The Flame of Eternity
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Abstract: This volume contains five critical reviews of the English edition of the late Krzysztof Michalski's The Flame of Eternity: An Interpretation of Nietzsche's Thought, Princeton University Press, 2012. The book has also been published in Polish, Russian, and in French. The reviews are by senior scholars, Babette Babich, Professor of Philosophy at Fordham University; Sigridur Thorgeirsdottir, Professor of Philosophy at the University of Iceland; Lydia Voronina, US Department of State, retired; Tom Rockmore, Professor of Philosophy at Duquesne University; and James Dodd, Professor and Chair in the Philosophy Department at the New School of Social Science in New York. Also in this volume, an original novella by Herbert Mason, Professor Emeritus at Boston University, on the classic myth and medieval folktale "Seven Sleepers of Ephesus" casting new light on the development of Islamic Studies in the United States, especially studies in Sufism.

Keywords: Babich, Babette; Dodd, James; Gadamer, Hans Georg; Heidegger, Martin; Mason, Herbert; Massignon, Luis; Michalski, Krysztof; Nietzsche, Friedrich; Olson, Alan M.; Rockmore, Tom; Schimmel, Anna-Marie; Thorgeirsdottir, Sigridur; Voronina, Lydia; being; time; eternal return; overman; will to power; embodiment; relational metaphysics; Muslim; Sufism; Islam; Hallaj; Harvard; Paris.

Owing to matters of health and other contingencies, the KJSNA panel review of Krzysztof Michalski's Flame of Eternity (Princeton, 2012), scheduled for the Annual Meeting of the Eastern Division of the American Philosophical Association in Atlanta (2012) did not take place. Nevertheless, our panelists agreed, as Babette Babich put it, Michalski's Flame of Eternity is a remarkable invitation to read Nietzsche "without guiderails," as it were. Thus all our reviewers are in agreement, for various reasons with Charles Taylor's single word "exceptional" endorsement on the book's dustjacket cover, certainly different than Richard Schacht's early dismissal, viz., that he just doesn't understand "this kind of writing."

Schacht's unease is provided formal precision in the observation by Sigridur Thorgeirsdottir that: Michalski's "book cannot be situated within the type of Nietzsche scholarship that consists in a dialogue with different interpretations of the relevant concepts in Nietzsche's philosophy of religion and it can, in

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1 Babette Babich is a Professor of Philosophy at Fordham University, and the Editor of "New Nietzsche Studies."

2 Broadly speaking, this might refer to the difference between an "analytical" and a "continental" approach to philosophy.
reason that Jaspers viewed the works of both Nietzsche and Kierkegaard as being invitations not to the study of academic philosophy, but to the challenging task of "philosophizing on the grounds of possible Existenz."

I believe that Krzysztof Michalski was himself fascinated and captured by this distinction and that his book is, as Tom Rockmore suggests a "hermeneutical" approach to Nietzsche and to philosophizing rather than being as Thorgeirsdottir and Babich tend to suggest, a "literary" or as Voronina puts it a "romantic" interpretation. On the other hand, Rockmore commends Michalski for actually dealing with Nietzsche's principal ideas, thus rescuing him from the host of post-modern interpretations that populate what Rockmore identifies as the "cottage industry" of recent Nietzsche interpretations that have little or nothing to do with anything that actually concerned Nietzsche. A Heideggerian approach to Michalski's take on time" and the "eternal round" for me resonates closely to the guiding thesis of Paul Ricoeur in his magisterial study of *Time and Narrative*, namely, the contrasting but equally influential conceptions of time in Aristotle and Augustine; the former being syntactically based on narrative, where time has a beginning, a middle, and an end; whereas Augustine's conception is informed by "interruption" which opens the door, as it were, to the truths of "special revelation" and to the vast cultural legacy of biblical theism in the Occidental World.

Our sincere thanks to these senior scholars for their insightful reviews of the final book of our much-too-soon departed friend, Krzysztof Michalski (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Krzysztof_Michalski).

### Current editions of *The Flame of Eternity*

**Polish:**

**Russian:**

**French:**

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3 In the sense that thousands of American undergraduate students each year identify Nietzsche as their favorite philosopher without knowing that he was a classicist and not a philosopher, and that if they were intent on studying Nietzsche in Germany they would likely find him being taught in Germanistik, and not in a philosophy department.