

Edited by VANESSA LEMM

Nietzsche and the Becoming of Life

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Nietzsche's Synaesthetic Epistemology and the Restitution of the Holistic Human

RAINER J. HANSHE

[The heart] nourished in seas of blood which leaps back and forth, and there especially it is called understanding by men; for men's understanding is blood around the heart.

—Empedocles¹

If a *revolt* is to come, it will have to come from the five *senses*!

—Michel Serres²

In opposition to the orthodox philosophic, religious, and aesthetic conception of the senses, in Nietzsche's epistemic order, every sense is not only positively valued but also often "crossed" with other senses. If three of the just four scholars who actually address Nietzsche's conception of synaesthesia assert that his depiction and use of it is strictly metaphoric,³ in fact, it is often if not as a rule precisely the opposite—Nietzsche conveys the phenomenon as something real, actual. Nietzsche was knowledgeable of synaesthesia through medical, aesthetic, and philosophic sources and a persistent engagement with it can be traced throughout his corpus. Further, his interest in synaesthesia may signal that he himself was synaesthetically inclined. If that cannot be definitively ascertained, aside from the testimony of his philosophy, several intriguing allusions in letters indicate that he may have had experiential knowledge of the phenomenon. Whatever the case, as an experimental mode of epistemology, Nietzsche was sensitive to it and, as will be illustrated, considered it a phenomenon demanding serious attention.

In counseling us to develop our synaesthetic potentiality, I propose that Nietzsche is recuperating an ancient praxis and advancing *a sense-oriented*

epistemology in order to refine and intensify our attunement to the world. It is the cultivation of a new mode of “common sense” (in Greek, *koinè aisthêsis*, in Latin, *sensus communis*) completely different from Kant’s and that of orthodox philosophy—data received via the sensory domain is not condemned or abnegated. In Nietzsche’s *Umwertung aller Werte*, the mode for obtaining knowledge is no longer reason alone—it will also be obtained through a meditative praxis that engages the entire body, which Nietzsche refers to as “a great reason” and “a manifold with one sense” (ZI “On the Despisers of the Body”), presaging the view in contemporary synaesthetic literature that we do not have five sense organs, but one sense organ with five sub-organs.⁴ A particularly rich concentration of the synaesthetic figures in his magnum opus, *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, with Zarathustra and the *Übermensch* representing holistic types who not only embrace the senses as well as means for acquiring knowledge, but more important, *unite* both as the ultimate epistemological tool. Synaesthetic epistemology is therefore concordant with Nietzsche’s perspectivalism and functions as one of the most optimal methods for acquiring more objective and truthful analyses of reality, a method that enables us to see with “more eyes,” which Nietzsche asserts enables us to develop more complete “concepts” of things.⁵ In what follows, I will examine the philosophical precedents of synaesthesia on which Nietzsche’s conception may in part be founded, trace the synaesthetic in Nietzsche’s corpus, focusing most on *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, briefly address the question of Nietzsche being synaesthetic, then conclude with an outline of Nietzsche’s constellation of the sensory order and explain how comprehending the *Übermensch* demands activating our synaesthetic capacity.

Ancient Philosophical Precedents

Wretched mind, from us [the senses] you take your certainty, and yet you would overthrow us?—Our defeat will be your downfall.

Democritus⁶

What can we find more certain than the senses themselves, to mark for us truth and false-hood?

Lucretius, *De rerum natura*⁷

Aside from its largely aesthetic orientation, synaesthesia also has ancient philosophical precedents and as a philologist, historian, and philosopher, Nietzsche was cognizant of that heritage. Of crucial concern here is the positive valuation that thinkers such as Heraclitus and Empedocles gave to the senses, and their recognition of them as valid epistemological tools.

In numerous fragments, Heraclitus presents a varied view of the senses and though critical of them, demanding that they be considered with discernment, he never condemns them *in toto* but recognizes the instrumental role they serve in acquiring knowledge of the world. For the Ionians, the senses are “instruments of discovery and signposts to truth.”⁸ Phenomena “can only be granted a decent scientific status if our senses, by which the phenomena are apprehended, have some claim to be regarded as dispensers of truth.”⁹ The most positive valuation of the senses Heraclitus advances is where he notes that “whatsoever things [are] objects of sight, hearing, [and] experience—these things I hold in higher esteem.”¹⁰ If he believes that the “eyes are more accurate witnesses than are [the] ears,”¹¹ both senses are inadequate witnesses if people have what he calls “uncomprehending (literally, ‘barbarian’) souls.”¹² When stating that most people do not understand what they encounter via the sensory dimension, he outlines the necessity for sensing and thinking *together* as opposed to rejecting the senses in favor of reason. Yet sensing must always be coupled with thinking, otherwise one will sense as if one is not sensing. “The ‘know nothings,’ on the other hand, are ‘unjudging hordes,’ whose senses are senseless, their ‘eye sightless, their hearing full of noise.’ Heraclitus pictures such people as sleepwalkers.”¹³

In his *Poem*, Empedocles presents us with another forceful alternative to the orthodox devaluation of the sensory order. In at least two fragments, and these are fundamental to his thinking, Empedocles articulates a “refusal to choose either the senses or reason, *nous*, to the exclusion of the other. This is most explicit,” Trépanier notes, in the fragment “where he instructs the disciple to place *no more trust* in one sense than the other” and is further reinforced in another fragment “where he includes ‘grasping with the mind’ alongside the senses, as one of the means whereby the disciple could follow his teachings.”¹⁴ As with Heraclitus, there is an important union of sensing and thinking:

But come, consider, by every device, how each thing is clear—not holding any sight as more reliable than what you hear, nor the resounding hearing [as more reliable] than the clarities of the tongue and do not in any way curb the reliability of the other limbs by which there is a passage for understanding, but understand each thing in the way that it is clear.¹⁵

If Sextus Empiricus believes there is a contradiction in Empedocles’ views, critics such as Trépanier demonstrate that the contradiction is but ostensible and predicated on a misreading of the fragment “where Empedocles does not reject either the senses or reason completely, but merely the status of

either as final and authoritative, to the exclusion of the other.”¹⁶ It is this Heraclitean and Empedoclean epistemology, where both reason and the senses function together, that I believe Nietzsche is recuperating. Indeed, it is what underlies his own epistemology and in thinking this, we can trace an expansive arc (the *pre-Platonic* lineage) stretching from Heraclitus and Empedocles directly to Nietzsche’s thought. As Barnes says, Empedocles “establishes that what is grasped through each of the senses is trustworthy provided that reason is in charge of them.”¹⁷ Despite his criticism of Empedocles’ views, Sextus Empiricus clearly recognizes this balance and affirms that “perception through each of the senses is reliable, provided reason is in control of them, even though previously disparaging their reliability.”¹⁸ Vlastos makes a similar assessment when he states that,

If used aright, the senses are “openings for understanding”; there is no necessary conflict between their reports and the highest truth that the mind can discover. When we see “earth with earth,” what we see is not “deceitful” appearance, but Being. Perception and judgment can thus be in perfect harmony. There, the same physical condition is appropriate to both, and the formulae for “most accurate sense-perceptions” and “wisest thoughts” coincide.¹⁹

Nietzsche makes precisely the same point in *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* and *Twilight of the Idols*, and it is exactly this coupling of sense perception and reason that informs his synaesthetic epistemology.

During Empedocles’ time *koinê aesthêsis* (common sense) had a completely different meaning from what it does in modern times. As Peter Kingsley proposes,

For Empedocles the discovery of common sense—of that consciousness which is able to hear and see and touch and feel and taste at the same time—was a matter of direct experience. And to experience it was to start waking up from the chaotic dream of human existence into another state of awareness.²⁰

This conception of synaesthesia is incredibly more complex and is not the mere crossing of two senses, but the simultaneous unification of *every* sense. For Empedocles, *koinê aesthêsis* functions as a means for the purest experience of the world or, in Nietzsche’s terms, for a perspectivalist one, the knower’s “discipline and preparation of the intellect for its future ‘objectivity’ . . .” (*GM* III: 12). It is a heightened if not possibly the most accurate mode of perception.²¹ The Austrian doctor Jean Nüssbaumer avowed that his synaesthetic experiences were objective and asserted that

those who aren't synaesthetic are the ones who are actually imagining things.²² Indeed, like Empedocles, Nietzsche is after as direct, full, and accurate an experience of the world as possible and his sounding out of all idols is a method for freeing us from what Kingsley calls "the chaotic dream of human existence," or, in Nietzsche's own terms, "the lie of the ideal." As Barnes notes, what Empedocles promises his disciples, and Zarathustra promises something similar, is "knowledge (and with it some magical powers). He insisted, against the Eleatics, that the senses, if properly used, are routes to knowledge."²³ And it is precisely the "proper" use of the senses as routes to knowledge that Nietzsche advocates throughout his philosophy, and this we can propose is the uniting of the human with its animal nature.

Synaesthesia in Nietzsche's Corpus

All that philosophers have been handling for thousands of years is conceptual mummies; nothing real has ever left their hands alive.

Nietzsche, *TI* "Reason" 1

One of the earliest instances of Nietzsche's positive valuation of the senses and of his awareness that they were all once united is in his 1870 essay "*Das griechische Musikdrama*." There, Nietzsche critiques the common aesthetic axiom that the union of two or more arts is indicative of "a barbaric error of taste." What this axiom actually betrays is the modern bad habit of lacking the ability to enjoy things with all of our faculties: "we are, as it were, torn into little pieces by absolute art forms, and hence enjoy as little pieces, in one moment as ear-men, in another as eye-men, and so on. Let us contrast this view with . . . the drama of antiquity as total work of art . . ." (*GMD*). Instead of cultivating the ability to unite all of the senses, we sever our bodies into pieces and augment and expand the separate parts and convince ourselves that we have become geniuses through inflating those individual fragments. From the very beginning of his philosophical life, Nietzsche's thought is grounded in a conviction in the centrality of the total body, of the body as holistic anchor of human experience.

In *Philosophy in the Tragic Age of the Greeks*, Nietzsche criticizes Parmenides for precisely the kind of abnegation and fragmentation of the body Zarathustra derides. Since Parmenides observed with his senses a world of becoming, he condemned his eyes and ears for what they recognized, refusing to accept his observations as epistemologically valid. Because of this, Parmenides warns us against being guided by the senses

of sight, hearing, and taste. Instead, we should trust in the power of thinking alone. For Nietzsche, this is the first and most dire critique of our apparatus of knowledge, by which he implies the body and the mind operating in unison. “By wrenching apart the senses and the capacity for abstraction, in other words, by splitting up mind as though it were composed of two quite separate capacities, he demolished intellect itself, encouraging man to indulge in that wholly erroneous distinction between ‘spirit’ and ‘body’ which, especially since Plato, lies upon philosophy like a curse” (*PTA* 10). Nietzsche declares further that “the absolute separation of senses and concepts” is a falsehood (*PTA* 13), precisely the kind of Platonic-Christian moral division of the body and mind that leads to barbarism. As with Socrates, the figure of Parmenides haunts Western thought and is one of the opponents in Nietzsche’s agonistic ring. Whether his assessment of Parmenides is wholly accurate or not is here inconsequential.²⁴ What we already begin to see through these passages is a continuity of thought that Nietzsche will sustain until the end of his writing life regarding the senses and the body.

In the 1886 preface to *Human, All Too Human*, Nietzsche constitutes the book not merely as a text, but as *a musical artifact* when declaring that it “must be capable of some kind of music and flute-player’s art by which even coy foreign ears are seduced to listen” (*HH* “Preface” 8).²⁵ Thus, “understanding” the book demands more than reading it with one’s eyes alone—it must also be *heard* with the eyes or ears; yet the book has not only “been read most carelessly” but, more crucial Nietzsche emphasizes, it has been “*heard* the worst.” To truly comprehend it then requires becoming *Übermenschlich*, that is, it requires “refined and experienced senses” (*HH* “Preface” 8). As Nietzsche diagnoses later in the book though, our senses have become blunted and our ears are no longer capable of hearing fine distinctions, such as between C-sharp and D-flat, a result of “the complete dominance of the well-tempered tonal system . . .” and our inquiring after reasons instead of after “what things are.” “In this matter,” Nietzsche believes, assessing the cultural climate of his time, “our ears have become coarser” (*HH* 217).²⁶ Now, over a hundred years later, our senses may be even more blunted. As Wordsworth diagnosed, presaging Nietzsche’s critique of decadence by half a century, urbanization, which includes a loss of the rich sensory contact with the natural world, is in part what blunts “the discriminating powers of the mind [. . .] unfitting it for all voluntary exertion to reduce it to a state of almost savage torpor.”²⁷ Because of coarseness or barbarity, we intellectualize the senses, too, and this intellectualization of the senses is one of the consequences of the Parmenidean-Platonic-Christian derision of the body. It results in an en-

ervating of the perceptual faculties, the rationalization of joy, and the supplanting of the real.

The more the eye and ear are capable of thought the more they reach that boundary line where they become unsensual. Joy is transferred to the brain; the sense organs themselves become dull and weak. More and more, the symbolic replaces that which exists—and so, as surely as on any other path, we arrive along this one at barbarism. (*HH* 217)

The necessity of coupling the perceptual and the rational faculties is exemplified in another aphorism where Nietzsche imbues the thinking organ with the attributes of the feeling one when conceiving of a double-brain with two *brain-ventricles* for the perceptions of science and nonscience (*HH* 251).²⁸ This provocative image, of a brain with throbbing chambers that pulsate, of an organ of cognition that requires blood to function, is emblematic of Nietzsche's radical epistemological concept, and it will receive a significant transformation in *Zarathustra*. It can function as a powerful guiding image for contemplating Nietzsche's synaesthetic epistemology. Let us sustain it in our imagination during this meditation.

In *Daybreak*, there is a similar demand for special readers, for readers with keen ears and delicate eyes and fingers, for readers capable of becoming still and slow, or of deeply ruminating like the cud-chewing cow Nietzsche admires. In his positing that our senses may even have had different functions, too, and in exploring that possibility, it is clear that synaesthesia is not merely metaphoric. When discussing the history of the eye, Nietzsche claims that after demonstrating its evolution, one “must arrive at the great conclusion that vision was *not* the intention behind the creation of the eye” (*GS* 122).²⁹ Similarly, in the *The Gay Science*, he explicitly declares that our eyes had a completely different function; “our eyes,” he pronounces, “are also intended for hearing” (*GS* 223). Whereas in general Nietzsche positively values the senses, in *Daybreak*, as throughout his corpus, there is a persistent emphasis on feeling and its importance, of the primacy feeling has over thought in life. This further reinforces the centrality of the body, of the nerves in Nietzsche's philosophical vision, a vision that one could say is in part neurologically based, though this never descends into mere positivism or biologism—body for Nietzsche is a fluid, amorphous entity. Thoughts are but “the shadows of our feelings—always darker, emptier, and simpler” (*GS* 179).³⁰ And when discussing two different kinds of deniers of morality and avoiding and resisting what would be considered “immoral” acts versus doing and encouraging “moral” acts, Nietzsche stresses that “the one should be encouraged and

the other avoided *for other reasons than hitherto*. We have to *learn to think differently*—in order at last, perhaps very late on, to attain even more: *to feel differently*” (D 103). Here, in this hierarchy, feeling is valued higher than thinking. If in his later work he may have a different view of morality, the centrality of feeling remains consistent throughout. Consciousness itself, or our “so-called consciousness,” as Nietzsche says, is also “a more or less fantastic commentary on an unknown, perhaps unknowable, but felt text” (D 119). Conceiving of the world as a text is a prevailing if not now even mundane aspect of postmodern thought, but, tellingly, what the postmodern appropriation of Nietzsche’s view neglects is its sensory nuance—it is, as he differentiates, a *felt* text, perhaps akin to Braille texts which the blind “see” with their fingers.³¹ The world is not something that we read as the text-centric insist, but *sense*, and to sense it requires possessing “subtle eyes, ears and noses” as well as a degree of inventiveness and an imagination “*unchained* by acuteness and knowledge” (D 428).

In the preface to the second edition of the *The Gay Science*, Nietzsche begins with a warning to the reader: to understand the book requires having *lived* through similar experiences.³² Reading alone—that is, rational comprehension—will not yield its secrets or enable the reader to fathom its knowledge. In *Ecce Homo*, Nietzsche repeats this warning when stating that if one has no access to something from experience, one will have no “ear” for it (EH “Books” 1). As Bertram notes, subsequent to beholding the Eleusinian mysteries, Aristotle “says the same thing when he reports that this act of beholding is a *παθεῖν*, an ‘experiencing,’ not a *μαθεῖν*, a ‘learning.’”³³ And, Bertram continues, it is as an Eleusinian mystagogue, “as a great educator of secrecy through secrets, that Nietzsche embraces this Aristotelian *παθεῖν* as the highest form of all fruitful learning and ‘knowledge.’”³⁴ Beyond that, the hermit of Sils Maria asserts that the book “seems to be written in the language of the wind that thaws ice and snow: high spirits, unrest, contradiction, and April weather are present in it” (GS “Preface” 1). Thus, Nietzsche endows this work with a sensorial and meteorological dimension and, as is well known, posits that philosophy has been nothing but “an interpretation of the body and a *misunderstanding of the body*” (GS “Preface” 2). Thinking itself is *bodily* and the philosopher

simply *cannot* keep from transposing his states every time into the most spiritual form and distance: this art of transfiguration *is* philosophy. We philosophers are not free to divide body from soul as the people do; we are even less free to divide soul from spirit. We are not thinking frogs, nor objectifying and registering mechanisms with their innards removed. (GS “Preface” 3)

Earlier, in “On Truth and Lies in an Extra-Moral Sense,” Nietzsche makes an analogous assertion when claiming that nature mystifies and confines us “in a proud, deceptive consciousness, aloof from the coils of the bowels, the rapid flow of the blood stream, and the intricate quivering of the fibers!” (*TL* 1). Later, he will pronounce in “On Immaculate Perception” that our entrails are what is strongest in us, and in the opening of *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* he makes the even more intriguing assertion that the head is simply the entrails of the heart (*Z* “Preface” 5), a clear inversion of the orthodox hierarchy of the body. Further, if we do not “hold on to our hearts,” according to Zarathustra, we can also lose our heads (*Z* II “On the Pitying”). In this, it is the heart, classically the feeling or emotive organ, that is the guiding or predominant force of the body. Parkes does not observe this in the footnotes to his translation, but Nietzsche may very well be evoking Empedocles’ thought that the blood around the heart is the thought of the human.³⁵

There is a bodily or sensorial dimension to the death of God (*GS* 125), too, and it is emblematic of Nietzsche’s sensory orientation. While the sacrifice of God causes us to *feel* the breath of empty space and the temperature of the world grows more frigid, the madman asks if we can *hear* the noise of the gravediggers burying God and if we *smell* the divine decomposition. The act of murdering God also results in our being saturated with blood so that we need to be cleansed. In the closing passage, the madman explains that the tremendous event has not yet reached the *ears* of men and that it is a deed that requires time to be *seen* and *heard*. Thus, Nietzsche imbues his dramatization of the sacrificial murder of God with a striking and powerful sensory dimension as opposed to demonstrating that “God” is a conceptual construct and not an actual or metaphysical entity. When speaking of the event of the death of God later in the book, Nietzsche construes it *visually* and speaks of it as a spectacle that only those “whose eyes, the *suspicion* in whose eyes is strong and subtle enough for this spectacle, some suns seem to have set and some ancient and profound trust has been turned into doubt: to them our old world must appear daily more like evening, more mistrustful, stranger, ‘older’” (*GS* 343). Also, when Zarathustra speaks of God dying, he notes that God offended “the taste of [his] ears and eyes . . .” (*Z* IV “Retired”). As a philosopher of the present and the future who has unlearned the fear of the senses, the sensorial dimension of events is an instrumental aspect of earthly life for today; all such philosophers “are believers in the senses,” and “*not* in theory but in *praxis*” (*GS* 372).³⁶

If some of Nietzsche’s positions regarding the development of the sensory organs are understood as merely straightforward utilizations of

nineteenth-century evolutionary arguments, as recent neuroscience research has proven, synaesthetic perceptions “are actual perceptions and, as such, clearly distinguishable from metaphorical associations or hallucinations.”³⁷ Further, and more appositely, basing the classification of the senses strictly on the visual organs is essentially crude, for those largely external structures are not the sole mediums of sense experience. The process of vision, for instance, includes numerous body structures that include the eye itself, nerves, and different areas of the brain. Thus, as Cretien van Campen explains, the

division of sensory experience on the basis of physical external characteristics (eyes, nose, etc.) into five sensory domains is somewhat misleading [. . .]. [Various] sense researchers stress that the senses cannot be isolated but should be considered and understood in their relationships to one another.³⁸

According to Greta Berman, “we all possess ‘relative synaesthesia,’ which, like relative pitch (and unlike perfect pitch), can be developed,”³⁹ and Nietzsche seems to have understood this as he compels us to cultivate the ability, which is part of his project of reinstituting the holistic human, the human who embraces its animal nature. “When technically discussing the phenomenon of synaesthesia,” Berman asserts, “we should be dealing with the senses not as metaphors, but as separate and distinct realities.”⁴⁰

Synaesthesia in *Zarathustra*

In *Zarathustra*, Nietzsche frequently implies that Zarathustra’s teaching can only be comprehended via the senses. When after first presenting his teaching and it is not understood, Zarathustra observes that he is still distant from human beings, suggesting that he is possibly not human, but *Übermensch*. That is to say, he possesses qualities or abilities that the average human does not or has not yet cultivated. More pertinently, and this is an illuminating passage, perhaps one of the most instructive regarding Nietzsche’s synaesthetic epistemology, Zarathustra realizes that his “sense does not speak to [the] senses” (“*Aber noch bin ich ihnen ferne, und mein Sinn redet nicht zu ihren Sinnen*”) of those he addressed (*Z* “Preface” 7), clearly indicating that it is *through the senses themselves* that one will come to “understand” his teaching in its fullest dimension. Once again, multiple perspectives must be employed to gain any accurate knowledge of an idea, concept, or the world. In another passage, Zarathustra asks his disciples if they are the *commanders* of their senses (*Z* I “On Child and Marriage”), accentuating the necessity of controlling the senses as opposed to passively

receiving perceptions.⁴¹ Since the *Übermensch* is not spoken of in conceptual terms, but in strictly material or sensorial ones—it is the sense of the earth, it is the sea, it is lightning, and earth and animal and plant are to be prepared for its sake (Z “Preface” 4) just as there is a rainbow that leads to the *Übermensch* (Z “Preface” 9); it is definitively not something that can be comprehended via cognition alone, but requires the attention of the entire body. And if it “comes to” Zarathustra as a specter (Z I “On Love of the Neighbor”) and a shadow that is “still” and “light” (Z II “Upon the Blessed Isles”), to continue to grapple with the *Übermensch* from a strictly cognitive position is to refuse to encounter the figure as Nietzsche intimates it needs to be encountered, to refuse to cultivate the precisely singular epistemological mode necessary to *sense* the *Übermensch*.

As is often remarked, it is not that Zarathustra is a failure as a teacher or that his teaching is inadequate, for clearly, it is effective, but that those who have struggled to receive his teaching lack the abilities necessary to receive and animate it. If Zarathustra is synaesthetic, as all synaesthetes, not only would he consider his own perceptions to be normal, he might not even be aware that others lack his innate abilities. It might not be too bold to speculate that Nietzsche designed the text to illustrate that Zarathustra’s teaching can be fully grasped *only* synaesthetically. As he says in the preface to *The Gay Science*, if one hasn’t had similar experiences to those elucidated in the book, it is doubtful if prefaces alone, that is, instructive intellectual guidance, will bring one closer to such experiences. What is necessary is *experience, sensing with the entire body* what the book expresses, for the book is a metaphor of bodily experiences, a series of nerve stimuli that have been transformed into images, and the reader must activate them bodily to regenerate their sensuous power.⁴²

Immediately subsequent to the very first presentation of his teaching, Zarathustra realizes that he is not understood and then wonders, “Must one first smash their ears before they learn to hear with their eyes?” (*Muss man ihnen erst die Ohren zerschlagen, dass sie lernen, mit den Augen hören?*) (Z “Preface” 5). This is another deeply illuminating passage that demands a different stress and focus. The task of hearing with one’s eyes is not metaphoric and recurs throughout the narrative, most dramatically when Zarathustra commands his abyss-deep thought to rise up and to *hear* with its *eyes*, which it achieves, as do other synaesthetic tasks, events, episodes, and entities. Zarathustra proclaims that he is able to listen to trees (Z “Preface” 5), that he can shut and open his ears as if they were eyes (Z II “On the Rabble” and *passim*),⁴³ that he can hear the eye of Life speaking (Z II “On Self-Overcoming”),⁴⁴ that he can hear the stillest hour speaking without voice (Z II “The stillest Hour”), that he can see and smell spirit (Z III “The

Homecoming”),⁴⁵ that his soul sneezes (Z III “The Homecoming”), that a tree can act as a seeing witness (Z III “On the Spirit of Gravity”),⁴⁶ that his eyes and entrails laugh (Z IV “The Shadow”), that eternity has a fragrance and odor (Z IV “The Sleepwalker Song”),⁴⁷ and so on. All of these factors designate that the text operates according to an altogether different epistemological order. Now, let’s briefly consider the possibility of Nietzsche being synaesthetic.

On 10 February 1883 Nietzsche makes an intriguing allusion to having experiential knowledge of synaesthesia in a letter to Overbeck. “How can I help having,” Nietzsche states, almost with excitement, “*an extra sense organ* and a new, terrible source of suffering!” (Letter Nr. 373, *KSB* 6:325f [emphasis added]). This admission corresponds precisely with accounts given by synaesthetes of their experiences, some of which include painful sensations in the fingertips due to certain consonants, of letters being bitter, scalding hot, and capable of producing terror, while color hearing can cause fatigue and headaches. These experiences offer insight into what Nietzsche articulates in the passages now under discussion. In another letter to his sister written in Venice on 20 May 1885, he claims that his words “have *other colors* than the same words from other people” and that with him “there is much *multicolored* foreground” (Letter Nr. 602, *KSB* 7:51f).⁴⁸ Similarly, in the final aphorism of *The Gay Science* (383), he refers to *painting* gloomy question marks, and in the final aphorism of *Beyond Good and Evil* he speaks of his *painted* thoughts as being once “so colorful” and “full of thorns and secret spices” (296) that they caused him to sneeze and laugh. When such thoughts are transformed into words, they lose their “fragrance” or sensorial dimension, but, Nietzsche protests, he alone has “colors, many colors perhaps, many motley caresses and fifty yellows and browns and greens and reds” for his wicked thoughts. While these may unquestionably be figurative statements, the parallel with the experience synaesthetes have of words is truly arresting.

Synaesthesia and the *Übermensch*

If the genuine philosopher once feared the senses because they “thought that the senses lured them out of their world, the cold realm of ‘ideas,’” Nietzsche insists that the philosophers of the future should “regard ideas, with their cold, anemic appearance, and not even in spite of this appearance, as worse seducers than the senses” (*GS* 372). Freeing the senses from the domain of morality, Nietzsche positively endows each of them in order to develop a new attunement to the world. In his aesthetico-philosophic project, all of the senses become valid means for acquiring knowledge—

the senses, Nietzsche declared, “do not lie at all. What we *make* of their evidence is what gives rise to the lie; for example, the lie of unity, the lie of materiality, of substance, of duration [. . .]. ‘Reason’ is what causes us to falsify the evidence of the senses. If the senses show becoming, passing away, change, they do not lie” (*TI* “Reason” 2).⁴⁹ Synaesthetes, as has been verified by neuroscientific research, do not all experience the same perceptions. Thus, their mode of perception reveals more accurately the degree to which we are not passive perceivers of a fixed reality, but that perception is to some degree a creative act; that when perceiving the world we are active participants. Through considering the possibility of perceiving the world from three completely different nonhuman perspectives, we will, Nietzsche asserts, be led to realize that there is no regularity to nature. What is doubly intriguing about this passage from “On Truth and Lies in an Extra-Moral Sense” is that a sight stimulus is considered capable of producing sound.⁵⁰

If each of us had a different kind of sense perception—if we could only perceive things now as a bird, now as a worm, now as a plant, or if one of us saw a stimulus as red, another as blue, *while a third even heard the same stimulus as a sound*—then no one would speak of such a regularity of nature, rather, nature would be grasped only as a creation which is subjective in the highest degree. (*TL* 1 [emphasis added])

Synaesthesia here reveals, as normative perception does not, the radical state of becoming of the world, its perpetual and dynamic flux.⁵¹ Yet, despite Nietzsche’s substantial transvaluation, despite the little and larger conceptual earthquakes that have occurred since his time, even today, we still remain at large in the grip of the Parmenidean-Platonic-Christian sense hierarchy.

Like Empedocles, Nietzsche clearly knew that “to open the way to a world of stillness quite unknown to our restless minds—is to become aware of the common factor linking each sense together, motionless, featureless, placeless and timeless, which is the consciousness we are.”⁵² It is not the abnegation of the senses that is at work in Nietzsche’s philosophy, for that would be to perpetuate a misunderstanding of the body, but precisely the celebration and engagement of the senses. What is necessary is *spiritualizing* and *multiplying* them (*WP* 820; *KSA* 9:37[12]), and this most probably refers to the new mode of *sensus communis* that I believe Nietzsche outlines.⁵³ If she never discusses synaesthesia but tantalizingly circles within its vicinity, Jill Marsden recognizes that the *Übermensch* is to be approached via radically other means. “To develop the conditions for sensing the overhuman, one has to suspend the intellectual values that

guide one's thought and be guided in turn by one's senses."⁵⁴ With this approach, a new praxis for encountering the *Übermensch* is initiated.

When stressing the importance of the senses, it must be emphasized that Nietzsche is not expunging reason altogether, but restoring a balance that for centuries had been disrupted, predominantly because of moral valuations, to a refusal *per se* of a perspectivalist epistemology. Nietzsche creates a new or rather, *revives* an ancient pagan constellation wherein reason and the senses operate together. Without reason, one cannot of course think one's senses through to their end. Here the parallel with Empedocles noted previously is so exact, Nietzsche may even be paraphrasing him. For Nietzsche, perception and judgment can function in perfect harmony, just as Vlastos remarks that they do for Empedocles. Reason always remains within Nietzsche's epistemology, but it is a different kind of reason; as he notes, there are diverse kinds of "reason" just as there are diverse kinds of the "sublime." In *The Gay Science*, he distinguishes between those who "thirst after things that *go against reason*" and others, Nietzsche's infamous "we," "we others who thirst after reason" (*GS* 319). In *Zarathustra* he speaks of the body itself as being "a great reason" and observes that what we have called "spirit" is but a tool of the body and "small reason," the "toy" of our great reason (*ZI* "On the Despisers of the Body").⁵⁵ As noted earlier, the body is spoken of in the same chapter as being "a manifold with one sense" (*ZI* "On the Despisers of the Body"). Nietzsche also construes reason positively when speaking in *Twilight of the Idols* of his "restored reason" (*TI* "Errors" 2). Thus, there is the body itself as a great reason, small reason, and Nietzsche's "renovated" reason, all functioning as faculties along with what he explicitly refers to as the single sense of the body.

With this conception of *sensus communis*, Nietzsche develops a unique epistemology born of his restitution of the body. In this recuperation of the Heraclitean and Empedoclean epistemological heritage, the senses are unified and function together with reason, which serves as a guide and enables us to think our senses through to their ends, to develop a perspectivalism *par excellence*. Here, I must return again to Marsden, for she comes closest to distinguishing what is necessary for this holistic approach to philosophy. "To be affected by the *Übermenschlich*—to experience it—is not to take up an intellectual position. Somehow," Marsden surmises, "we are required to develop sensitivity to different cues, to push the exercise of thinking beyond its usual range."⁵⁶ However, it is not only that we are to impel thinking into a different range, but that it is necessary to cultivate a more dynamic use of our senses, that we think and sense *together*. What, Marsden argues, must be abandoned is "the assumption that the over-human is to be approached conceptually."⁵⁷ Instead, Marsden suggests,

“we might say that the overhuman is to be sensed in Nietzsche’s thinking at the very point where cognition fails.”⁵⁸ One might conceive this somewhat differently though—the *Übermensch* is to be sensed not where cognition fails completely, but where it *acquiesces* to the body, where a new harmonic constellation of the senses and reason is developed. And when illustrating in *Ecce Homo* how his *felt text* is to be received, Nietzsche stresses that the book is constituted of *alpine air* and that its *halcyon tone* must be *heard aright* if we are not to be unjust to “the meaning of its wisdom” (*EH* “Preface” 4), a “meaning” which is clearly also sense-oriented. To exercise this justice is then an equally, if not predominantly, sensorial task. Following this counsel, Nietzsche quotes a profoundly suggestive passage from his magnum opus that offers further illumination into Zarathustra’s teaching. It also directs us toward explicitly *how* it is to be embodied or incorporated. In the passage, Zarathustra compares his teachings to good, sweet figs that are so ripe they are about to burst and invites us to “drink their juice and their sweet flesh!” Once again, we are given a sense-oriented task, this time a gustatory or digestive one, and this must be thought beyond the realm of mere metaphor, for it is precisely here that Nietzsche evokes his most honored and ancient synaesthetic forbear, Empedocles.

In his *Poem*, Empedocles offers similar counsel to his disciples when commanding them to press his words down underneath their dense-packed diaphragms and to let them grow. As to Zarathustra, words to Empedocles are food, or *seeds*, and in order to cultivate such nutrients, his disciples have to *breathe* them in and “bury them deep inside [their] own entrails like seeds,”⁵⁹ not just comprehend them rationally.⁶⁰ “Perceive,” he instructs, “just as the pledges from our Muse command after splitting what I am saying in your entrails.”⁶¹ Throughout *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, Nietzsche uses the exact same agricultural metaphors as Empedocles but, oddly, Lampert does not make this observation, nor to my knowledge have any other commentators.⁶² Aside from Nietzsche’s referring to Zarathustra as a sower who casts forth his seed (*Z* II “On the Three Metamorphoses”), Zarathustra instructs humanity that it must plant the seed of its highest hope in order to give birth to a dancing star (*Z* “Preface” 5). Zarathustra also believes that truths are engendered from seeds (*Z* III “The Convalescent”) and that “a genuine son and consummate heir” will grow from the seed of the superior humans (*Z* IV “The Welcome”). Like Empedocles, Zarathustra discusses the necessity of *chewing* on words and of grinding and crushing them until *they flow like milk into his soul* (*Z* IV “The Ugliest Human Being”). This art of rumination, of chewing thoughts like cud, is exactly akin to Empedocles’ instruction to his disciples to force his

teachings deep inside themselves like seeds, to *split* them, to give birth to them in their entrails. Beyond thinking alone, there is a *bodily process* that must occur in order to truly fathom these teachings or, more dynamically, to *activate* them. “Thinking” though is not just a rational process, or it is not one that can easily be differentiated from the body. “The skin,” as Deane Juhan recognizes, “is no more separated from the brain than the surface of a lake is separate from its depths The brain is a single functional unit, from cortex to fingertips to toes. To touch the surface is to stir the depths.”⁶³ Thus, our entrails, which Nietzsche believes is the strongest part of us, like other parts of our bodies, may very well be involved in the process of “thinking.” And this precise parallel with Empedocles is further solidified through Nietzsche’s referring to Zarathustra’s teaching as a living plantation, garden, and fine soil. As the advocate of the earth who ritually counsels us to remain faithful *to* the earth and to be courageous enough to believe even in our entrails, Zarathustra is clearly evoking this aspect of Empedocles’ praxis. When Kingsley illustrates that what makes the use of *metis* crucial for Empedocles “was its capacity to carry [him] beyond human existence altogether,”⁶⁴ there is an analogous desire in him to overcome the human and to become *Übermenschlich*. Or, the concept of the *Übermensch* is infused with an Empedoclean ethos. When Empedocles instructs his disciples “to become aware of the common factor linking each sense together, motionless, featureless, placeless and timeless, which is the consciousness we are,”⁶⁵ we discover a further corollary with Zarathustra and the figure of the *Übermensch*, the holistic human type *par excellence*.

Conclusion

If Zarathustra’s voice is “thunder enough that even graves will learn to listen!” and, more pertinent, it is “a healing potion even for those born blind” (*Z* III “The Convalescent”), something distinctive is operating in the text that demands careful consideration.⁶⁶ To construe such rhetoric negatively as simple hyperbole, as does Gooding-Williams for instance, is to be insensate to the philosophical task Nietzsche struggles to achieve. Alerting the reader to the “synaesthetic epistemology” and new mode of *sensus communis* that he advances, as opposed to stating it, Nietzsche *attunes* us to what is quite clearly an instrumental aspect of his philosophy, seducing us to *sense* it. As careful readers, we must not neglect these signals—the synaesthetic dimensions of his texts are far from strictly metaphoric.⁶⁷ Nietzsche explicitly avows in the *Nachlaß* that “our eyes hear much more keenly than our ears” (*KSA* 10:3[1]415). Since he limits “truth”

to what is humanly thinkable, visible, and sensible, in projecting before humanity its former holistic totality, he calls us to *animate* a modality we are capable of animating. If, as some neuroscientists assert, (relative) synaesthesia *can* be developed, Nietzsche presents humanity with a spectacular challenge that demands consideration.⁶⁸ When he asks repeatedly in *Ecce Homo* whether or not he has been “understood,” we might wonder if one of the main reasons why we have failed to “understand” him is because we have not approached him synaesthetically. Nietzsche does state that “the more abstract the truth which one wishes to teach, the more one must first entice the senses” (*BGE* 128). At the very least, Zarathustra’s teaching clearly seems to demand this, which Marsden also recognizes, and if “understanding” also requires “understanding” another’s blood as Zarathustra asserts, the task of knowing Zarathustra sets for us is clearly a body-oriented one.⁶⁹ Nietzsche’s conception of the body, however, includes not only the senses and the nerves, but mind, too. When informing us that “there is more reason in our bodies than in our finest wisdom” (*Z* I “On the Despisers of the Body”), it is to a more complete constellation that Nietzsche directs us, where mind is not separated from the body or the nerves or the sensuous dimension, but is inextricably connected to it. “Formerly, the proof of man’s higher origin, of his divinity, was found in his consciousness, in his ‘spirit.’ To become *perfect*, he was advised to draw in his senses, turtle fashion, to cease all intercourse with earthly things, to shed his mortal shroud: then his essence would remain, the ‘pure spirit’” (*A* 14). Having learned differently, having at last overcome the lie of the ideal, “We no longer derive man from ‘the spirit’ or ‘the deity,’ we have placed him back among the animals.” As Nietzsche affirms in the same passage, “The ‘pure spirit’ is a pure stupidity: if we subtract the nervous system and the senses—the ‘mortal shroud’—*then we miscalculate*—that is all!” (*A* 14). But in tearing ourselves to pieces, in reducing ourselves to nothing but “ear-men and eye-men,” we reduce ourselves to the emaciated stalks Zarathustra castigates, inverse cripples incapable of activating our synaesthetic capacity and *uniting* reason and the senses, which would create the most powerful, if not truthful, epistemological mode, or the most ultimate and many-sensed form of perspectivalism. We have been severed from the ancient heritage of the synaesthetic body predominantly due to morality, to limited, single perspectives born of Platonism and the Platonism of the people, monotheism. In order not only to sense Nietzsche anew, but to achieve our highest potentiality, we must recover that ancient pagan heritage.

21. Robert Gooding-Williams, *Zarathustra's Dionysian Modernism*, 117.
22. Alan D. Schrift, "Foucault and Derrida on Nietzsche and the End(s) of 'Man,'" in *Exceedingly Nietzsche: Aspects of Contemporary Nietzsche-Interpretation*, eds. David Farrell Krell and David Wood (New York: Routledge, 1988), 144.
23. Jean Graybeal, "Ecco Homo: Abjection and 'the Feminine,'" in *Feminist Interpretations of Friedrich Nietzsche*, eds. Kelly Oliver and Marilyn Pearsall (University Park: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1998), 162.
24. Jean Graybeal, "Ecco Homo: Abjection and 'the Feminine,'" 161.
25. Jean Graybeal, "Ecco Homo: Abjection and 'the Feminine,'" 161.
26. Luce Irigaray, *Marine Lover of Friedrich Nietzsche* (New York, Columbia University Press, 1991), 14.
27. Luce Irigaray, *Marine Lover of Friedrich Nietzsche*, 15.
28. Luce Irigaray, *Marine Lover of Friedrich Nietzsche*, 26.
29. Luce Irigaray, *Marine Lover of Friedrich Nietzsche*, 39.
30. Luce Irigaray, *Marine Lover of Friedrich Nietzsche*, 40.

10. Nietzsche's Synaesthetic Epistemology and the Restitution of the Holistic Human

Rainer J. Hanshe

1. Empedocles, *The Poem of Empedocles* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1992), 105.
2. Michel Serres, *Angels: A Modern Myth* (Paris: Flammarion, 1995), 71.
3. There are only two studies devoted strictly to synaesthesia in Nietzsche's thought: Diana Behler, "Synaesthesia in Nietzsche's *Die Geburt der Tragödie* and Its Correlation to French and Russian Symbolism," *Carrefour de Cultures*, ed. Régis Antoine (Tübingen: Narr, 1993), 169–80; and Clive Cazeaux, "Sound and Synaesthesia in Nietzsche and Merleau-Ponty," *Proceedings of the Sound Practice Conference* (Dartington: Dartington College of Arts, 2001): 35–40. The former article focuses only on *BT* and suffers from a myopic understanding of the phenomenon, if not of Nietzsche; the latter, while brief and concerned strictly with *TL*, is still a rich and suggestive article, but Merleau-Ponty receives the lion's share of its focus. Though not referring to it as such, Sarah Kofman briefly addresses the concept (the first consideration of the topic to my knowledge) in her *Nietzsche et la métaphore* (Paris: Bibliothèque scientifique, 1972), while Babette Babich mentions it in one passage of her *Words in Blood, Like Flowers* (New York: State University of New York Press, 2006), 39. Hence, this essay is the first extensive overview of the synaesthetic aspect of Nietzsche's thought.
4. The two basic perspectives regarding the senses: (1) there are five senses that function independently; and (2) there is *one* sense organ with five *suborgans*. See Heinz Werner, "Unity of the Senses," in *Developmental Processes: Heinz Werner's Selected Writings*, Vol. 1, eds. Sybil S. Barten and Margery B. Franklin (New York: International Universities Press, 1978), 153–167.
5. One might add, *more noses* et al. too, especially when recalling Nietzsche's assertion that his "genius is in his nostrils!" (*EH* "Destiny" 1). On the use of the

term “perspectivalism” versus “perspectivism,” see Babette E. Babich, *Nietzsche’s Philosophy of Science: Reflecting Science on the Ground of Art and Life* (New York: State University of New York Press, 1994), 46–49.

6. Democritus, *The Atomists: Leucippus and Democritus: Fragments*, trans. and ed. by Christopher C.W. Taylor (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2010), 13 (frag. 125).

7. Lucretius, *De rerum natura*, trans. David R. Slavitt (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2008), 699–700.

8. Jonathan Barnes, *The Presocratic Philosophers* (London: Routledge, 1982), 248.

9. Jonathan Barnes, *The Presocratic Philosophers*, 248.

10. Heraclitus, *Fragments* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1991), 55.

11. Heraclitus, *Fragments*, 101.

12. Heraclitus, *Fragments*, 107.

13. Gregory Vlastos, *Studies in Greek Philosophy: Volume I: The Presocratics*, Daniel W. Graham, ed. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1995), 156. In *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, Nietzsche views the “professors of virtue” as equally somnambulistic figures, a condition due specifically to their type of virtue as opposed to Zarathustra’s, which is a wide awake type of virtue. For an examination of this and its relation to the praxis of incubation, see Rainer J. Hanshe, “Zarathustra’s Stillness: Dreaming and the Art of Incubation” in *Nietzsche’s Therapeutic Teaching: For Individuals and Culture*, eds. Horst Hutter and Eli Friedland (London and New York: Bloomsbury, 2013), 141–156.

14. Simon Trépanier, *Empedocles: An Interpretation* (London: Routledge, 2004), 56.

15. Empedocles, *The Poem of Empedocles* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1992), 77.

16. Simon Trépanier, *Empedocles: An Interpretation*, 56.

17. Jonathan Barnes, *Early Greek Philosophy* (London: Penguin Classics, 2001), 118.

18. Simon Trépanier, *Empedocles: An Interpretation*, 213.

19. Gregory Vlastos, *Studies in Greek Philosophy*, 157.

20. Peter Kingsley, *Reality* (Inverness: Golden Sufi Center, 2003), 514.

21. There may be some correlation between this and Ansell-Pearson’s description of “superior” empiricism as that “in which we go beyond a synthesis of points within the field of appearance and attempt to discover the ‘real articulation and individuality of things.’” See Keith Ansell-Pearson, *Philosophy and the Adventure of the Virtual* (London: Routledge, 2002), 121, and further, 12, 38, 139, 170.

22. See Kevin T. Dann, *Bright Colors Falsely Seen: Synaesthesia and the Search for Transcendental Knowledge* (New Heaven: Yale University Press, 1998), 20.

23. Jonathan Barnes, *Early Greek Philosophy*, xli.

24. If Nietzsche’s view of Parmenides is a distortion, which some scholars argue, thinkers such as Sextus Empiricus had the same view, which is to say, this

is how Parmenides was interpreted by a large number of people: “Parmenides rejected opinionative reason [. . .] and assumed as criterion the cognitive—that is, the inerrant—reason, as he gave up belief in the senses.” See *Sextus Empiricus: Against the Logicians*, Vol. 2, trans. Robert G. Bury (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1949), 57.

25. It is instructive to recall that not only did Nietzsche “write” while on vigorous walks, later transcribing into notebooks what he thought during those peripatetic moments, he also often *recited* his aphorisms aloud to amanuenses and had books read to him. Thus, reading and writing for him always had an auditory or oral dimension. Cf. *BGE* 246, 247.

26. For another passage on the coarsening or obstruction of the senses see *TL* 1.

27. See the “Preface to *Lyrical Ballads* (1802),” in *The Major Works*, William Wordsworth (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 599.

28. The German for brain-ventricles is *Hirnkammern*, a neologism Nietzsche created specifically to convey the idea of a brain possessing chambers as if it were also a heart.

29. For the evolution of the ear, see *D* 250.

30. On the “godlike feeling” Nietzsche calls true humaneness, see *GS* 337. This extraordinary and profound aphorism advances a conception of compassion that far supersedes the Christian notion of pity. What could be more sublimely thoughtful and magnanimous than the “godlike feeling” Nietzsche calls humaneness?

31. For a contemporary example, the Turkish painter Esref Armagan, who was born blind, asserts that he can see with his fingers: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8QUOy83po60>.

32. For similar warnings, but from a poetic context, see “Au Lecteur (1857),” in Charles Baudelaire, *The Flowers of Evil* (New York: New Directions, 1989), 3, and the first canto in Comte de Lautréamont, “Les Chants de Maldoror (1869),” in *Maldoror and the Complete Works of the Comte de Lautréamont*, trans. Alexis Lykiard (Cambridge: Exact Change, 1994), 27–28.

33. Ernst Bertram, *Nietzsche: Attempt at a Mythology* (Illinois: University of Illinois Press, 2009), 300.

34. Ernst Bertram, *Nietzsche: Attempt at a Mythology*, 300.

35. Hofmannsthal may have Empedocles’ notion in mind, too, or Nietzsche’s, when he has Chandos state in his letter to Lord Bacon that “we could enter into a new, momentous relationship with all of existence if we began to think with our hearts.” See “A Letter” in Hugo von Hofmannsthal, *The Lord Chandos Letter and Other Writings* (New York: NYRB Classics, 2005), 125.

36. See *BGE* 14 for a similar passage on the senses and the difference between the strength of the senses of those in Plato’s time, or just of Plato himself, versus the degree of strength of the senses of those in Nietzsche’s day and age, if not surely our own.

37. Greta Berman, “Synesthesia and the Arts,” *Leonardo*, Vol. 1, No. 32 (1999): 15.

38. Cretien van Campen, *The Hidden Sense: Synesthesia in Art and Science* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2008), 100.

39. Greta Berman, "Synesthesia and the Arts," 16.

40. Greta Berman, "Synesthesia and the Arts," 16.

41. See *BGE* 14 for another passage on exercising mastery of the senses. Also, for Kant, sense perception is passive whereas for Nietzsche, or in synaesthetic perception, it certainly is not.

42. Think here of Nietzsche's statement that "truths are illusions that we have forgotten are illusions; they are metaphors that have become worn out and have been drained of sensuous force" (*TL* 1).

43. Consider this similar passage: "I understand; I'll open my ears again (oh! oh! oh! and *close* my nose). Now I can really hear what they have been saying all along" (*GMI*: 14).

44. During that synaesthetic episode, Zarathustra learns from Life of the will to power; with that specific knowledge, he will "go on to solve the riddle" of the *hearts* of his disciples.

45. In *HH* II, Nietzsche speaks of words having odors: "Every word has its odor: there exists a harmony and disharmony of odors thus of words" (*WS* 119).

46. For another instance of being seen by objects, see Edward Casey, *The World at a Glance* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2007), 29, *passim*. Casey speaks of objects witnessing us, of the sensation of feeling as if objects that we glance at are actually also glancing at us.

47. Zarathustra is also referred to as a roaring stream (*Z* II "The Child with the Mirror") and as a forest and a night of dark trees (*Z* II "The Dancing Song"). Also, earlier in the book, his "I" teaches him the new pride of carrying an *earthen* head that creates a sense for the earth (*Z* I "On Believers in a World Behind").

48. For a passage on how human endeavors have color, see *HH* 150, and for one on how significance has an odor, see *HH* 217.

49. In *Daybreak*, Nietzsche states that it is not the senses that deceive us, but *the habits* of our senses that weave us "into lies and deception of sensation: these again are the basis of all our judgments and 'knowledge'—there is absolutely no escape, no backway or bypath into the *real world!*" (*D* 117).

50. One can think here too of Nietzsche's discussion of the monumental column of Memnon which, when struck by sunlight, was said to produce a musical tone (*BT* 9). Cox claims that, "wary of the attempt to reduce sound to sight," when discussing Chladni and his sand figures, "Nietzsche insists that the visual and the auditory constitute separate spheres and that the relationship between the two can only ever be a matter of translation or metaphor." In my view, Cox misconstrues the passage on Chladni in *TL* and is incorrect about the crossing of senses as being only a matter of translation or metaphor, as the above passage should make quite clear. If language cannot fully convey "reality" or what one experiences, synaesthesia or the crossing of senses is not a matter of reducing one sense to another; instead, it is an *expansion* or *intensification* of our perceptual abilities.

See Christopher Cox, "Lost in Translation: Sound in the Discourse of Synaesthesia," *Art Forum International* (October 2005): 236–241.

51. For further related material, see the chapter on Heraclitus (PPP 60–63).

52. Peter Kingsley, *Reality*, 513.

53. See *UM* 9 for an earlier passage on the spiritualization of the senses.

54. Jill Marsden, "Sensing the Overhuman," *The Journal of Nietzsche Studies* 30 (2005): 114.

55. For an illuminating essay on the "great reason of the body," see Volker Gerhardt, "The Body, the Self, and the Ego," in *A Companion to Nietzsche*, ed. Keith Ansell-Pearson (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2006), 273–296. See also Wayne Klein, *Nietzsche and the Promise of Philosophy* (New York: State University of New York Press, 1997), in particular 89–95.

56. Jill Marsden, "Sensing the Overhuman," 106.

57. Jill Marsden, "Sensing the Overhuman," 107.

58. Jill Marsden, "Sensing the Overhuman," 109.

59. Peter Kingsley, *Reality*, 523.

60. On the relation between breath and words as understood by the ancient Greeks, see the chapter "Archilochos at the Edge," in Anne Carson, *Eros the Bittersweet* (New York: Dalkey Archive Press, 1998), especially 48–50.

61. Peter Kingsley, *Reality*, 551.

62. Lampert refers to Empedocles only once and it is in a marginal footnote. See his *Nietzsche's Teaching* (Connecticut: Yale University Press, 1989), 319. Seung refers to Empedocles only twice in his book but does not address the similar use of agricultural metaphors either. See T.K. Seung, *Nietzsche's Epic of the Soul* (Lanham: Lexington Books, 2005), 88, 92. Although the relation between Empedocles and Zarathustra has been explored by numerous scholars (Janz, Krell, Babich, etc.), to my knowledge, no scholar has outlined this very specific correlation, which is illuminating and certainly significant.

63. Deane Juhan, *Job's Body: A Handbook for Bodywork* (New York: Station Hill Press, 2003), 43.

64. Peter Kingsley, *Reality*, 513.

65. Peter Kingsley, *Reality*, 513.

66. While in *Zarathustra* an uncanny *voice* functions as a curative tonic for the *sightless*, in the *Anti-Christ*, Nietzsche declares that his "voice reaches even the hard-of-hearing" (*A* 50) and that he "can write in letters which make even the blind see" (*A* 62). For an insightful analysis of these abilities, see "The Text as Graffito: Historical Semiotics (*The Antichrist*)" in Gary Shapiro's *Nietzschean Narratives* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1989), 124–141.

67. As Empedocles illustrates, there is a deep philosophical import to synaesthesia and what one can acquire through it, which Kingsley discusses in this interview (see segment 15:00–17:31): http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ow_G26lpOk. Last accessed on April 24, 2010.

68. According to neuroscientific research, all infants experience different modes of synaesthesia in the first several months of their lives. Thus, the condition

is considered “normal” and a stage of sensory development. See Daphne Maurer, “Neonatal Synaesthesia,” in *Synaesthesia: Classic and Contemporary Readings*, eds. Simon Baron-Cohen & J.E. Harrison (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 1997), 182–207.

69. This is not to suggest that one cannot grasp Nietzsche’s ideas unless one is synaesthetic, for one clearly can, but if the transfiguration of the human that Nietzsche seeks to instigate is to occur, it seems necessary to approach his *felt* texts in a more holistic manner, that is, synaesthetically.

11. Nietzsche’s Naturalist Morality of Breeding: A Critique of Eugenics as Taming

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1. Although most commentators agree that Nietzsche endorses breeding, Julian Young, *Nietzsche’s Philosophy of Religion* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 168 and Thomas Brobjer, “The Absence of Political Ideals in Nietzsche’s Writings: The Case of the Laws of Manu and the Associated Caste-Society,” *Nietzsche-Studien* 27 (1999): 304, suggest that Nietzsche is critical of breeding, particularly in his discussion of the laws of Manu, while Vanessa Lemm argues that he is opposed to both breeding and taming as forms of civilization as opposed to culture, Vanessa Lemm, *Nietzsche’s Animal Philosophy: Culture, Politics, and the Animality of the Human Being* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2009), 12 and 164. While it is true that Nietzsche does not fully endorse the laws of Manu, I believe it is a mistake to interpret his opposition to this individual example as opposition to breeding as such. Although Nietzsche does not explicitly endorse the morality of breeding in his contrast of breeding and taming, his commitment to a morality of this form is clearly implied by his repeated, consistently positive, use of *Züchtung* and *züchten* to indicate the positive task of future philosophers. See, for example, *A* 3: “The problem I raise here is . . . what type of human one ought to breed (*züchten*)”; *BGE* 61: “The philosopher as we understand him, we free spirits—as the man of the most comprehensive responsibility who has the conscience for the overall development of man kind . . . will make use of religions for his project of cultivation and education work (*Züchtungs- und Erziehungswerke*)”; and *BGE* 62: “one always pays dearly . . . when religions do not want to be a means of education and cultivation (*Züchtungs- und Erziehungsmittel*) in the philosopher’s hand.”

2. There is a wide consensus on at least one issue: if Nietzsche’s notion of breeding is comparable to eugenics, it is certainly not aimed at racial purity, nor does it rely on race as a criterion of selection. See, for example, Jacqueline Scott “On the Use and Abuse of Race in Philosophy: Nietzsche, Jews, and Race,” in *Race and Racism in Continental Philosophy*, eds. Robert Bernasconi and Sybol Cook (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2003), 53–73 and “The Price of the Ticket: A Genealogy and Revaluation of Race,” in *Critical Affinities: Nietzsche and African American Thought*, eds. Jacqueline Scott and A. Todd Franklin (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2006), 149–173; Jacob Golomb and