there is Orlando, there is always the sensation of being queer. The queerest moment for the biographer is when Orlando decides to finish her book, and nothing takes place but thinking and writing in a lonely room. Nothing is left for the biographer to tell because nothing happens. The protagonist is isolated, fixed, nearly immobile, in total self-contemplation, a monad enclosed in time but also beyond it.²⁵ The narration stops. Life stops (“Life, Life, Life”).²⁶ Nothing is worth being told. Nothing takes place but thinking in the *here* and *now* as expressed by writing: “She wrote. She wrote. She wrote.”²⁷ Life goes on without Orlando taking notice of it—till she arrives in the new millennium, the world of flying machines and vehicles that she drives as fast as her thoughts accelerate the machine’s possibilities. The stream of consciousness emerges with the car and becomes one and the same thing: The subject (Orlando) accelerates the object (the car), and the object accelerates the subject.²⁸ They are one and the same: pure acceleration from corner to corner, thought to thought. Orlando is an *automobile* in the literary sense of the word, the *immobile mover*, more a *spiral* than a *stream* in a man-made machine.

5_Ur/Sprung, Figure, Fulfillment: From Walter Benjamin's Origin(s) to Erich Auerbach's Vertical Lift

Orlando jumps forward in time scales no other human being would survive. But Orlando is not a human being. She is a writing machine, a poet, an artist. Every jump is like a fall in rabbit's hole: an *Orlando in Wonderland*, so to speak, where everything seems to be queer. History becomes queer when philologists and philosophers like Walter Benjamin and Erich Auerbach are talking about *Ur/Sprung*, or figure and fulfillment, as if the terms mean something well known, but at the same time something totally different. In the case of Walter Benjamin, *Ursprung* (origin), from his study about the *Trauerspiel*, to his *Passagen-Werk* as *Urgeschichte der Moderne*, the prefix "Ur-" does not mean the start point from where a genesis (*Entstehung*) begins to develop. The historian is not analyzing a determined, fixed point in the past ("*das im Werden und Vergehen Entsprungene*"), but "*Entspringende*," a term which he uses to refer not to the past, but to the present.²⁹ What is marked by "Ur-" is the time and place of the subject who starts looking backward and from that point on becomes like Orlando captured in a timeless moment. "*Das Entspringende*" is what jumps out of time (needle)—for an imperceptible moment—and then returns into the flow or stream of becoming in the mode of immersive thinking. By looking back, the subject is inventing time as relation between cause and effect, the old and the new. The subject itself is lost in time till it arrives at the point where it finished its task.

Unfortunately, Walter Benjamin never finished his *Passagen-Werk*. From the view of some philologists, who wish for some ending, the circumstances of his present destroyed the future of his work. Other philologists believe that the *Passagen-Werk* is an infinite work of art and science, open to revision for future tasks. I agree with the latter perspective. In every *Ursprung* there is *Ur/Sprung*, an interruption between now and then.

Erich Auerbach's view of history has a lot in common with Walter Benjamin's, but Auerbach's double of figure and fulfillment has more in common with Christian theological concepts.³⁰ Despite acknowledging that in much of the western world, we are living in a secularized society cut off from divine foresight, Auerbach activates old terms to make them new again. Thus, "figure" as "*figura*" designates a temporal lapse between two disparate events (Adam/Jesus, crucifixion/reincarnation); put

together again in a ritual of envisioning (eucharistic sacrament), both events recur simultaneously as if they were present at the same time.³¹ This envisioning (*Vergegenwärtigung*) is not just an act of seeing but believing; in other words, seeing alone is not believing: we believe, and that is why we see and understand. It is the magic of the spoken word that transforms the whole situation in the presence of two events that do not substitute for each other as mere representation (figure as symbol, metaphor, allegory, and so on), but present themselves as what they really are. There are two realities made visible by the communion of participants who believe that nothing is lost in time, but all is simultaneously present and equally valid as events/figures in its own right.³² In Benjamin's terms, everything is saved (*rettendes Eingedenken*) although it is destroyed (*Auslöschung*).³³ This is the negativity of fulfillment, not suspension (*Aufhebung*) in Hegelian terms, but postponement (*Aufschiebung/Verschiebung*):³⁴ It is a task for future presences to save what already disappeared from the display of time; it keeps open the possibilities of new constellations between past and future events. Things that we have lost in time are coming back to us from the future.

6 Things We Lost in Time: Hannah Arendt's "Sich-Zusammen-in-einer-Gefahr-Wissen"

If each person's mind has a life of its own, then how does one get access to it? Let's ask for the key from gatekeeper Hannah Arendt. What we said before points straight to the vertical lift of the needle which loses its connection to the continuous flow of time on the turntable when the train of thought is interrupted or disrupted. When returning to the lines of thought (grooves on the record), the record is not the same anymore, neither is the needle. With every new contact they change. The lifetime of record and needle is limited like our own. But it is this limitation which paves the way to the unlimited feeling of being present. Hannah Arendt characterizes this spatial-temporal moment as "in-between":

In other words, the location of the thinking ego in time would be the in-between of past and future, the present, this mysterious and slippery now, a mere gap in time, toward which nevertheless the more solid tenses of past and future are directed insofar as they denote that which is no more and that which is not yet. That they are at all, they obviously owe to man, who has inserted himself between them and established his presence there.³⁵

The answer to the question about where we are when we think is simple and clear: We are in the *nowhere* understood also as *now/here* between the past and the future,

the two antagonists fighting against each other. In the middle of their battle, the thinking ego emerges as a battleground (an allusion to Kafka's parable), as homeless. It is not the transcendent place where God once presided over all creatures, rather, it asserts itself in the battle between being and becoming.

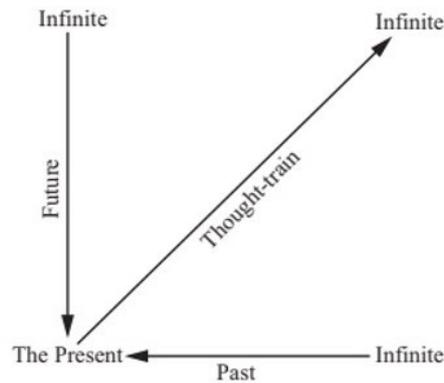


Fig. 3: Sketch in Hannah Arendt, *The Life of the Mind* (San Diego/New York/London: Harcourt Inc., 1978), 208.

While “it” is thinking, “it” does not exist, as in the not-being of Orlando while she thinks and writes; “it” has no age, no origin, no aim of arriving somewhere. All predecessors and successors of this event have done nothing else but create future presences in a timeless and homeless zone of becoming imperceptible. Out of this place, eternal works are born which transcend their own “finiteness.”³⁶ From homelessness these works arrive in a promised home, a prefigured future which is fulfilling the origin (*Ur/Sprung* as *Herkunft*) of its own past.

Humans invented the future perfect as the most perverse strategy to overcome time itself, the tense suggesting that anything will be done—anywhere, and anytime—without exact specification. The coordinates of time and place are negotiated on the battleground of the here and now. The human species, once frightened about what the future may bring, is now confronted with the simple fact that the future is already here, fulfilling our past. What geologists and climate researchers call the Anthropocene, or posthuman philosophers like Donna Haraway call the Chtulucene,³⁷ I would call—in Arendt's terms—*Sich-Zusammen-in-einer-Gefahr-Wissen*,³⁸ a shared past of “being together in danger,” which has the possibility of building a new

companionship born from death. Our birth sets a new beginning as natality (*Natalität*): It is an initiation of the first impulse to act (*ein initium setzen*).³⁹

Arendt's "in-between" repeats Auerbach's *Jederzeitlichkeit*⁴⁰ which repeats Benjamin's *Dialektik im Stillstand* which repeats Nietzsche's *Nieder/Wiederkunft* which repeats Vico's *ricorso*. It is a true battleground of the fittest idea mapping time's eternal loops and lapses. These are echoes and resonances between philosophers and writers who were falling out of time (*unzeitgemäß*) within the academic field, homeless thinkers not up to date because they molded their minds to a battleground of predecessors and successors. As chronological monsters they return to our present to remind us of what Orlando and Zarathustra had/have experienced, are experiencing, will experience, and will have experienced: "Time has passed over me,"⁴¹ whispers Orlando, while Zarathustra would exclaim: Well then, anew! The turntable turns on. Let us return to it in loops and lapses!

Endnotes

- ¹ Arthur Schopenhauer, *Die Welt als Wille und Vorstellung. Zürcher Ausgabe. Werke in zehn Bänden*, Vol. 4 (Zürich: Diogenes, 1977), 526. Translation by P.G.
- ² Schopenhauer, *Die Welt als Wille und Vorstellung*, 532.
- ³ Cf. Theodore Cook, *The Curves of Life: Being an Account of Spiral Formations and their Application to Growth in Nature, to Science and to Art; With Special Reference to the Manuscripts of Leonardo da Vinci* (London: Constable, 1914).
- ⁴ I reflected on the spiral as a figure of time in more detail in my new book, Patricia A. Gwozdz, *Ecce figura: Lektüren eines Konzepts in Konstellationen (100 v. Chr.–1946)* (Berlin/Boston: De Gruyter, 2023).
- ⁵ Cf. Patricia A. Gwozdz, "Deconstructing Gaia's Memories: Von Leonardo da Vinci's Mal-Szene des Fluiden bis zu Charles Darwins Strata-Poetik des Imperfekten," in *Tiefenzeit/Mikrozeit. Reihe: Archiv für Mediengeschichte*, Vol. 18, eds. Friedrich Balke, Bernhard Siegert, and Joseph Vogl (Paderborn: Wilhelm Fink, 2019), 77–91.
- ⁶ Knut Ebeling, "Das Archiv brennt," in *Das Archiv brennt*, eds. Knut Ebeling and Georges Didi-Huberman (Berlin: Kadmos, 2007), 33–183, here: 57.
- ⁷ Hannah Arendt, *The Life of the Mind* (San Diego/New York/London: Harcourt Inc., 1978), 207.
- ⁸ Rainer Hirsch-Luipold et al., eds., *Die Bildtafel des Kebes. Allegorie des Lebens* (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 2005), 68–145.
- ⁹ Giambattista Vico, *Principi di scienza nuova d'interno alla comune natura delle nazioni* (Napoli: Nella Stamperia Muziana, 1744).
- ¹⁰ Cf. Sebastian Edinger, "Vom emphatischen Erschaffen zur instrumentellen Konvention: Die Abwärtstransformation von Vicos *verum-et-factum-convertuntur*-Prinzip im Angesicht der empirischen Wissenschaften," in *Maschinen des Lebens—Das Leben der Maschinen: Zur historischen Epistemologie und Metaphorologie von Maschine und Leben*, eds. Patricia A. Gwozdz, Jakob Heller, and Tim Sparenberg (Berlin: Kadmos, 2018), 55–73.

- ¹¹ Cf. Jürgen Trabant, *Vico's New Science of Ancient Signs: A Study of Sematology* (London/New York: Routledge, 2004).
- ¹² Cf. Thomas Gilbhard, *Vicos Denkbild: Studien zur Dipintura der Scienza Nuova und der Lehre vom Ingenium* (Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 2012).
- ¹³ For a more detailed discussion of this theses regarding Vico's figuration of time as chronological monsters and comparing with Cebes and Nietzsche see Gwozdz, *Ecce figura*, 405–424.
- ¹⁴ Vico, *Principi di scienza nuova*, 195, 369, 391–392. The term “monster” refers to the Latin meaning “monere” which means “to warn” also understood as something in the future which is coming towards us.
- ¹⁵ Vico, *Principi di scienza nuova*, 421.
- ¹⁶ Cf. Gwozdz, *Ecce figura*, 422–424.
- ¹⁷ Friedrich Nietzsche, “Also sprach Zarathustra IV: Das Eselsfest, §1,” (1885), accessed September 07, 2023, <<http://www.nietzschesource.org/#eKGWB/Za-IV-Eselsfest-1>> and Friedrich Nietzsche, “Also sprach Zarathustra IV: Das Eselsfest, §3,” (1885), accessed September 07, 2023, <<http://www.nietzschesource.org/#eKGWB/Za-IV-Eselsfest-1>>.
- ¹⁸ Cf. Patricia A. Gwozdz, *Die Genesenden: Medical Humanities Revisited* (Berlin: Kadmos, 2002).
- ¹⁹ Friedrich Nietzsche, “Also sprach Zarathustra III: §Von der grossen Sehnsucht,” (1885), accessed September 07, 2023, <<http://www.nietzschesource.org/#eKGWB/Za-III-Sehnsucht>>.
- ²⁰ See again for a closer look Gwozdz, *Ecce figura*, 419–423.
- ²¹ Cf. Paul S. Loeb, *The Death of Nietzsche's Zarathustra* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 67.
- ²² Friedrich Nietzsche, “Nachgelassene Fragmente, 14 = W II 5. Frühjahr 1888,” accessed September 07, 2023, <<http://www.nietzschesource.org/#eKGWB/NF-1888.14>>.
- ²³ Virginia Woolf, “Orlando: A Biography [1928],” in *Selected Works of Virginia Woolf: Jacob's Room* (1922); *Mrs. Dalloway* (1925); *To the Lighthouse* (1927); *Orlando: A Biography* (1928); *A Room of One's Own* (1929); *The Waves* (1931); *Three Guineas* (1938); *Between the Acts* (1941) (Hertfordshire: Wordsworth Editions Limited, 2005), 393–559, here: 515.
- ²⁴ Cf. Jose Esteban Muñoz, *Cruising Utopia: The Then and There of Queer Futurity* (New York/London: New York University Press, 2009).
- ²⁵ Woolf, “Orlando: A Biography,” 529–559.
- ²⁶ Woolf, “Orlando: A Biography,” 531.
- ²⁷ Woolf, “Orlando: A Biography,” 529.
- ²⁸ Woolf, “Orlando: A Biography,” 548–549.
- ²⁹ Walter Benjamin, “Ursprung des deutschen Trauerspiels,” in *Walter Benjamin: Gesammelte Werke*, Vol. 1, eds. Rolf Tiedemann and Hermann Schweppenhäuser (Frankfurt, Main: Suhrkamp, 1991), 359.
- ³⁰ For a detailed history of the concept “figura” in theology, philosophy and literature see again Gwozdz, *Ecce figura*.
- ³¹ For a close reading of Auerbach's terms see Gwozdz, *Ecce figura*, 138–167.
- ³² Cf. Erich Auerbach, “Figura,” in *Erich Auerbach: Gesammelte Aufsätze zur Romanischen Philologie* (Bern/ München: Francke Verlag, 1967), 55–92, here: 66–70.
- ³³ Cf. Sigrid Weigel, *Entstellte Ähnlichkeit: Walter Benjamins theoretische Schreibweise* (Frankfurt, Main: Fischer Taschenbuch, 1997), 59.

- ³⁴ Gwozdz, *Ecce figura*, 618.
- ³⁵ Arendt, *The Life of the Mind*, 208.
- ³⁶ Arendt, *The Life of the Mind*, 211.
- ³⁷ Cf. Donna Haraway, *Staying with the Trouble: Making Kin in the Chtulucene* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2016).
- ³⁸ Hannah Arendt, *Der Liebesbegriff bei Augustin: Versuch einer philosophischen Interpretation* (Berlin: Julius Springer, 1929), 84.
- ³⁹ Hannah Arendt, *Vita activa oder Vom tätigen Leben* (München/ Zürich: Piper, 1994), 16.
- ⁴⁰ Cf. Erich Auerbach, *Mimesis: Dargestellte Wirklichkeit in der abendländischen Literatur* (Bern: Francke 2015), 168. For a visualization of Auerbach's figuralogy see Gwozdz, *Ecce figura*, 182.
- ⁴¹ Woolf, "Orlando: A Biography," 546.