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Becoming and Purification: Empedocles, Zarathustra's Übermensch, and Lucian's Tyrant

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Becoming and Purification

Empedocles, Zarathustra's Übermensch, and Lucian's Tyrant

BABETTE BABICH

Das Leben suchst du, suchst, und es quillt und glänzt
Ein göttlich Feuer tief aus der Erde dir,
Und du in schauerndem Verlangen
Wirfst dich hinab, in des Aetna Flammen.

—Hölderlin, *Empedocles*

You look for life, you look and from deeps of Earth
A fire, divinely gleaming wells up for you,
And quick, aquiver with desire, you
Hurl yourself down into Etna's furnace.

—Hölderlin, *Empedocles*

Introduction

“Who is Nietzsche’s Zarathustra?” Heidegger once asked, reminding us as he sought to pose this question that qua advocate,¹ Zarathustra takes the part of, or speaks on behalf of, others. Heidegger’s question permits us to ask about Zarathustra’s style as a “rhetor,” an orator, a speaker. When we read *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, what does it mean that Nietzsche tells us that his Zarathustra *speaks*? What does it mean that he tells us that Zarathustra conscientiously, deliberately speaks “otherwise” to his disciples and to the general public than he does to himself (ZII “On Redemption”)? And what is the role of the advocate in philosophy? For the most part, such questions exceed what we can do here but are important to keep in mind if we wish to read *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* in terms of Zarathustra’s teaching of both the overhuman—that is literally: the *Übermensch*—and the eternal return.

In an effort to address both themes, I will undertake to read Nietzsche's *Zarathustra* with reference to Empedocles.

The pre-Socratic, or as Nietzsche would say, the pre-Platonic Empedocles was a paradigmatic speaker and, according to Aristotle, the first of the orators. And in addition to *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, Nietzsche (like Hölderlin) composed several drafts entitled *The Death of Empedocles*. Significantly for the title *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, the first lines of the fragments usually presented as the *Katharmoi*² begin with an exemplification of Empedocles' "speakerly" prowess,³ as Empedocles presents himself in his writings.⁴ Nietzsche's *Zarathustra* as stylistic orator or rhetorician may also be compared to Empedocles in terms of style, native and nonnative, just as the Sicilian Empedocles may be compared to the Syrian Lucian of Samosata who wrote in a form of Greek said to have been purer than a native's own. Critically, comparatively, Nietzsche commanded his own special expertise on the writings of the Sicilian chronologist and contemporary of the second-century Lucian: Diogenes Laërtius.⁵

Nietzsche's *Zarathustra* echoes Empedocles as a speaker and political or moral advocate as he teaches self-overcoming. A parallel to Empedocles is also suggested by *Zarathustra*'s apparent flight into the volcano and his elusive death (as both Lucian and Diogenes Laërtius foreground *conflicting* reports of Empedocles' death). Thus tracing a parallel between Nietzsche's Empedocles and Hölderlin's Empedocles, I read Nietzsche's *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* as a parodic echo of Empedocles' *Purifications*. Like Empedocles' call for reform and for the transfiguration of humanity, *Zarathustra*'s speech to the crowd teaches the overhuman, calling as it would seem for humanity's self-overcoming.

This call includes what may be called the politics of kingship or "revolution," as this political dimension appears in Hölderlin's *Empedocles*. It is important to explore this revolutionary spirit alongside Nietzsche's own discussion of princes, economics, and politics in *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*. This undertaking is especially challenging, not only because of the difficulties attendant upon reading Hölderlin in general, but also because of the complex question of the role of tragedy. Nietzsche argues that tragedy commits suicide at its own hand, implicating Euripides and Socrates but also the New Comedy. He also reminds us that the satirical is always part and parcel of the tragic world view.

The complex question of the relation between tragedy and parody (or Lucianic Menippean satire) spans Nietzsche's works from *The Birth of Tragedy* to *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* to *Ecce Homo*'s "What I Owe the Ancients." And we read in his preface to the 1886 second edition of *The Gay Science*⁶ the self-referential warning: "'*Incipit tragoedia*' we read at the

end . . . Beware! Something downright wicked and malicious is announced here: *incipit parodia*, no doubt” (*GS* 1; see *GS* 342). Here we may recall that comedy, seen from the perspective of Nietzsche’s classical antiquity, is an all-too typical word for life itself. Thus we read Nietzsche’s provocative and wondrous allusion to Aeschylus’s “waves of uncountable laughter” together with his reflection that “*in the long run* every one of those great teachers of a purpose (of existence) was vanquished by laughter, reason, and nature; the short tragedy always gave way again and returned into the eternal comedy of existence” (*GS* 1; see *GS* 36, 67). The tonality—for those of us who look to beginnings—is indeed already at work in Nietzsche’s initial questioning of the usual, that is, the classically scholarly valuation of the epic poet Homer and the lyric and bawdy Archilochus. He reminds his readers that the ancients ranked these two poets together (*BT* 5). Nietzsche’s reflection on *The Birth of Tragedy Out of the Spirit of Music* does not permit us to see tragedy, comedy, and parody as contradictions—an insight already expressed in the sublime coincidence of opposites in Hölderlin’s short verse *Sophocles*:

Many strove in vain the highest joy, joyfully to say, Here finally it speaks to me, here in sorrow expressed.⁷

Nietzsche’s Sketches for the *Death of Empedocles*

Scholars observe that in 1870–1872 Nietzsche planned a drama on the model of and bearing the same title as Hölderlin’s several drafts of the *Death of Empedocles*.⁸ Like Hölderlin’s project, Nietzsche’s drafts are not brought to fruition. Here it is important to recall that compositions and letters imitating ancient authors was part of a classical formation whereby, recalling Aristotle’s emphasis, Empedocles may arguably be regarded as a signifier for this classical tradition.⁹ Thus Plutarch writes or composes a text after the fashion of Empedocles,¹⁰ as does Cicero. As does the student Nietzsche, infamously borrowing his words to do so—and note that our modern conviction that he was “plagiarizing” would not have been his own understanding of his practice. Nor would his teacher, as I have elsewhere argued,¹¹ have been unaware of the source and thus would hardly have been duped. One learns, very traditionally, through imitation.

In a section titled, “The Philosophers of the Tragic Age revealed, the world as tragedy” (*KSA* 7:21[16]), Nietzsche sketches “the tragic human being,” outlining three acts of his plan for the “death” of Empedocles. The parallel with Zarathustra at this stage is patent to the extent that both Empedocles and Zarathustra can be compared with the divine, and both present themselves as such. At the same time, both are imbued with mortality;

thus Empedocles names himself an outcast in these terms: "Of these I too am now one, an exile from the gods and a wanderer, having put my trust in raving strife."¹² While Zarathustra teaches the death of God and can be compared to divinity only in this context owing to the Judeo-Christian God, Empedocles attains his reputed elevation to a divinity among or alongside the gods by means of a dramatic death, whether self-elected as suicide or else self-arranged or staged as such or, as Diogenes Laërtius writes, "otherwise unknown."¹³ Lucian, in his account of Empedocles, plays on this "staging" by presenting it as the unexpected and so comic device of an updraft (hereby reversing the usual workings of the *deus ex machina*, which lowered the god to the stage and into public view). Thus, in Lucian's *Icaro-Menippus*, our hero meets Empedocles on the moon, wafted there, as we are told, from the volcano's updraft and where, as Lucian's Empedocles reports to his bastard-winged visitor (sporting one wing from an eagle and one from a vulture—yet another touch that could not help but appeal to the one-time Wagnerian Nietzsche), he has since survived on "dew."¹⁴

As many scholars have argued, Zarathustra is about death. And the afterlife, as Nietzsche tells us, is the epitome of the rejection of the becoming of life, which is why Nietzsche emphasizes the universal disinclination of human beings even to think "*The Thought of Death*"—"nothing is further from their minds than the feeling that they form a brotherhood of death" as the inspiration for his desire "to do something that would make the thought of life even a hundred times more appealing to them" (*GS* 278). And Nietzsche gives this theme of the refusal of becoming and death pride of place in the first section of his "'Reason' in Philosophy" in *Twilight of the Idols* (*TI* "Reason" 1). Writing here against traditional philosophers, Nietzsche argues that "nothing real has escaped their hands alive . . . death, change, and age, like reproduction and growth, are for them objections—refutations even" (*TI* "Reason" 1). Nietzsche had earlier reflected on the meaning of life in a *Gay Science* aphorism entitled *What Is Life?* "Life—that is: continually shedding something that wants to die" (*GS* 26). It only adds to this point to note, as David Allison and others tell us, that Nietzsche's plans for the text initially included Zarathustra's literal death. Indeed, I argue that this same event had already transpired in the schema of the text from the start, just where Zarathustra succumbs to a snake bite under a fig tree (shades of Pierre Courcelle's attention to the conventional trope of the image of Augustine under his fig tree, allegorically, hermeneutically, *figuratively* speaking): "'Your way is short,' the adder said sadly; 'my poison kills'" (*ZI* "On the Adder's Bite"). The bitten Zarathustra then commands the adder take back his poison, and the adder falls upon his neck a second time. The second bite is the bite of fantasy, the

articulation of Zarathustra's remonstrance against the past, against what has been—the command that it not have been, that it be *as if it had never been*. And on this reading, the entirety of *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* would be a dream before dying—another philosopher's dream to be added to the array of such and the interpretation of the same.

So read, the beginning of Zarathustra's downgoing—usually (and informatively) read as an allusion to Plato's *Republic*—acquires a different aspect in concord with the many allusions to death. These allusions begin already at the start of *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* with the not-yet transmitted tale of the death of God to the old hermit in the forest and with the tight-rope walker who falls to his death and whose corpse Zarathustra carries with him only to leave him in a hollow tree (an archaically, typically Greek burial place). The general concern with the “this-worldly” versus the “other-worldly” continues with the invocation of the *Isles of the Blest*, as well as the uncanny (and Lucianic) *Tomb Song* in addition to Zarathustra's flight into the volcano into hell. This can be explored with reference to Lucian's dialogues of the dead and his mocking of the traditional accounts of the afterlife but also the philosophers and the gods of the Romans and the Greeks, the Christians and the Jews alike.

Here we may recall the section “On Free Death,” invoking “the death that consummates” with Zarathustra's twice-repeated remonstrance “Die at the right time” (ZI “On Free Death”). Zarathustra thus describes death as a “festival,” echoing the esoteric dimension of Empedocles' teaching. In association with this, we may add Nietzsche's most explicit echo of Lucian's *True Story* (*Alethe Diegemata*), whereby he titled a section “On the Isles of the Blest” (just as Lucian did—thereby following Hesiod, Pindar, and Plato). If today's readers are inclined to think of the Caribbean or Tahiti for such “blessed isles,” Nietzsche refers to a classicist's vision of the afterlife where Zarathustra describes himself as “a wind to ripe figs,” emphasizing that rather than salvation or redemption or eternal life, it is “of time and becoming that the best parables should speak: let them be a praise and a justification of all impermanence” (Z II “On the Isles of the Blest”). It is here, too, that Zarathustra echoes Empedocles who first proposed the teaching of eternal recurrence: “Verily, through a hundred souls I have already passed on my way, and through a hundred cradles and birth pangs. Many a farewell have I taken; I know the heartrending last hours” (Z II “On the Isles of the Blest”). But Nietzsche's Zarathustra affirms “thus my creative will, my destiny, wills it. Or, to say it more honestly: this very destiny: my will wills” (Z II “On the Isles of the Blest”)—and it is Empedocles' teaching of rebirth that echoes in the language of the “nuptial ring of rings, the ring of recurrence” (Z III “The Seven Seals”).

Zarathustra teaches the *Übermensch* as the above-human or overhuman as both the transition to and the eternal recurrence of the same. Speaking of what his posthumous notes from 1887 describe as “*ein Hiatus zwischen zwei Nichtsen*” (KSA 12:10[34]), Nietzsche’s Zarathustra describes the human being as “a rope over an abyss” (Z “Prologue” 4)¹⁵ and begins with what reads as a sermon delivered against the backdrop of a dynamic tableau of life and death, a living *biblia pauperum* taking place above and behind him as he speaks. Thus, as Zarathustra begins to speak, we read that the tightrope walker, mistaking his cue, “began his performance” (Z “Prologue” 4), a doubling of the play or mise-en-scène. This explains the patience of Zarathustra’s audience as he begins speaking (an important point as they did not come to hear him) and simultaneously works—literally above and below—to illustrate Zarathustra’s talk of the human as “a dangerous across, a dangerous on-the-way, a dangerous looking-back, a dangerous shuddering and stopping” (Z “Prologue” 4).

The reference to life and death is doubled once again inasmuch as Zarathustra’s sermon is all about what he calls the “rainbow bridge” of life:

I love those who do not know how to live, except by going under, for they are those who cross over.

I love the great despisers because they are the great reverers and arrows of longing for the other shore.

I love those who do not first seek behind the stars for a reason to go under and be a sacrifice, but who sacrifice themselves for the earth, that the earth some day become the overhuman’s . . . I love him whose soul squanders itself, who wants no thanks and returns none: for he always gives away and does not want to preserve himself (Z “Prologue” 4).

The reference here is commonly taken to echo the Christian teaching of dying to the life of the world or of the body. Yet Nietzsche’s Zarathustra teaches the “great reason” of the body, and a self that “wants to create beyond itself” (ZI “On the Despisers of the Body”). He affirms not only the “rainbows and bridges of the overhuman” (ZI “On the New Idol”), but also declares “I love him who wants to create over and beyond himself and thus perishes” (ZI “On the Way of the Creator”).

In this way, the notion of self-overcoming—of going under, conceiving life itself as that which always and inevitably overcomes itself—also teaches what Zarathustra names the great noon. Like the great year of the ancient philosophers, the great noon is the turning to the new associated with fire and with the sun as a consummation: “that is the great noon when man

stands in the middle of his way between beast and overhuman and celebrates his way to evening as his highest hope: for it is the way to a new morning" (Z I "On the Gift-Giving Virtue" 3).

Inasmuch as Zarathustra teaches what all classical philosophy teaches, that is, the art of living, Zarathustra teaches the overhuman as "the meaning of the earth," a teaching that includes the conception that the "human is something that shall be overcome" (Z "Prologue" 3). The point is literal: the art of living, as we have needed the efforts of the late Pierre Hadot¹⁶ and others to remind us, is also the art of dying, the art, once again as Nietzsche's Zarathustra teaches, of dying in the right way and, indeed: for the right reason, and even, if one would be perfect, "at the right time" (Z I "On Free Death").

Nietzsche's Zarathustra, Nietzsche's Empedocles

Happy and blessed one, you shall be a god instead of a mortal.

Empedocles¹⁷

I have suggested that Nietzsche's *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* offers a parodic retelling of Empedocles' esoteric and poetic *Katharmoi*. With this claim, I join those many scholars who argue that Nietzsche's Zarathustra is parodically modeled on something¹⁸—whether it be the Bible, or Plato's *Republic*, or Wagner's *Ring*. And I think there are intrinsic limitations to such parallels, but here let's see, if only experimentally, how far it takes us to look not only to Empedocles but also, as I argue rather radically, Lucian's comedies/parodies. We limit ourselves to Nietzsche's own Zarathustra, again, only to sketch out the plausibility of *beginning* such a reading, but it is important to note that by simply invoking Zarathustra as such, Nietzsche already invokes a prophetic figure of considerable, if disputed, antiquity.¹⁹ Thus, as I argued earlier, taking Zarathustra as a Heideggerian "advocate" (*ein Fürsprecher*)²⁰ is to take him as an Empedoclean figure. Claiming, as Heidegger does, that "Zarathustra speaks on behalf of life, suffering, and the circle,"²¹ we do not depart from Empedocles, especially as Heidegger defines life, suffering, and the circle as "the selfsame," and defines the solid circle (in similarly Hölderlinian terms) as the ring-dance of love, as the wedding dance. In this manner, Heidegger echoes Empedocles' sphere: "'Circle' is the sign of the ring that wrings its way back to itself and in that way always achieves recurrence of the same."²² For Empedocles, who emphasizes the *συνέχεια*, that which conjoins the disjoint, the "wheel-shaped Sphere is held fast in the close obscurity of Harmonia, exulting in its joyous solitude."²³

Thus Nietzsche's Zarathustra teaches that the "human being is something that shall be overcome" (Z "Prologue" 3) and that "What is great in man is that he is a bridge and not an end: what can be loved in man is that he is an overture and a going under" (Z "Prologue" 4). This is followed (as suggested earlier) by a string of metaphors for death and perishing: "Life itself confided this secret to me: Behold it said I am that which always overcomes itself . . . where there is perishing, a falling of leaves, behold, there life sacrifices itself—for power" (Z II "On Self-Overcoming"). This always-self-overcoming is the becoming of life, and it is the Dionysian meaning of the will to power.

To address any of these questions requires that we turn our attention to the spirit of rhetoric as it were. Thus we ask again: what is it to be a *Fürsprecher*, to be an advocate or an orator? Empedocles begins the *Katharmoi* fragments (as these are typically gathered together by editors) with what is thus conventionally the most striking address of any of the ancient philosophers. We have the perfect (and perfectly literal) rhetorical *topos*: thus Empedocles addresses his audience as citizens of a specific city, while yet telling only the tale of the speaker:

Ἵψ φίλοι, οἱ μέγα ἄστν κατὰ ξανθοῦ Ἀκράγαντος
 ναίειτ' ἀν' ἄκρα πόλιος,

Ye friends who dwell in the mighty city along the yellow Acragas,
 hard by the Acropolis . . .²⁴

Thus beginning, "O friends," Ἵψ φίλοι—Empedocles continues to say *I*: ἐγὼ δ' ὕμμιν θεὸς ἄμβροτος . . . But unto ye I walk as god immortal now, no more as a man, On all sides honored fittingly and well, crowned both with fillets and with flowering wreaths."²⁵

Thus Spoke Empedocles.

Friends—dwelling—high cities—not merely self-aggrandizement but—apotheosis—honors—with all the trappings of a festival.

Literally so, as *he writes*, as *he* tells us.

It is as rhetorician, as a speaker, that one first attends to Empedocles and this same speaker's element manifestly characterizes *Also Sprach Zarathustra*. Nietzsche begins his inaugural lecture in Basel on "Homer and Classical Philology" by noting the critical importance of the person both in antiquity and as it persists as an issue in the themes of then-current scholarship. He thereby highlights the objective or substantive as well as the rhetorical role of style.²⁶ He also emphasizes this same rhetorical strategy in *Human, All Too Human*, where he offers a philological explanation of how to write a book (his model is the *New Testament*) for everyone and

consequently, as Nietzsche here emphasizes: for no one.²⁷ And if Empedocles is engaged in what the classicists rather flat-footedly call self-presentation, it is important that Nietzsche, by contrast, and even as Zarathustra, masks or dissembles himself. In other words, Nietzsche lies *and* takes care to tell us that he does so, like the rhetors, orators, poets, and most especially like the Menippean Lucian from whom, as already noted, he borrows more than a few allusions.²⁸

Yet we recall again from Nietzsche's *Philosophy in the Tragic Age of the Greeks* as from his inaugural lecture: the key to antiquity is personality, and this key also seems to fit the case of Nietzsche's Zarathustra (speaking on the model of Diogenes Laërtius on Empedocles).

Who Is Nietzsche's *Übermensch*?

Emphasizing both catharsis and nemesis in his conception of the *Übermensch*, Nietzsche derives the term *Übermensch* not from Aristotle's conception of the great-souled man, *megalopsychos* (though this surely resonates in it), but from Lucian of Samosata's *hyperanthropos* (ὑπεράνθρωπος) as it appears in Lucian's parodic dialogue ΚΑΤΑΠΛΟΥΣ, *The Downward Journey*. Lucian's alternative subtitle—*Η ΤΥΡΑΝΝΟΣ*, or *The Tyrant*—offers the account of the tyrant as “overman,” that is: as a superior man of wealth and power who in this worldly life towers *above* others regarded in this same life as inferior or “lesser” human beings. Lucian's parody transposes the same putatively “higher” man, the *hyperanthropos*, escorted by Hermes and ferried by Charon or Death into the afterlife of the Greek underworld—hence the title reference to a descent from high to low: *Kataplous* or *Downward Journey*.

More important, although the derivation of Nietzsche's *Übermensch* from Lucian's *hyperanthropos* is hardly news to scholars (it is, indeed, a source scholarship cliché), no one has reviewed the substance of this source with specific reference to the substance of Zarathustra's teaching of the *Übermensch*.

In general, it is common to assume that we know what Nietzsche means by the *Übermensch* and that it corresponds, more or less coincidentally, more or less historically, to Hitler's fantasy: the evolutionary apex of human development. And this is the force of the argument claiming Nietzsche's advanced support of the transhuman condition;²⁹ Nietzsche's ideal of the overman is thus taken as being a superior human being (and that is also to say, with Plato and Aristotle and even Alasdair MacIntyre, a superior warrior or perfect soldier): born of science or at least *good breeding*, by which one means a family of a certain economic wherewithal,

thereby heir to a certain “good” education, nutrition, environment, travel, and so on.³⁰

The whole of technologically oriented society via the fantasy of genetic engineering and associated technologies as well as the fantasy life that is the Internet and mass media in general presupposes an identical vision of humanity as supreme, as “higher,” as Nietzsche might have said. And if we are hardly eager to endorse the Nazi vision of the master-race, we nonetheless await the phantom du jour of transhuman or cyborg or whatever might be still expected under the now slightly aging rubric of “the singularity.”³¹

Any rank ordering presupposes a developmental progression, but Empedocles also invokes a kind of evolution, if not a progressive one: a dispersal in time, an abandonment or expulsion, as expiation—and here we recall the ethical parallel with Anaximander—for a crime, for the bloody violence of dealing death and eating meat.

When anyone sins and pollutes his own limbs with bloodshed, who by his error makes false the oath he swore—spirits whose portion is long life—for thrice ten thousand years he wanders apart from the blessed, being born throughout that time in all manner of forms of mortal things, exchanging one hard path of life for another. The force of the air pursues him into the sea, the sea spews him out onto the floor of the earth, the earth casts him into the rays of the blazing sun.³²

Empedocles’ vision of evolution and change also assumed that ours is the age of extinction—that is to say, the time of strife or hatred—precisely because of the killing that we cannot seem to stem and our aversion or abuse of the bonds or constraints of love.

We eat the flesh of animals, the beings we seduce into docility or breed for the purpose of domestication, caring for them from birth—we feed and succor our prey. This we name animal husbandry and the shepherd’s love for his flocks is by no means coincidentally a metaphor for both human and divine love. Perversely, we are the only animals who use love’s bonds, those ties of affection and caring, as Empedocles spoke of love, to draw animals to us in order, so tamed, to have easy access to them for slaughter at our convenience. This deception and its great efficiency is one of the reasons we can kill as many animals as we do, as systematically as we do. Thus we kill beings, living beings like ourselves, whom we can have known since the moment of their birth in order to cut slices from their bodies and limbs to roast and boil or steam them and sometimes even to eat them raw, and sometimes (both eggs and fetuses) before they are born. Most of us dress in the skins or fur or hair of animals (this animal hair is

what we call wool and cashmere, the skin is leather, and so on). Most of us eat animal flesh for no other reason than that we like the taste (this, so it has been popularly argued, is the biggest counter-argument contra vegetarianism along with habit, convention, or sociability). The bandwagon argument: everyone is doing it, fuels an industry to supply animal body parts, whether via mechanized agriculture or hunted down in the wild or dredged in unimaginable amounts from the sea for the purpose of human consumption and use: the restaurant industry, the street food industry, the supermarket industry, nothing other than an apocalypse for every animal that had previously dwelled on the face of the earth in formerly “undeveloped” as in cultivated lands.

Wild or domestic, we kill them all. All this is unchanged since Empedocles’ day:

The father lifts up his own son changed in form and slaughters him with a prayer, blind fool, as he shrieks piteously, beseeching as he is killed. But he deaf to his cries slaughters him and makes ready in his halls an evil feast. In the same way son seizes father and children their mother, and tearing out life they eat the flesh of those they love.³³

Classicists are fond of linking Empedocles’ prohibition of carnivorousness with metempsychosis. Thus one reads again and again that it is Empedocles’ reasoning that one ought not eat meat just because one might thereby unknowingly consume one’s recently deceased brother or father (assuming the situation applies in the first place). Yet the anthropological (incest or consanguinity) prohibition is inadequate here. The animal for Empedocles is brother to you—not in a limited, but an unlimited or universal way: universal in the way that Schiller’s poem *An die Freude*, the “Ode to Joy,” urges the Christian idealist vision for all humanity as brothers under heaven: *Alle Menschen werden Brüder*. Simone de Beauvoir concludes *The Second Sex* by speaking, to the great annoyance of feminists all over the world, of *fraternité* in just the same sense.

Empedocles is speaking, as Nietzsche would speak (this is the ontological meaning of the will to power),³⁴ of the fundamental relatedness of all living things. We are not “other” than animals and we are certainly not—consider only what we do!—“higher.” The animal you barbecue *is* your brother, physiologically, biologically speaking, not a one that *could be* in some spiritualist sense, your literal (that is, genetically human) brother or son.³⁵ This that you do to the least of your neighbors, the least of your brethren, this you do to the Christ. So we have heard from the man Nietzsche named the only Christian, the one who hung on the cross and—the one who died for the things he said.

Beyond Nietzsche's reading of Empedocles' carnivorousness, the notion of the overhuman may be anything but a goal or an advance.³⁶

And yet Nietzscheans and anti-Nietzscheans alike *believe* in the overhuman. In fact, in practice, we tend to assume that we are (already) the transhuman (these days we prefer this term) or overhuman or posthuman, at least potentially, at least in some sense, perhaps by comparison with ages gone by: we are the dominant species in comparison not only with the ape but every other living being on this earth. Thus if not yet by ordinary or natural evolutionary means, then certainly, as we suppose, some scientist must currently be developing some mechanism to transform us further, using the latest genetic or stem cell technology; a transformation (think of the already mentioned metaphor of the "singularity") which is "singular" in name only, inasmuch as it happens to take us in the same direction we already find ourselves going.³⁷

The human, all-too-human will be or already is (depending, again, on how transhuman you already take yourself to be) the "overhuman."

Between Nietzsche's *Übermensch* and Lucian's *ὑπερένθρωπος*

This work is Lucian's, who well knew
The foolishness of times gone by,
For things the human race finds wise
Are folly to th' unclouded eye.

Erasmus³⁸

I noted earlier that every scholar knows that Nietzsche's *Übermensch* is a coinage taken or derived from Lucian. Every scholar *knows* this because Walter Kaufmann tells us so, and seemingly every account duly cites Kaufmann (the citation is easy to find, taking just one line on the first page of the chapter in question: "*Kataplous*, 16").³⁹ However, if one actually reads (as scholars manifestly do not read) the actual source itself, namely, Lucian's *Kataplous hē turannos* [*Tyrannus sive cataplus*] or *Voyage to the Underworld or The Tyrant*,⁴⁰ one gains an intriguing insight into the "overhuman." Lucian articulates this in the same comedic-parodic-satiric fashion Nietzsche alludes to in *The Birth of Tragedy* and *The Gay Science* and specifically invokes as Menippean satire at the conclusion of his *Ecce Homo*, "What I owe the Ancients."

Satirically, ironically (or as literary scholars are apt to say, following Bakhtin as they do: *serio-comically*), the notion of the *Übermensch* spans Nietzsche's career.⁴¹

For his own part, Lucian's dialogue plays upon the tyrant Megapenthes' literal downgoing to the underworld in the wake of his death. Like the scenes in Lucian's *Dialogues of the Dead*, Lucian's *Kataplous* articulates the instructive morality tale of those who seem in everyday life to be superior, or "upperclass" or "higher" human beings, only to be shown to be just (or merely) all-too-human as soon as they cross over into the underworld (or, in Lucian's text, as they are unwillingly dragged into the afterlife, just as the dwarf leaps after the tightrope walker or "overman" at the start of Zarathustra, and similarly threatens to drag him down into hell).

In Lucian's *Kataplous*: "The 'superman' [ὕπεράνθρωπος] is the superior man, a king among men, a man of power like a tyrant."⁴² Note that these attributes are political ones on the basis of which the cobbler musing on his own past life had seen the tyrant as physically enhanced: the tyrant "appeared to me a superman, thrice-blessed, better looking and a full royal cubit taller than almost anyone else."⁴³ But, so Lucian's satire continues, "when he died and had to take off his trappings, not only did he look ridiculous to me, but I had to laugh at how ridiculous *I* was."⁴⁴

Context makes all the difference, not just for Nietzsche but for Lucian. Thus Lucian's provocative contrast highlights the superficial vision of the higher man, the man of the upper or wealthy classes, and the same man once translated into the afterlife.

Parody and satire are one thing, so we think, Nietzsche's *Übermensch* seems to be another notion, a transcendent, evolutionary ideal, not at all parodic. We are speaking after all of the philosophy that is reputed to have inspired the National Socialist language of the master-race and a world war that went with it: the ideology of the *Übermensch* as opposed to the *Untermensch*. And Nietzsche himself uses both terms. Yet here I have been arguing that Nietzsche's emphasis on the rhetorical importance of Menippean satire together with the Lucianic origins of the notion of the *Übermensch* make it at least plausible that Nietzsche's Zarathustra be read as "teaching" the *Übermensch* in a *parodic* fashion. To say, however, that the *Übermensch* is a parodic or satiric notion does little to make its meaning clear. For to say that is parodic (or better: tragico-parodic) hardly means that Nietzsche's Zarathustra does not undertake to "teach" the *Übermensch*—of course he does. But it is easy to fail to note (certainly even many sophisticated and sensitive Nietzsche scholars do so) that the elusive doctrine of the eternal return, the doctrine that Zarathustra comes to teach, the teaching that the overhuman himself or herself is meant to be the passage toward, is the eternal return of the *same*. And this teaching is Empedocles' "truth" of rebirth. Thus Nietzsche's Zarathustra can teach

that the human is charged to overcome or to get beyond or to get over the human.

Empedocles and Death—or Zarathustra's Descent into Hell

From what high rank and from what a height of bliss . . .

Empedocles⁴⁵

To conclude this very provisional suggestion of a parallel between Zarathustra and Empedocles, by way of Lucian, we may summarize what we have seen so far. Here we recall that Nietzsche reminds us that

Empedocles sought to impress the oneness of all life most urgently, that carnivorousness is a sort of self-cannibalism (*Sichselbstverspeisen*), a murder of the nearest relative. He desired a colossal purification of humanity, along with abstinence from beans and laurel leaves. (PPP 109)

Purification is what matters, if one can understand this in terms of a classical asceticism or training or practice. And when it comes to Empedocles' purification—far more than his caution against carnivorousness (here through Nietzsche read as a kind of self-devouring), more than his cosmological cycle (although both of these issues matter greatly to the Schopenhauerian Nietzsche)—it is the tableau of the volcano and of Empedocles' voluntary death that strikes us most powerfully.⁴⁶ And then we can also note the nicely dramatic detail of a single bronze sandal, tossed up and back to the land of the living by the same volcano. *Why just one?*⁴⁷ And still more important, why would it not have been vaporized or melted?⁴⁸

We have already encountered the topos of *The Islands of the Blest* as the subtitle of Wilhelm Heinse's *Ardinghello*, to whom Hölderlin dedicated his poem "Bread and Wine." With Heinse offering the recollections of Ardinghello, a wanderer in Sicily, and Hölderlin those of Hyperion, the hermit in an idealized vision of modern Greece, the geographic contours of these two accounts is critical to both and both point to a locative longing for a phantom: the dream of Greece.⁴⁹ But this is the high air of allegory. More concretely, Jung refers to an account of Nietzsche's Zarathustra that echoes the constellation of death.⁵⁰ As his point of departure, Jung's discussion engages *The Isles of the Blest* and *Of Great Events* as these appear in Nietzsche's *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*.

Most of us will recall the Zarathustran passage in question: it's weird and not just because Jung says so, if Zarathustra scholars rarely remark upon this wackiness, and I remember reading it for the first time and for

however many hundreds of times I have read it, but always without much sense. But it is worth thinking about such things, especially with reference to Nietzsche who spent his life engaged with oddities often unquestioned by supposedly critical scholarship.⁵¹

Together with the above reading of Lucian, and together with the suggestion that Nietzsche retells the purifications of Empedocles along with the death of Empedocles with his *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* (and I have been attempting here to make both claims), the constellation in question may begin to lose much of its oddness.

For Jung, Nietzsche would have had to have recognized this as the locus classicus of the Dorian city of Acragas although, as Jung reflects, Nietzsche's Zarathustran account does not allude to Empedocles. Nevertheless, Jung rightly remarks that the story "has a very peculiar ring."⁵²

It was so funny—the noontide hour and the captain and his men—what was the matter with that ship that they go to shoot rabbits near the entrance of hell? Then it slowly came to me that when I was about eighteen, I had read a book from my grandfather's library, *Blätter aus Prävorst* by Kerner, a collection in four volumes of wonderful stories, about ghosts and phantasies and forbodings, and among them I found that story. It is called "An extract of awe-inspiring import from the log of the ship 'Sphinx', in the year 1686 in the Mediterranean."⁵³

It's hard to argue with Jung's psychoanalytic insight here, for Nietzsche does indeed seem to "channel" Justinius Kerner's short account.⁵⁴

Let us recall the passage from the section entitled "On Great Events."

There is an island in the sea—not far from the Blissful Islands of Zarathustra—upon which a volcano continuously smokes; the people, and especially the old women among the people, say that it is placed like a block of stone before the gate of the underworld, but that the narrow downward path which leads to this gate of the underworld passes through the volcano itself. (Z II "On Great Events")

The passage could not be more obviously related to Lucian, but it is just as useful to note that it also echoes the spirit or sense of Rohde's broader constellation of his exploration into *Psyche: The Cult of Souls and the Belief in Immortality Among the Greeks*.⁵⁵ Inasmuch as both Nietzsche and Rohde shared the same background familiarity (and our reading above of Lucian helps us here), reading Rohde gives us access to terminology Nietzsche took for granted, some of which we seem no longer to take as convention, beginning with the language of "The Isles of the Blest," along with a certain

expression of “translation” across the surface of the earth, and of dimensionality high and low, above and below the earth.

The relevant bit from Nietzsche’s account in *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* is as follows:

it happened that a ship dropped anchor at the island upon which the smoking mountain stood; and its crew landed in order to shoot rabbits. Towards the hour of noon, however, when the captain and his men were reassembled, they suddenly saw a man coming towards them through the air, and a voice said clearly: ‘It is time! It is high time!’ But as the figure was closest to them—or flew quickly past, however, like a shadow, in the direction of the volcano—they recognized, with the greatest consternation, that it was Zarathustra. (Z II “On Great Events”)

Jung goes on to cite Kerner’s original text for his students’ sake.⁵⁶ For Jung, inasmuch as Nietzsche’s account reproduces Kerner’s ghost story, it would seem that Nietzsche would have had to have read the story in his youth (as Jung recognized to the extent that he was a near contemporary), a surmise he checks with Elisabeth Förster Nietzsche, who confirms that she and her brother found this book in the library of their own “grandfather, Pastor Oehler.”⁵⁷

In addition to Jung’s (repeated) invocation of this story as a demonstration not of Nietzsche’s conscious plagiarism but rather of the working power of the unconscious (and hence as an argument for the existence of the same agency),⁵⁸ Jung notes that “such stories are recorded because they are edifying”—and here we note that this edification resonates in turn with Lucian. In the case of Kerner’s ghost story, so Jung explains: “The two gentlemen from London were big merchants and evidently they were not quite alright, because they are painted with the colors of hell which express sinfulness; one is black and the other grey, whereas they should be wearing white shirts which is court dress in heaven.”⁵⁹

The ghostly dimension of Zarathustra’s witch-like flight, as should now be evident given our earlier reference to Lucian’s underworld setting and now still more with our recollection of the context of Rohde’s *Psyche*, is literal enough.⁶⁰ Most commentators similarly fail to note that Zarathustra’s shadow, the *shade* in question, corresponds for the ancient Greek to the flattened dimensionality that is the only thing that remains of us after death, presuming here what Rohde characterizes as a “subterranean translation.”

Hence with respect to the claim that it is, as Nietzsche’s Zarathustra repeats, “high time,” that it is therefore *late*—“it’s time, it’s time” as T. S.

Eliot calls, as Gadamer once spoke of age as including so many “warning shots across the bow”—so, too, Jung explains that “This is the secret, this is the key to the meaning of that descent into hell. It was a warning; soon you will go down into dissolution.”⁶¹

There are numerous explorations of the meaning of the overhuman, and there is no doubt that it also has an ideal aspect.⁶² But given the context of Lucian’s *Kataplous*, I have argued that it may serve us to consider yet another rendering of the overhuman as an ironic and hence edifying construct. But then the didactic purpose of Zarathustra’s “teaching” becomes more rather than less elliptical, and the overhuman also becomes something less than a consummation—whether transhuman or not.

47. Chantal Jaquet, *Sub Specie Aeternitatis*, 78.

48. It is important to remember here that Epicurus figured in the list of the four pairs of thinkers (Epicurus and Montaigne, Goethe and Spinoza, Plato and Rousseau, Pascal and Schopenhauer) on whom Nietzsche “fixes his eyes.” See WS 408.

49. Jacques Choron, *La mort et la pensée occidentale*, 91–95.

50. Marcus Aurelius, *The Meditations, Second Meditation*. Trans. George Long. Last cited on 2/8/2013 in: <http://classics.mit.edu/Antoninus/meditations.2.two.html>

51. Charles Kahn makes an interesting observation about this fragment: “Maybe the biggest surprise that awaits us at death is that, then, things won’t be so different once we are and have always been used to the experience of continuously dying and being born,” Charles H. Kahn, *The Art and Thought of Heraclitus* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979), 220ff.

14. Becoming and Purification: Empedocles, Zarathustra’s Übermensch, and Lucian’s Tyrant

Babette Babich

1. Martin Heidegger, *Nietzsche*, vol. 2, trans. David Krell (San Francisco: Harper, 1991), 211.

2. Empedocles, Frag. 399 in *The Presocratic Philosophers*, eds. Geoffrey S. Kirk, John E. Raven, and Malcolm Schofield (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 313ff.

3. Regarding Empedocles, one cannot but be struck by his style of self-presentation as we have already noted and as the classicist Eva Stehle emphasizes. See Stehle, *Performance and Gender in Ancient Greece: Nondramatic Poetry in its Setting* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1997), 210ff.

4. Many classicists who write on Empedocles mock him, asserting that ancient authors did so as well, but this reading may tell us more about the classicists in question or our modern/Christian aversion to saying “I” (See Nietzsche’s allusion to this “lyrical” tradition with regard to Archilochus in BT 5).

5. Jonathan Barnes invokes Nietzsche’s characterization of Diogenes Laërtius as “the porter who guards the gate of the Castle of Ancient Philosophy. Scholars may scorn him; but they must pass by him and cannot pass him by.” Jonathan Barnes, “Review of *Diogenes Laërtius. Vitae Philosophorum* by M. Marcovich,” *The Classical Review, New Series*, 52 1 (2002): 8.

6. Composed after the publication of *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, but also after the addition of the fifth book to *The Gay Science* and following the private circulation in 1885 of the fourth part of *Zarathustra*.

7. Friedrich Hölderlin, *Gedichte* (Stuttgart: Reclam, 1990), 50.

8. Discussions of Nietzsche and Empedocles have been part of the tradition of Nietzsche interpretation from the outset. See for example and among others, Johann Piatek, *Nietzsches Empedokles-Fragmente* (Stryj: Progr. Gymn., 1910) and Raymond Furness, “Nietzsche and Empedocles,” *Journal of the British Society for*

Phenomenology 2 2 (1971): 91–94. For further references, see also Anke Bennholdt-Thomsen, *Nietzsches Also Sprach Zarathustra als literarisches Phänomen* (Frankfurt: Athenäum Verlag, 1974), 151–152. For a recent contemporary or mainstream reading, but lacking the contextual dimensions noted here, see Glenn Most, “The Stillbirth of a Tragedy: Nietzsche and Empedocles,” in *The Empedoclean Kosmos: Structure, Process and the Question of Cyclicity*, ed. Apostolos. L. Pierris (Patras: Institute for Philosophical Research, 2005), 31–44. Given the constraints of Most’s reading, Walther Kranz, *Empedokles: Antike Gestalt und romantische Neuschöpfung* (Zürich: Artemis, 1949) remains invaluable, particularly as it includes Hölderlin, as does Karl Reinhardt’s review/reflection on Kranz in Karl Reinhardt, *Vermächtnis der Antike: Gesammelte Essays zur Philosophie und Geschichtsschreibung* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1966). See also: David Farrell Krell, *Postponements: Woman, Sensuality and Death in Nietzsche* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1986) as well as for additional bibliographical references, Jürgen Söring, “Nietzsches Empedokles-Plan,” *Nietzsche Studien* 19 (1990): 176–211.

9. David Sedley adverts to Cicero’s conventional characterization of Lucretius’s *De rerum natura* by comparing in terms of its opening style, comparing it to a version of Empedocles by “a certain Sallustius” in the first chapter “The Empedoclean Opening,” *Lucretius and the Transformation of Greek Wisdom* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 1.

10. Jackson P. Hershbell, “Plutarch as a Source for Empedocles Re-Examined,” *The American Journal of Philology*, 2 92 (1971): 156–184.

11. See Babette Babich, “Between Hölderlin and Heidegger: Nietzsche’s Transfiguration of Philosophy,” *Nietzsche-Studien*, 29 (2000): 267–301.

12. Empedocles, Fr. 404 in *The Presocratic Philosophers*, 315.

13. Diogenes Laërtius is our first source for the traditional conflicting array of different deaths Empedocles was said to have died: “καὶ ταῦτα μὲν περὶ τοῦ θανάτου καὶ τοσαῦτα (Thus and thus much of his death),” Diogenes Laërtius, *Lives of the Eminent Philosophers*, Books VI–X, trans. Robert D. Hicks (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1925), 388–389.

14. The debate about Empedocles’ death is longstanding but it also includes the debate about his godlike status, the best way for a mortal to ascend to the status of the immortals is to die. Thus Nietzsche reminds us of “the old German saying, all gods must die” (*KSA* 7:5[115]).

15. See with reference to the contextualization of humanity and animality, and a discussion of the transitional relation between “the animal, the human, and the overhuman,” Vanessa Lemm, *Nietzsche’s Animal Philosophy: Culture, Politics, and the Animality of the Human Being* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2009), 2.

16. See Pierre Hadot, *Philosophy as a Way of Life*, trans. Michael Chase (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995) and see more broadly here, Horst Hutter, *Shaping the Future: Nietzsche’s New Regime of the Soul and its Ascetic Practices* (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2005), especially but not only chapter one.

17. Empedocles, Frag. 400, *The Presocratic Philosophers*, 314.

18. One usually speaks of parodies in this general sense. See for further references in English, Peter Wolfe, "Image and Meaning in *Also Sprach Zarathustra*," *Modern Language Notes* 5 (1964): 546–552 as well as Anke Bennholdt-Thomsen, *Nietzsches Also Sprach Zarathustra als literarisches Phänomen* (Frankfurt: Athenäum Verlag, 1974) for useful references to an array of German and French literature that is increasingly forgotten, and see, too the references in the note to follow.

19. See Emil Abegg, "Nietzsches Zarathustra und der Prophet des alten Iran" in *Nietzsche. Conférences prononcées à Genève sous les auspices de la Fondation M. Gretler* (Erlenbach-Zürich, 1945), 64–82. There are ongoing disputes regarding the age of the historical Zoroaster (some scholars say roughly 750 years by contrast with ancient authors who date Zoroaster some 5,000 years before the current era). For although Zoroaster had been dated in antiquity as extremely ancient, modern historians tend to set him in the seventh century BCE owing to accounts that he had met with Pythagoras (572–497 BCE); otherwise his flourishing may be rounded back to about 1700. See Farhang Mehr, *The Zoroastrian Tradition, An Introduction to the Ancient Wisdom of Zarathustra* (Rockport, MA: Element Inc., 1991) or those who, philologically enough, dispute the etymology Nietzsche gives us of his name, duly telling us that the name Zarathustra has naught to do with stars or brightness or the sun or anything at all, but only golden camels. Even the usually iconoclastic David Allison repeats this debunking exposition of Zarathustra's name. See Allison's reference to Janz's remark that "Creuzer's *Symbolik und Mythologie der alten Völker* had mistakenly given alternate etymologies for Zoroaster, namely 'Zeretoschtro-Zeratuscht' which he translated as 'Golden Star'—'Star of Light' or 'Shining Gold'" in David Allison, *Reading the New Nietzsche* (New York: Rowman and Littlefield, 2001), 282. Charles Andler by contrast emphasizes the oriental relevance of both the historical Zoroaster and Buddha, and Bennholdt-Thomsen draws upon both Andler and Schlechta and notes that Zarathustra's laughter may derive from the legend, detailed by Pliny, that Zoroaster laughs on the day of his birth. Bennholdt-Thomsen, *Nietzsches Also Sprach Zarathustra als literarisches Phänomen*, 88 refers to Abegg, "Nietzsches Zarathustra und der Prophet des alten Iran," 68.

20. Martin Heidegger, *Nietzsche*, vol. 2, 211.

21. Martin Heidegger, *Nietzsche*, vol. 2, 212.

22. Martin Heidegger, *Nietzsche*, vol. 2, 213.

23. Empedocles, Frag. 358, *The Presocratic Philosophers*, 295 (trans. modified).

I follow John Curtis Franklin's translation and see Franklin for a discussion of "Harmony in Greek and Indo-Iranian Cosmology," *The Journal of Indo-European Studies*, 1 and 2 30 (2002): 1–25. If I had more time here I would undertake to argue this wheel-shaped sphere is Zarathustra's golden ball.

24. Empedocles, Frag. 399, *The Presocratic Philosophers*, 313ff.

25. Empedocles, Frag. 399, *The Presocratic Philosophers*, 313ff.

26. I discuss this in the context of classical philology in Babette Babich, "Nietzsche's Philology and Nietzsche's Science: On the 'Problem of Science' and 'fröhliche Wissenschaft,'" in: *Metaphilology: Histories and Languages of Philology*, ed. Pascale Hummel (Paris: Philologicum, 2009), 155–201.

27. See the introduction and the first third in general of Babich, *Words in Blood, Like Flowers: Philosophy and Poetry, Music and Eros in Hölderlin, Nietzsche and Heidegger* (New York: State University of New York Press, 2005), vii–xii, 3–116. I develop this in Babich "Zu Nietzsches Stil," in *Eines Gottes Glück, voller Macht und Liebe* (Weimar: Bauhaus Universitätsverlag, 2009), 9–27.

28. Thus Lucian expounds upon his own prevarication as a variation upon the traditional lies of others in his "True Stories" [*Alethe Diegemata*]. Thus he pleads "I too have turned to lying—but a much more honest lying than all the others. The one and only truth you'll hear from me is that I am lying. By frankly admitting that there isn't a word of truth in what I say, I feel I am avoiding the possibility of attack from any quarter." Lucian, "A True Story," in *Selected Satires of Lucian*, ed. and trans. Lionel Casson (New York: Norton, 1968), 15. See BGE 22. Lucian could not make his warning plainer: "Well then I am writing about things I neither saw nor heard of from a single soul, things which don't exist and couldn't possibly exist. So all readers beware, don't believe any of it" ("A True Story," 15).

29. See for discussion and a range of further references, pro and contra, Babette Babich, "Nietzsche's Post-Human Imperative: On the 'All-too-Human' Dream of Transhumanism," *The Agonist*. Vol. IV, Issue II (2012). Online publication: http://www.nietzschercircle.com/AGONIST/2011_08/Dream_of_Transhumanism.html.

30. Michael Allen Gillespie, "Slouching Toward Bethlehem to Be Born': On the Nature and Meaning of Nietzsche's Superman," *The Journal of Nietzsche Studies* 30 (2005): 49–69 and see too Lawrence Lambert, *Nietzsche's Teaching: An Interpretation of "Thus Spoke Zarathustra"* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1989).

31. See Ray Kurzweil, *The Singularity is Near: When Humans Transcend Biology* (New York: Viking, 2006) and for further discussion and other references, Babette Babich, "O, Superman! or Being Towards Transhumanism: Martin Heidegger, Günther Anders, and Media Aesthetics," *Divinatio* (January 2013): 83–99.

32. Empedocles, Frag. 401, *The Presocratic Philosophers*, 315.

33. Empedocles, Frag. 415, *The Presocratic Philosophers*, 319.

34. See Babette Babich, "Ontologie," in *Nietzsche-Lexikon*, ed. Christian Niemeyer (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 2009), 257–260.

35. Like the duck that *could be* somebody's mother in the popular song of my grandparent's era in the states.

36. It is not that it has never occurred to anyone that the *Übermensch* might be a parodic concept: Keith Ansell-Pearson has argued that Nietzsche lays out a

potentially parodic path in his 1886 preface to *Human, All Too Human*. "Toward the *Übermensch*: Reflections on the Year of Nietzsche's Daybreak," *Nietzsche-Studien* 23 (1994): 128–30. Richard Perkins sees these figures as the lover, the knower, and the creator: "How an Ape Becomes a Superman: Notes on a Parodic Metamorphosis in Nietzsche," *Nietzsche-Studien* 15 (1986): 180. Without underscoring the parodic dimension, Marie-Luise Haase sees the figures of the *Übermensch* as saint, philosopher, and artist: "Der *Übermensch* in Also Sprach Zarathustra und im Zarathustra Nachlass, 1882–1885," *Nietzsche-Studien* 13 (1984): 236. Eugen Fink argues for the genius, the free spirit, and Zarathustra himself, *Nietzsches Philosophie* (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 1960), 72ff.

37. At the same time, this also means that Ray Kurzweil's *The Singularity is Near* illustrates the contemporary face of evolutionary triumphalism or millenarism. See, by contrast, Babette Babich, "Ex aliquo nihil: Nietzsche on Science and Modern Nihilism," *American Catholic Philosophical Quarterly. Special Issue on Nietzsche* 84–2 (Spring 2010): 231–256, and on the postmodern fascination with the redemptive promise of electronic media, Babich, "Thus Spoke Zarathustra, or Nietzsche and Hermeneutics in Gadamer, Lyotard, and Vattimo," in *Consequences of Hermeneutics: 50 Years After Gadamer's Truth and Method*, eds. Jeff Malpas and Santiago Zabala (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 2010), 218–243.

38. After Christopher Robinson, *Lucian and his Influence in Europe*, citing the epigram to Aldine edition of Erasmus, *In Praise of Folly* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1979), 191.

39. This citation, "Kataplous, 16" reproduces Kaufmann's footnote in its entirety. See Walter Kaufmann, *Nietzsche, Philosopher, Psychologist, Antichrist* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1974), footnote 1, 307. The footnote itself clarifies Kaufmann's main text: "The *hyperanthropous* is to be found in the writings of Lucian in the second century AD and Nietzsche as a classical philologist had studied Lucian and made frequent references to him in his philologia," (Walter Kaufmann, *Nietzsche, Philosopher, Psychologist, Antichrist*, 307). Joseph Erkme, *Nietzsche im "Zauberberg"* (Frankfurt am Main: Klostermann, 1996) duly cites Kaufmann in his notes before going on to detail the earlier appearances of the term *Übermensch* as such in German (Joseph Erkme, *Nietzsche im "Zauberberg,"* 271ff). But prior to Kaufmann, see the entry in Rudolf Eisler's *Handwörterbuch der Philosophie* (Berlin: Mittler und Sohn, 1913) as well as Ernst Benz, "Das Bild des Übermenschen in der Europäischen Geistesgeschichte," *Der Übermensch. Eine Diskussion* (Stuttgart: Rhein-Verlag 1961), 19–16. Similar details, drawn from Kaufmann, appear in Karen Joisten, cited below, and so too with reference to anthropology and the social sciences Jyung-Hyun Kim, *Nietzsches Sozialphilosophie: Versuch einer Überwindung der Moderne im Mittelpunkt des Begriffes Leib* (Würzburg: Königshausen and Neumann, 1995), 198ff. See for a politicized overview, Ulrich Busch, "Vergessene Utopien: Friedrich Nietzsches Vision vom Übermenschen," *Utopie kreativ*, 151 (2003): 460–667.

40. Lucian's *Kataplous* is included in several collections of Lucian's dialogues, appearing as the first dialogue in the Loeb edition of *Lucian*, Volume II, trans. A. H. Harmon (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1915), 2–57 and including the Everyman library edition, translated by Lionel Casson, *Selected Satires of Lucian*, 175–193.

41. But Northrop Frye had already laid the ground rules or gone to the grounds, or, still better: to the underground for English readers, explaining in a section of his *Anatomy of Criticism* entitled “Theory of Myths”—just because and rhetorically and given the distance between our own time and Lucian and Menippus, but also Nietzsche himself, it really *needs* explaining—that “whenever the ‘other world’ appears in satire, it appears as an ironic counterpart to our own, a reversal of accepted social standards. This form of satire is represented in Lucian's *Kataplous* and *Charon*, journeys to the other world in which the eminent in this one are shown doing appropriate but unaccustomed things, a form incorporated in Rabelais, and in the medieval *danse macabre*. In the last named the simple equality of death is set against the complex inequalities of life.” [Herman] N. Frye, *Anatomy of Criticism: Four Essays* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1957), 232.

42. Lucian, “The Downward Journey,” *Volume II*, Trans. A. H. Harmon (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1915), 34–35.

43. Lucian, “The Downward Journey,” 34–35. See Lucian's “Dialogues of the Dead” where Croesus complains to Pluto that Menippus is giving them a hard time in hell. Menippus replies: “True enough, Pluto: I hate them; they're low scoundrels, not content with having led bad lives but even in death they remember their past and cling to it. That's why I enjoy tormenting them,” Lucian, *Volume VII*, trans. M. D. Macleod (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1961), 17. To which Pluto replies “You shouldn't; they mourn great losses.” Menippus is adamant, and Croesus cries “Isn't this outrageous?” to which Menippus retorts: “No, the outrageous thing was your behavior when you expected people to worship you, treated free men with contempt, and forgot all about death. That's why you're going to lament the loss of all those things,” Lucian, *Volume VII*, 17–19. See AOM 408 und Erwin Rohde, *Der griechische Roman und seine Vorläufer* (Leipzig: Breitkopf und Härtel, 1900). For Lucian's influence, see further Herbert Hunger, *Die hochsprachliche profane Literatur der Byzantiner; Teilbd. 2: Philologie, Profandichtung, Musik, Mathematik und Astronomie, Naturwissenschaften, Medizin, Kriegswissenschaft, Rechtsliteratur* (München: Beck, 1978), 151f., as well as Christopher Robinson, *Lucian and his Influence in Europe* (London: Duckworth, 1979) and more broadly, Werner von Koppenfels, *Der andere Blick. Das Vermächtnis des Menippos in der europäischen Literatur* (Munich: C.H. Beck, 2007). A rewarding treatment is Francis G. Allinson, *Lucian: Satirist and Artist* (Boston: Marshall Jones Company, 1926) who for his own part refers to Rohde's studies and to Swift's objectly “Lucianic” debt to Lucian.

44. “Imagine—I had stood in awe of that trash and had jumped to the conclusion that he was divinely happy on the basis of the smells from his kitchen

and the color of his robes” Lucian, *Volume VII*, 17–19. And Lucian goes on to mock the moneylenders, and so on (and on).

45. Empedocles, Frag. 404, *The Presocratic Philosophers*, 316.

46. This fascination remains even where Diogenes Laertius begins with a veritable catalogue of the various ways Empedocles was said to have exited this world. This indeed is the point of departure for the classicist Eva Chitwood’s monograph, *Death by Philosophy: The Biographical Tradition in the Life and Death of the Archaic Philosophers Empedocles, Heraclitus, and Democritus* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2004).

47. Bracht Branham notes that the single sandal would have counted as a classical signifier: “Must this not be an allusion to Jason’s singular footwear? Pelias is warned by an oracle to beware a man with one sandal (Pindar). Of course it’s also a comic image. The evocation of Jason might have something to do with metempsychosis, suggesting a connection between the heroic ‘healer’ (Jason) and Empedocles.” (Personal communication with the author.) This suggestion is illuminating but the question regarding the particular significance of such signifiers here remains to be answered. What does it mean that one sandal was tossed back? And did it mean that Empedocles, wherever he was going, went there wearing just one? The Derveni Krater’s one-sandal shod figure only underscores this question.

48. This point is the most Lucianic inasmuch as recollecting Lucian’s account, Empedocles survived the leap into the volcano as the man in the moon, living on gathered dew. But also to the extent that ancient bronze differs from the kind we know today in many ways and there were many kinds and much ancient bronze had a lower melting point: one of the reasons for its ubiquity and appeal and not less its utility. In Babette Babich, “Die Naturkunde der Griechischen Bronze im Spiegel des Lebens: Betrachtungen über Heideggers ästhetische Phänomenologie und Nietzsches agonale Politik,” in *Internationales Jahrbuch für Hermeneutik*, ed. Günter Figal (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2008), 127–189, I argue that this labile character may serve to explain the abundance of life-size statues in antiquity by suggesting that portrait statues may have served as identifying place-holders of bronze to be quickly forged as armor on demand and handy in the absence of personal storage space given what we know of Greek domestic architecture.

49. There are a number of studies of this theme, beginning with Eliza Butler’s *The Tyranny of Greece over Germany: A Study of the Influence Exercised by Greek Art and Poetry Over the Great German Writers of the of the Eighteenth, Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries* (London: Cambridge University Press, 1935), but see for a recent account, Constanze Güthenke, *Placing Modern Greece: The Dynamics of Romantic Hellenism, 1770–1840* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 70ff and Walter Seitter, “Der Deutsche Griechen-Komplex,” in *Die Glücklichen sind neugierig Zehn Jahre Kolleg Friedrich Nietzsche*, eds. Julia Wagner and Stefan Wilke (Weimar: Bauhaus Universitätsverlag, 2009), 232–253.

50. Whether self-willed or not (and therefore an image of death in life, at least as set together with Lucian’s *Kataplous*), Jung himself does not explore. Nevertheless, Jung glosses the account in question as the descent of Zarathustra into Hades

in his seminar from 4 May 1938. “There is the volcano and the fire underneath, the entrance to the interior of the earth, the entrance to the underworld—there is even old Cerberus, the fire dog—and Zarathustra is now going down into all this. Psychologically it would mean that after all that great talk, there is an underworld and down there one has to go. But if one is so high and mighty, why not stay up there? Why bother about this descent? Yet the tale says inevitably one goes down—that is the *enantiodromia*—and when one gets down there, well one will be burned up, one will dissolve.” James L. Jarrett, ed., *Jung’s Seminar on Nietzsche’s Zarathustra* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1988), 2116–2117.

51. In general, when scholars say they are puzzled, they are usually halfway to dismissing the issue. The scholarly epoché brackets what does not make sense. Nietzsche’s *Birth of Tragedy*, by contrast, attempts to revive questions usually taken for granted, and in this case, fairly striking questions: why tragedy? Why the delight in the tragic; that is: why the enjoyment of tragic music drama?

52. James L. Jarrett, ed., *Jung’s Seminar on Nietzsche’s Zarathustra*, 2117.

53. James L. Jarrett, ed., *Jung’s Seminar on Nietzsche’s Zarathustra*, 2117. In his text, Jung refers to Kerner’s *Blätter aus Prevorst*, a series of volumes edited by Kerner and entitled *Blätter aus Prevorst; Originalien und Lesefrüchte für Freunde des innern Lebens, mitgeteilt von dem Herausgeber Der Seherin Aus Prevorst. Erste Sammlung* (Karlsruhe: Gottlieb Braun, 1831). See for a discussion, John R. Haule, “From Somnambulism to the Archetypes: The French Roots of Jung’s Split With Freud,” *The Psychoanalytic Review* 71/4 (1984): 635–659. This is an arena that calls for further research (Robin Small has emphasized the actual or literal historical elements of the account with respect to English history) but especially in connection with Nietzsche but also Hölderlin. This collection of spiritualist, mesmerist, and magnetic tales inspired by Erika Hauffe, the subject of *Die Seherin von Prevorst. Eröffnungen über das innere Leben der Menschen und über das Hereinragen einer Geisterwelt in die unsere*, was compiled over a number of years by Justinius Kerner (1786–1862), a Suabian poet. As a medical student, Kerner had helped care for Hölderlin during his clinical confinement in Tübingen and was influential in arranging the publication of Hölderlin’s collected works. The reference given by the compiler of Jung’s Zarathustra seminar is to *Seeress of Prevorst*. Although Jung was in the habit of citing the two together, the citation he gives here is “Volume IV, page 57” (James L. Jarrett, ed., *Jung’s Seminar on Nietzsche’s Zarathustra*, 2117), can only refer to the *Blätter aus Prevorst*, which was indeed issued serially, although in this case the indicated page reference refers to this specific (first) collection of different writings, included together with a set of aphorism (from Professor Eschenmayer) and a selection of Kerner’s own poems. I am grateful to Robin Small for drawing my attention to the need to clarify this. The story is also repeated (here citing the *Blätter aus Prevorst* rather than the *Seeress of Prevorst*) in Jung, “Approaching the Unconscious” in Jung, ed., *Man and His Symbols*, (New York: Random House, 1968), 24, citation in the note to page 24 and 389. For Jung who included an illustration of the unconscious influence of advertising on the previous page, the story demonstrates the actuality of uncon-

scious processes in Nietzsche's recollection, as in musical compositions where a composer reprises a folksong from his youth, "an idea or an image moves from the unconscious to the conscious mind," (Jung, "Approaching the Unconscious," 25). I add here that Robin Small in his *Nietzsche and Reé* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005) also refers to Jung as well as to Kerner.

54. Justinus Kerner, *Die Seherin von Prevorst. Eröffnungen über das innere Leben der Menschen und über das Hereinragen einer Geisterwelt in die unsere* (Stuttgart: J. F. Steinkopf, 1963 [1829]). In English as *The Seeress of Prevorst*, trans. Catherine Crowe (New York: Partridge & Brittan, 1855).

55. See Erwin Rohde, *Psyche: The Cult of Souls & The Belief in Immortality Among the Greeks*, trans. W. B. Hillis (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1925). Originally published in 1894, Thomas Mann owned and annotated a copy of Rohde's *Psyche: Seelencult und Unsterblichkeits Glaube der Griechen* (Tübingen: Mohr, 1907).

56. "The four captains and a merchant, Mr Bell, went ashore on the island of Stromboli to shoot rabbits. At three o'clock they called the crew together to go aboard, when, to their inexpressible astonishment, they saw two men flying rapidly over them through the air. One was dressed in black, the other in grey. They approached them very closely, in the greatest haste; to their greatest dismay they descended amid the burning flames into the crater of the terrible volcano, Mt. Stromboli. They recognized the pair as acquaintances from London," James L. Jarrett, ed., *Jung's Seminar on Nietzsche's Zarathustra*, 1217–1218.

57. James L. Jarrett, ed., *Jung's Seminar on Nietzsche's Zarathustra*, 2118. In accord with the fetishism that seems to attend the search for Nietzsche's sources (whether to prove or disprove his originality), commentators can be expected to be quick to wonder whether Elisabeth was lying but the popularity of the book and the very coincidence of which Jung speaks between his own access to the book and the young Nietzsche and his sister's access suggest that this is not something it would served purposes to lie about. Indeed, the coincidence is plausible enough even without Elisabeth's confirmation and Bennholdt-Thomsen notes, following Jung, that Nietzsche concerns himself with Kerner between the ages of 12 and 15.

58. The story was one Jung had been telling since his inaugural dissertation, published two years after Nietzsche's death in 1902.

59. James L. Jarrett, ed., *Jung's Seminar on Nietzsche's Zarathustra*, 2118. I thank the anthropologist and Hölderlin scholar, Annette Hornbacher for noting that Jung's invocation of this color distinction and significance is itself taken from Kerner.

60. If Gary Shapiro is right to point to the geological significance of the contrast of this passage with the *Isles of the Blest* where Zarathustra "appears mysteriously on a volcanic island (where his Shadow seems to fly into the volcano itself)," Gary Shapiro, "Beyond Peoples and Fatherlands: Nietzsche's Geophilosophy and the Direction of the Earth," *Journal of Nietzsche Studies*, 35–36 (2008): 13. Restoring this emphasis however, an emphasis Shapiro conscientiously avoids,

exposes us once again to what he identifies as the risks and dangers of “reading Nietzsche through the prism of Hölderlin’s Greek and German earth, in a Heideggerian mode, risks what Foucault called the return and retreat of the origin and the nostalgia and site fetishism that mar Heidegger’s thought,” Gary Shapiro, “Beyond Peoples and Fatherlands,” 10.

61. James L. Jarrett, ed., *Jung’s Seminar on Nietzsche’s Zarathustra*, 1224).

62. In addition, again, to numerous English readings in German studies as well as in philosophy, Rudolf Eisler’s *Handwörterbuch der Philosophie* repays reading with regard to the question of the *Übermensch* as a philosophical notion in particular connection with Nietzsche. For a general overview, see Ernst Benz, “Das Bild des Übermenschen in der Europäischen Geistesgeschichte” in his *Der Übermensch. Eine Diskussion* (Stuttgart: Rhein-Verlag, 1961), 19–161 as well as Karen Joisten, *Die Überwindung der Anthropozentrität durch Friedrich Nietzsche* (Würzburg: Königshausen und Neumann, 1994), 172ff.

15. “Falling in Love with Becoming”: Remarks on Nietzsche and Emerson

Dieter Thomä

1. Richard Ford, *The Lay of the Land* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2006), 52–54; italics original.

2. Richard Ford, *The Lay of the Land*, 200 and Richard Ford, *Independence Day* (New York: Vintage, 1996), 377.

3. Ralph W. Emerson, *Essays and Lectures* (New York: Library of America, 1983), 271 (italics original).

4. See Vivetta Vivarelli, “Nietzsche und Emerson: Über einige Pfade in Zarathustras metaphorischer Landschaft,” *Nietzsche-Studien* 16 (1987): 227–263; Stanley Cavell, *This New Yet Unapproachable America: Lectures after Emerson after Wittgenstein* (Albuquerque: Living Batch Press, 1989); Georg Stack, *Nietzsche and Emerson: An Elective Affinity* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 1992); David Micks, *The Romance of Individualism in Emerson and Nietzsche* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 2003); Benedetta Zavatta, “Nietzsche, Emerson und das Selbstvertrauen,” *Nietzsche-Studien* 35 (2006): 274–297; Dieter Thomä, “Jeder ist sich selbst der Fernste: Zum Zusammenhang zwischen personaler Identität und Moral bei Nietzsche und Emerson,” *Nietzsche-Studien* 36 (2007): 316–343; Dieter Thomä, “Das werdende Selbst: Identität, Alterität und Interaktion nach Emerson, Nietzsche und Cavell,” in *Happy Days: Lebenswissen nach Cavell*, eds. Kathrin Thiele and Katrin Trüstedt (Munich: Wilhelm Fink, 2010), 171–186.

5. Richard Ford, *The Lay of the Land*, 73 (italics original).

6. Richard Ford, *The Lay of the Land*, 379.

7. Richard Ford, *The Lay of the Land*, 249 (italics original).

8. Richard Ford, *The Lay of the Land*, 76.

9. Ralph W. Emerson, *Essays and Lectures*, 262–263 (italics original).

10. Ralph W. Emerson, *Essays and Lectures*, 274, 276.

11. John Updike, “Emersonianism,” in: *Odd Jobs* (New York: Knopf, 1991), 159.