

Vivetta
Vivarelli
Literarische
Bilder und
Vorbilder
der Ewigen
Wiederkunft

Quodlibet Elements

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The first and only aphorism that Nietzsche devotes to the idea of eternal return begins with the words: “What, if a demon [...]”? The same words “What would be, if the demon [...]?” appeared in one of the finest letters the young philologist Erwin Rohde sent to Nietzsche, and which referred to deeply felt moments they spent together. This study seeks to recreate the biographical and literary background to the intriguing idea that Nietzsche tried to support in his notes with scientific hypotheses. How important for Nietzsche’s thought are the views on time of Marc Aurel, Montaigne, Pascal and their ideas on the relationship between transience and eternity? Is Nietzsche’s “most abyssal thought” also a Wager in favor of this life, an attempt to escape from or to fill the Pascalian abyss of the emptiness of a world after the death of God? How influential are some of Leopardi’s poetic images? Finally, how does the famous midnight song in Zarathustra relate to the eternal return and to Rohde and Wagner? Drawing on works to be found in Nietzsche’s private library, this book attempts to shed light on Nietzsche’s “radical rationalism” – to quote Mazzino Montinari – and on the ways in which it reaches its final, clairvoyant aporias.

L'AUTORE

Vivetta Vivarelli is Professor of German Literature at the University of Florence. Her main publications include: *Nietzsche und die Masken des Freien Geistes: Montaigne, Pascal und Sterne* (Würzburg: Königshausen & Neumann, 1998); *Il fume rovinoso e gli argini. Hölderlin e Goethe leggono Orazio* (Pisa: Edizioni ETS, 2001); as editor: *La nascita della tragedia* (a Translation, with Introduction, Commentary, Notes and an Appendix of Texts, Turin: Einaudi, 2009), and *Nietzsche e gli ebrei* (Selected texts with Introduction, Commentary, Contextualization and Two Essays by Jacob Golomb und Andrea Orsucci, Florence: Giuntina, 2011); “Greek Audience: Performance and Effect of the Different Literary Genres in Nietzsche’s Philologica,” in Anthony K. Jensen, Helmut Heit, *Nietzsche as a Scholar of Antiquity* (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2014); “Der Bildner des Übermenschen und der dithyrambische Künstler: Michelangelo und Wagner in ‘Also sprach Zarathustra’” (*Nietzsche-Studien*, 47, 2018).