
As the Spider Spins

Nietzsche Today

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As the Spider Spins

Essays on Nietzsche's Critique and Use of Language

Edited by
João Constâncio and Maria João Mayer Branco

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References, Citations and Abbreviations

All German quotations of Nietzsche's writings are from the following editions:

- KSA Nietzsche, Friedrich (1980), *Sämtliche Werke. Kritische Studienausgabe in 15 Bänden*, Giorgio Colli/Mazzino Montinari (eds.), München/Berlin: DTV/de Gruyter.
- KGW Nietzsche, Friedrich (1967ff), *Werke. Kritische Gesamtausgabe*, established by Giorgio Colli und Mazzino Montinari, continued by Wolfgang Müller-Lauter und Karl Pestalozzi (eds.), Berlin/New York: de Gruyter.
- KSB Nietzsche, Friedrich (1986), *Sämtliche Briefe. Kritische Studienausgabe in 8 Bänden*, Giorgio Colli/Mazzino Montinari (eds.), München/Berlin: DTV/de Gruyter.

References to published or titled texts by Nietzsche follow the standard abbreviations, which are given below. For a complete list see also: http://refworks.reference-global.com/Xaver/extern/10.1515_NO/statics/NO_Siglen.pdf.

Unless otherwise stated, the cited translations are the following:

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- Nietzsche, Friedrich (1966), *The Birth of Tragedy*, ed./transl. by W. Kaufmann, New York: Random House.
- Nietzsche, Friedrich (1967), *On the Genealogy of Morals*, ed./transl. by W. Kaufmann, New York: Random House.
- Nietzsche, Friedrich (1983), *Untimely Meditations*, transl. by R. J. Hollingdale, Cambridge/London/New York/New Rochelle/Melbourne/Sydney: Cambridge University Press.
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- Nietzsche, Friedrich (2002), *Beyond Good and Evil*, ed. by R.-F. Horstmann/J. Norman, transl. by J. Norman, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Nietzsche, Friedrich (2005), *The Anti-christ, Ecce Homo, Twilight of the Idols and Other Writings*, ed. by A. Ridley/J. Norman, transl. by J. Norman, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Nietzsche, Friedrich (2005), "The Case of Wagner", in F. Nietzsche, *The Anti-christ, Ecce Homo, Twilight of the Idols and Other Writings*, ed. by A. Ridley/J. Norman, transl. by J. Norman, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Nietzsche, Friedrich (2005), "Nietzsche contra Wagner", in F. Nietzsche, *The Anti-christ, Ecce Homo, Twilight of the Idols and Other Writings*, ed. by A. Ridley/J. Norman, transl. by J. Norman, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Nietzsche, Friedrich (2006), *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, ed. by A. Del Caro/R. Pippin, transl. by A. Del Caro, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Occasionally, some of the authors have chosen to quote from the following translations:

- Nietzsche, Friedrich (1954), "Twilight of the Idols", transl. by W. Kaufmann, in: W. Kaufmann (ed.), *The Portable Nietzsche*, New York: Viking Penguin.
- Nietzsche, Friedrich (1966), *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, ed./transl. by W. Kaufmann, New York: Random House.
- Nietzsche, Friedrich (1966), *Beyond Good and Evil*, ed./transl. by W. Kaufmann, New York: Random House.
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- Nietzsche, Friedrich (1996), *On the Genealogy of Morals: A Polemic*, ed./transl. by D. Smith, Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Nietzsche, Friedrich (2009), "On Truth and Lie in an Extra-Moral Sense", in:
F. Nietzsche, Writings from the Early Notebooks, ed. by R. Geuss/A.
 Nehamas, transl. by L. Löb, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Translations from the *Nachlass* follow the two most recent editions in English:

WEN Nietzsche, Friedrich (2009), *Writings from the Early Note-books*,
 ed. by R. Geuss/A. Nehamas, transl. by L. Löb, Cambridge: Cam-
 bridge University Press.
 WLN Nietzsche, Friedrich (2003), *Writings from the Late Note-books*,
 ed. by R. Bittner, transl. by K. Sturge, Cambridge: Cambridge
 University Press.

In order to translate two notes from the *Nachlass* not available in WEN or WLN
 we have used the English edition of the notorious (and non-existent) book *Der
 Wille zur Macht*:

WP Nietzsche, Friedrich (1967), *The Will to Power*, ed. by W. Kauf-
 mann, transl. by W. Kaufmann/R. J. Hollingdale, New York: Ran-
 dom House.

Notes from the *Nachlass* not available in WEN, WLN, or WP have been trans-
 lated by either the editors or the authors. In the footnotes, Nietzsche's text is
 usually reproduced in the original German.

References to the *Nachlass* are given as follows: NL year, KSA volume,
 note; e.g., NL 1885, KSA 11, 31[131]. References to a translation are added
 after the references to the KSA, e.g. NL 1885, KSA 11, 31[131] = WLN, 10; e.g.
 NL 1881, KSA 9, 11[164], my translation. Sections or chapters that are not
 numbered but given a title in Nietzsche's text are quoted following the stand-
 ard abbreviations in English and German: e.g. EH Clever 9/EH klug 9.

Abbreviations Of Nietzsche's Works In German

AC	<i>Der Antichrist. Fluch auf das Christenthum</i>
DD	<i>Dionysos-Dithyramben</i>
DW	<i>Die dionysische Weltanschauung</i>
EH	<i>Ecce Homo. Wie man wird, was man ist</i>
FW	<i>Die fröhliche Wissenschaft</i>
FWS	FW "Scherz, List und Rache."
GD	<i>Götzen-Dämmerung oder Wie man mit dem Hammer philosophirt</i>
GM	<i>Zur Genealogie der Moral. Eine Streitschrift</i>

GT	<i>Die Geburt der Tragödie</i>
GT Versuch	<i>Die Geburt der Tragödie, Versuch einer Selbstkritik</i>
JGB	<i>Jenseits von Gut und Böse. Vorspiel einer Philosophie der Zukunft</i>
M	<i>Morgenröthe. Gedanken über die moralischen Vorurtheile</i>
MA	<i>Menschliches, Allzumenschliches. Ein Buch für freie Geister</i>
NW	<i>Nietzsche contra Wagner. Aktenstücke eines Psychologen</i>
PHG	<i>Die Philosophie im tragischen Zeitalter der Griechen</i>
PV	<i>Die Lieder des Prinzen Vogelfrei</i>
UB	<i>Unzeitgemässe Betrachtungen</i>
VM	(MA II) <i>Vermischte Meinungen und Sprüche</i>
WA	<i>Der Fall Wagner. Ein Musikanten-Problem</i>
WL	<i>Wahrheit und Lüge im aussermoralischen Sinne</i>
WS	<i>Der Wanderer und sein Schatten</i>
ZA	<i>Also Sprach Zarathustra. Ein Buch für Alle und Keinen</i>
ZB	<i>Ueber die Zukunft unserer Bildungsanstalten</i>

Abbreviations Of Nietzsche's Works In English

A	<i>The Antichrist</i>
AOM	(HH II) <i>Assorted Opinions and Maxims</i>
BGE	<i>Beyond Good and Evil. Prelude to a Philosophy of the Future</i>
BT	<i>The Birth of Tragedy</i>
BT Attempt	<i>The Birth of Tragedy, Attempt At a Self-Criticism.</i>
CW	<i>The Case of Wagner</i>
D	<i>Daybreak</i>
DD	<i>Dithyrambs of Dionysus</i>
EH	<i>Ecce Homo. How One Becomes What One Is</i>
GM	<i>On the Genealogy of Morals. A Polemic</i>
GS	<i>The Gay Science</i>
HH	<i>Human, All Too Human</i>
NW	<i>Nietzsche contra Wagner. Out of the Files of a Psychologist</i>
PTAG	<i>Philosophy in the Tragic Age of the Greeks</i>
TI	<i>Twilight of the Idols. How To Philosophize with a Hammer</i>
TL	<i>On Truth and Lying in a Non-Moral Sense</i>
UM	<i>Untimely Meditations</i>
WS	(HH II) <i>The Wanderer and His Shadow</i>
Z	<i>Thus Spoke Zarathustra</i>

Abbreviations Of Works By Other Authors

- ApH Kant, I. (1955–1966), “Anthropologie in pragmatischer Hinsicht”, in: *Gesammelte Schriften*, ed. by Königliche Preussische Akademie der Wissenschaften/Deutsche Akademie der Wissenschaften, Berlin/New York: de Gruyter.
- CPR Kant, I. (1998), *Critique of Pure Reason*, ed./transl. by P. Guyer/A. W. Wood, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- CPrR Kant, I. (1997); *Critique of Practical Reason*, ed./transl. by Mary Gregor, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- EKU Kant, I. (1955–1966), “Erste Einleitung in der Kritik der Urteilskraft”, in: *Gesammelte Schriften*, ed. by Königliche Preussische Akademie der Wissenschaften/Deutsche Akademie der Wissenschaften, Berlin/New York: de Gruyter.
- FR Schopenhauer, A. (1974), *On the Fourfold Root of the Principle of Sufficient Reason*, transl. by E. F. J. Payne, La Salle, Illinois: Open Court.
- G Kant, I. (1955–1966), “Grundlegung zur Metaphysik der Sitten”, in: *Gesammelte Schriften*, ed. by Königliche Preussische Akademie der Wissenschaften/Deutsche Akademie der Wissenschaften, Berlin/New York: de Gruyter.
- GesS Humboldt, Alexander von (1968), *Gesammelte Schriften*, 17 vols., ed. by Königliche Preussische Akademie der Wissenschaften, Berlin/New York: de Gruyter.
- KpV Kant, I. (1955–1966), “Kritik der praktischen Vernunft”, in: *Gesammelte Schriften*, ed. by Königliche Preussische Akademie der Wissenschaften/Deutsche Akademie der Wissenschaften, Berlin/New York: de Gruyter.
- KrV Kant, I. (1955–1966), “Kritik der reinen Vernunft”, in: *Gesammelte Schriften*, ed. by Königliche Preussische Akademie der Wissenschaften/Deutsche Akademie der Wissenschaften, Berlin/New York: de Gruyter.
- KU Kant, I. (1955–1966), “Kritik der Urteilskraft”, in: *Gesammelte Schriften*, ed. by Königliche Preussische Akademie der Wissenschaften/Deutsche Akademie der Wissenschaften, Berlin/New York: de Gruyter.
- MAN Kant, I. (1955–1966), “Metaphysische Anfangsgründe der Naturwissenschaften”, in: *Gesammelte Schriften*, ed. by Königliche Preussische Akademie der Wissenschaften/Deutsche Akademie der Wissenschaften, Berlin/New York: de Gruyter.

- MS Kant, I. (1955–1966), “Die Metaphysik der Sitten”, in: *Gesammelte Schriften*, ed. by Königliche Preussische Akademie der Wissenschaften/Deutsche Akademie der Wissenschaften, Berlin/New York: de Gruyter.
- R Kant, I. (1955–1966), “Die Religion innerhalb der Grenzen der bloßen Vernunft”, in: *Gesammelte Schriften*, ed. by Königliche Preussische Akademie der Wissenschaften/Deutsche Akademie der Wissenschaften, Berlin/New York: de Gruyter.
- TP Kant, I. (1955–1966), “Über den Gemeinspruch: Das mag in der Theorie richtig sein, taugt aber nicht für die Praxis”, in: *Gesammelte Schriften*, ed. by Königliche Preussische Akademie der Wissenschaften/Deutsche Akademie der Wissenschaften, Berlin/New York: de Gruyter.
- WWR I Schopenhauer, A. (1958), *The World as Will and Representation. Vol. I*, transl. by E. F. J. Payne, New York: Dover.
- WWR II Schopenhauer, A. (1958), *The World as Will and Representation. Vol. II*, transl. by E. F. J. Payne, New York: Dover.
- WWV I Schopenhauer, A. (1949), “Die Welt als Wille und Vorstellung. Erster Band”, in: *Sämtliche Werke*, vol. 2, ed. by A. Hübscher, Wiesbaden: Brockhaus.
- WWV II Schopenhauer, A. (1949), “Die Welt als Wille und Vorstellung. Zweiter Band”, in: *Sämtliche Werke*, vol. 3, ed. by A. Hübscher, Wiesbaden: Brockhaus.

João Constâncio and Maria João Mayer Branco
‘As the Spider Spins’: Introduction

I

In the unpublished essay *On Truth and Lying in a Non-Moral Sense*, Nietzsche writes that space and time are representations that “we produce within ourselves and from ourselves with the same necessity as the spider spins” (TL 1/WL 1, KSA 1, p. 885, translation modified). In *Daybreak*, he uses the same metaphor to describe “the habits of our senses”:

The habits of our senses have woven 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! We sit within our net, we spiders, and whatever we may catch in it, we can catch nothing at all except that which allows itself to be caught in precisely our net (D 117/M 117).¹

The sense impressions and sensorial horizons that encircle our bodies and depend on our sense organs are the cobwebs that we ourselves spin, and our conscious thoughts, our words and judgements, our “truths” and pieces of “knowledge” are no more than developments of those cobwebs and hence part of what we ourselves spin (“we spiders”). In fact, the whole world can be seen as a spider – “the great world-spider” (AOM 32/VM 32) – and our cobwebs as part of that enormous cobweb which is “the great spider’s web of causality” (GM III 9). Indeed the monotheistic conception of “God” is precisely the conception of “God as spider” (A 18/AC 18).²

However, in several other passages Nietzsche uses the spider metaphor specifically to express his conception of the formation and development of concepts. In TL, for example, he writes:

Here one can only certainly admire humanity as a mighty architectural genius who succeeds in erecting the infinitely complicated cathedral of concepts on moving foundations, or even, one might say, on flowing water; admittedly, in order to rest on such foundations, it has to be like a thing constructed from cobwebs (*Spinnfäden*), so delicate that it can be carried off on the waves and yet so firm as not to be blown apart by the wind (TL 1, 147/WL 1, KSA 1, p. 882).

¹ See also NL 1880, KSA 9, 6[439], NL 1881, KSA 9, 15[9]. In NL 1870, KSA 7, 5[33], our “illusions” are designated as “cobwebs” (*Spinngewebe*).

² See also GM III 9, NL 1888, KSA 13, 16[58], NL 1888, KSA 13, 17[4].

Here this “delicate” and yet “firm” web spun by the spider is seen in a positive light, but in other texts Nietzsche presents the spider as a “bloodsucker” (BGE 209/JGB 209) that either manages to feed on the blood of its victims or gets caught in its own web and has to drink its own blood.³ He uses the spider and spinning metaphors to describe in a negative way the unfortunate and harmful type of life of priests (“the most dangerous type of parasite, the true poisonous spiders of life”, A 37/AC 37), scholars and “specialists” (GS 366/FW 366), sceptics (BGE 209/JGB 209), theologians (NL 1887–88, KSA 13, 15[55]), “metaphysicians and scholastics” (NL 1888, KSA 13, 17[4]). Most importantly, he refers in a negative way to several of the greatest philosophers as “spiders”: to Parmenides (PTAG 10–11/PHG 10–11), Plato (WS Preface/WS Vorrede), Spinoza (A 17/AC 17, TI Skirmishes 23/GD Streifzüge 23), Kant (A 11/AC 11), Schopenhauer (NL 1885–87, KSA 12, 2[197]). Philosophers in general are “spiders” – “cobweb-weavers of the spirit” (BGE 25/JGB 25) – and all philosophies seem to be just the “brain diseases of sick cobweb-weavers” (TI Reason 4/GD Vernunft 4). At bottom, the idea in all these passages is that “philosophising is a type of atavism”. “Philosophical concepts” are spun by spiders because they “belong to a system just as much as all the members of the fauna of a continent do” (BGE 20/JGB 20), that is, because they are no more than historical developments of the “metaphysics of language” (TI Reason/GD Vernunft). All philosophical concepts, no matter how “individual” they seem to be, express “the unconscious domination and direction through similar grammatical functions” (BGE 20/JGB 20), they all unknowingly unfold and explore the metaphysical “grammar” which is embedded and presupposed in human language, particularly in the Indo-Germanic languages.⁴ Hence, the image of the philosopher as a “spider” is the image of him “imprisoned in the nets of *language*” (NL 1872–73, KSA 7, 19[135], our translation).

From all of this it seems to follow that Nietzsche has a fundamentally negative and critical view of language. Most certainly his “task” of “revaluating all values” involves a liberation from the metaphysical “cobwebs” of language, and he famously indicates that overcoming metaphysics, the “ascetic ideal” and “man’s sickness of *man*” would have to involve a “deconstruction” of our entanglement in language and its grammar: “I am afraid that we have not got rid of God because we still have faith in grammar...” (TI Reason 5/GD Vernunft 5).

³ See PTAG 10–11/PHG 10–11, HH I 427/MA I 427, AOM 194/VM 194, D 71/M 71, Z III Virtue 3/ZA III Tugend 3, BGE 209/JGB 209.

⁴ See BGE 20/JGB 20, BGE Preface/JGB Vorrede, BGE 34/JGB 34, BGE 54/JGB 54, TI Reason 5/GD Vernunft 5.

However, one of the main pillars of Nietzsche’s philosophy is the belief that “the world that counts as ‘real’, so-called ‘reality’” (GS 58/FW 54) is to a great extent a *linguistic* phenomenon. A complete “deconstruction” of our language does not make sense for Nietzsche. It would be the same as a destruction of our world and life. Nietzsche wants to “destroy” only to “create”, he wants to “revaluate all values” only to “create new values”. This point is most clearly made in *The Gay Science*:

Only as creators! – This has caused me the greatest trouble and still does always cause me the greatest trouble: to realise that *what things are called* is unspeakably more important than what they are. The reputation, name, and appearance, the worth, the usual measure and weight of a thing – originally almost always something mistaken and arbitrary, thrown over things like a dress and quite foreign to their nature and even to their skin – has, through the belief in it and its growth from generation to generation, slowly grown onto and into the thing and has become its very body: what started as appearance in the end nearly always becomes essence and *effectively* acts as its essence! What kind of a fool would believe that it is enough to point to this origin and this misty shroud of delusion in order to *destroy* the world that counts as ‘real’, so-called ‘reality’! Only as creators can we destroy! – But let us also not forget that in the long run it is enough to create new names and valuations and appearances of truth in order to create new ‘things’ (GS 58/FW 58).⁵

This should make clear how crucial it is for Nietzsche to create a “new language” (BGE 4/JGB 4). His critique of language is not meant as a rejection of language, for in criticising the harmful effects of language and its metaphysical grammar Nietzsche is always already creating new uses of language – uses that, on the one hand, call attention to the very fact that “even one’s thoughts one cannot entirely reproduce in words” (GS 244/FW 244) and “every word is also a mask” (BGE 289/JGB 289), but, on the other hand, also claim to be “better” than the traditional, ascetic, metaphysical uses of language. Nietzsche’s anti-metaphysical philosophy – his “genealogy” or “psychology” as a “morphology and *doctrine of the development of the will to power*” (BGE 23/JGB 23) – is a “new language”.

In other words, Nietzsche uses the metaphor of the spider that spins its cobweb to express his critique of the metaphysical and “sick” use of language – but he also suggests that human beings (“we spiders”) are in principle able to spin different, life-affirming, non-metaphysical cobwebs. Philosophy is not condemned to failure, the creation of new values via the philosophical creation of new concepts is a very difficult task – a task for which one has perhaps to be “destined” – but it is not at all an absurd and harmful task. On the contrary,

⁵ See also, for example, BGE 24/JGB 24, BGE 34/JGB 34.

Nietzsche's hopes for himself and his equals, indeed for humanity as a whole, lie in philosophy – in “every daring of the lover of knowledge”:

Indeed, at hearing the news that ‘the old god is dead’, we philosophers and ‘free spirits’ feel illuminated by a new dawn; our heart overflows with gratitude, amazement, forebodings, expectation – finally the horizon seems clear again, even if not bright; finally our ships may set out again, set out to face any danger; every daring of the lover of knowledge is allowed again; the sea, *our* sea, lies open again; maybe there has never been such an ‘open sea’ (GS 343/FW 343).

II

This book is a collection of 12 essays that focus not only on Nietzsche's critique of the metaphysical assumptions of language, but also on his effort to use language in a different and better way. Hence the subtitle, “Essays on Nietzsche's Critique and Use of Language”. It is from that perspective that the book considers such themes as consciousness, self-expression, metaphor, instinct, affectivity, style, morality, truth, and knowledge.

The authors that we invited to contribute to this book are Nietzsche scholars who belong to some of the most important research centres of the European Nietzsche-Research: Centro Colli-Montinari (Italy), GIRN (Europhilosophie), SEDEN (Spain), Greifswald Research Group (Germany), NIL (Portugal). The scholarly and philosophical exchange among these research centres has been very intensive in recent years, and we are very happy to contribute with this book to a wider divulgation of our colleagues' and our own work on Nietzsche. One of the aims of our research project (“Nietzsche and the Contemporary Debate on the Self”, PTDC/FIL-FIL/111444/2009) is precisely to promote the kind of international exchange and research that made this book possible. In the same spirit, we edited *Nietzsche on Instinct and Language* in 2011, which was also published by de Gruyter. In fact, the two books may be said to complement each other.

Let us now conclude this brief introduction with a summary of each chapter and each essay in the book.

III

In the first chapter – I. On Metaphor and the Limits of Language – , we have assembled three essays that give pre-eminence to Nietzsche's early writings on

language and knowledge and hence to his conception of language as metaphorical. **Céline Denat**’s essay focuses mainly on Nietzsche’s lectures on Rhetoric (1872) and *On Truth and Lying in a Non-Moral Sense* (1873), as well as on the notebooks from the same period, and it tries to show that Nietzsche gives new, wider meanings to the words “rhetoric” and “metaphor”. Nietzsche presents language itself as “rhetorical” and “metaphorical” because he rejects the notion that there is, or there could be, a “proper”, “adequate” (or “ideal”) language. No discourse is “true” in an absolute sense, and therefore no discourse can be labelled as being *merely* “rhetorical” or “metaphorical” by contrast with an absolutely true discourse. In fact, every human discourse can and should be traced back to a rhetorical “force” that creates metaphors. Most importantly, Denat’s essay also tries to show that this view involves a critique of truth as adequacy or correspondence, but it does not lead to scepticism. For already in his earlier writings Nietzsche conceives of the possibility of what he later calls his “new language” (BGE 4/JGB 4), a language which “remains a speech in images (*Bilderrede*)” (NL 1881, KSA 9, 11[128], p. 487) but also enlarges the limits of language and hence allows for higher degrees of philosophical probity.

Luís Sousa’s essay analyses Nietzsche’s conception of “knowledge” and “truth” in *On Truth and Lying in a Non-Moral Sense* (1873) and aims to show that the claim that language is metaphorical is part of a radicalisation of Schopenhauer’s idealism. In that early text Nietzsche does not yet fully abandon the idealistic distinction between phenomenon and thing-in-itself. Although some passages already outline his later claim that the very concept of a “thing” and a “thing-in-itself” is just a human creation and “fiction”, he is still mostly “agnostic” with regard to the existence of the “thing-in-itself”. Therefore, he still uses the notion of an adequate access to the “thing-in-itself” as a means for calling human knowledge into question. Since we can know nothing *about* the “thing-in-itself”, no type of human discourse – or even perception – can claim to be a token of “knowledge” or “truth” in the traditional sense of these words.

Luis Enrique de Santiago Guervós starts by considering the same early texts as Céline Denat and Luís Sousa – and therefore he also analyses the thesis that language is metaphorical – but he then moves on to Nietzsche’s more mature works and focuses on his purpose of philosophising by following “the guiding thread of the body”, that is, of using the *metaphor* of the body, the *metaphor* of a multiplicity of drives and affects, in order to interpret reality. Guervós argues that the early texts already prefigure this metaphor because in presenting language as metaphorical they present the “aesthetic” as a sort of foundation of all thought. But it is only in later writings that Nietzsche fully

develops the anti-metaphysical metaphor of our “pulsional life” (*Triebleben*)⁶ and transforms it into a foundation of his whole philosophy. This is, however, a paradoxical foundation. It seems that in trying to overcome metaphysics within language and by exploring new metaphors, Nietzsche cannot avoid remaining entangled in the metaphysical grammar of human language. Or can he?

The second chapter – II. On Language, Emotion, and Morality – assembles the three essays most concerned with the emotional and moral dimension of human language. **Andrea Bertino**’s essay deals with the ways Nietzsche, Humboldt, and Levinas’ views on language and consciousness question the moral autonomy of individuals, i.e. of the “I” or “Self”. Firstly, Bertino argues that for Nietzsche our linguistic self-understanding in terms of an “I” or “Self” causes a loss of autonomy and individuality, whereas for Humboldt it is only through language, and specifically through the linguistic production of an “I”, that we become autonomous and individual. Secondly, he argues that Levinas has managed to criticise the traditional conception of autonomy and individuality in a more radical way than both Nietzsche and Humboldt. On the other hand, according to Bertino’s argument, the three authors share the belief that philosophy can contribute to the development of new forms of self-understanding and communication which enable new and better forms of ethical life.

Tom Bailey’s essay suggests that notwithstanding his criticisms of modern moral and political language – of such terms as “freedom”, “responsibility”, “duty”, “rights”, and “equality” – Nietzsche’s political philosophy is best situated in the modern tradition, that fundamentally concerned with the nature and possibility of human “autonomy”. In particular, Bailey interprets Nietzsche’s political philosophy as reformulating Kant’s conceptions of “autonomy” and “community” by affirming a “respect” for agency that involves a reciprocal vulnerability and measurement of agency among “equals”. Bailey shows how these conceptions inform Kant’s and Nietzsche’s accounts of political obligation, and particularly how Nietzsche’s reformulations of Kantian terms issue in substantially different political conclusions, before exploring what such a Kantian approach might contribute to contemporary debates over the individual’s place in a political community. Bailey’s reading thus implies that, rather than leave modern philosophical concerns behind, Nietzsche provides sophisticated, if neglected, responses to them.

⁶ Throughout the whole book, we have used the expression “pulsional life” to translate the expression *Triebleben* and the word “pulsional” to translate *triebhaft*. This is because it is sometimes very important to distinguish *triebhaft* from *instinktiv*, and hence the usual translation of *triebhaft* by “instinctive” and *Triebleben* by “instinctive life” is inadequate.

Chiara Piazzesi's essay discusses the emotional and moral dimension of human language by making the fundamental point that according to Nietzsche the words that refer to our affects, passions or emotions do not denote what the latter really are, but rather what we *think* they are. This point has several consequences, which Piazzesi sharply emphasises. Firstly, it entails that every attempt to develop a scientific discourse on the emotions will always remain attached to the *history* of the words we use to speak about emotions and hence to the “folk psychology” which is embedded in that history. Secondly, one cannot separate the history of our discourse on the emotions from our emotions themselves. The creation and use of different words to speak about emotions give rise to different emotions, and we can never become aware of our emotions outside of a social and historical context in which the way we speak about our emotions decisively influences the way we interpret them. Thirdly, all discourse on the emotions is evaluative or “moral”, and this also applies to the type of reflexive, critical, second-order discourse which is favoured by Nietzsche, that is, to a “psychology” which is “genealogical” and hence takes the history of our linguistic creations into account. Nietzsche’s philosophical approach is fundamentally aimed at changing our evaluations and liberating our emotional experiences from traditional morality, and not at presenting a scientific description of what our evaluations and emotional experiences “really are”.

The third chapter – III. On Language, Self-Expression, and Consciousness – includes four essays that deal with the problem of language from the perspective of self-expression and consciousness. **Jaanus Sooväli** discusses the status of the word “I” in Nietzsche’s writings, and he attempts to show that Nietzsche’s views can be said to complement and anticipate Derrida’s critique of Husserl’s conception of the “I”. According to Husserl, the meaning of the word “I” can only be given in solitary speech and is tantamount to an immediate representation of *my* personality. That meaning, then, can only be given to *me*; for the others, it will always remain no more than a sign or indication of my personality – it can never be “given” to them. Nietzsche takes a different view. By emphasising the role of communication and rethinking consciousness as an event that occurs only within social and communicative contexts, he anticipates the so-called “death of the subject”. The word “I” is also just a sign or an indication *for myself*: even in “solitary speech” its meaning remains social and communicative, and hence the “self-presence of the subject” in speech acts is no more than a fiction. The meaning of the word “I” cannot be “given” in Husserl’s sense.

Luca Lupo's essay is an attempt to interpret aphorism 119 of *Daybreak*, an aphorism which famously describes the unconscious realm of the drives

and instincts as a “text” and consciousness and language as a “commentary” on that “unknown, perhaps unknowable, but felt text” (D 119/M 119). The main point of Lupo’s analysis is to show that, according to D 119/M 119 and many other texts from the 1880’s, “to live an experience” (*Erleben*) and “to invent” (*Erdichten*) the contents of that experience are equivalent terms. Experiences depend on “instinctive judgements”, as well as on “intellectual judgements” that are built upon them, and all such judgements are driven by a “poetic” (*dichtende*), “inventive” (*erdichtende*) force (*Kraft*) of our organism. Thus the “external world” is actually an environment (an *Umwelt*) that we, as living-organisms, fabricate by means of the activity of our drives, instincts, conscious thoughts and words. This thesis is mostly explored in the *Nachlass*, but it is also present in Nietzsche’s published writings. However, as Luca Lupo emphasises, Nietzsche does not put forward that thesis in a dogmatic way. On the contrary, everything he states about consciousness, language, the instincts, and the drives has a hypothetical, conjectural, even sceptical, status.

João Constâncio’s essay is an attempt to interpret aphorism 354 of *The Gay Science*, which is arguably one of the most important texts Nietzsche has written on consciousness and language (and which is also one of the main focuses of Andrea Bertino and Jaanus Sooväli’s essays). Constâncio begins by arguing that in GS 354/FW 354 “consciousness” (*Bewusstsein*) designates a properly human form of awareness which involves conceptualisation, intentionality, and self-reflexivity. However, the most original aspect of this view of consciousness is that it conceives of conceptualisation, intentionality, and self-reflexivity as part of a “systemic” event that only arises within social and linguistic spaces, by means of communication-signs. There is thus an intrinsic public dimension in consciousness and language, and yet this does not imply that self-expression is impossible. According to Constâncio’s argument, Nietzsche believes that all forms of conscious and particularly linguistic communication are forms of *indirect* self-expression – and, most importantly, that there are forms of self-expression which are *better* than others. To a great extent, Nietzsche’s “new language” is precisely a means for better self-expression.

The main point of **Maria João Mayer Branco**’s essay is to emphasise that Nietzsche’s critique of language goes hand in hand with a *praise* of language. Branco uses the spider metaphor as presented in *Human, All Too Human* to argue that Nietzsche’s project of creating a “new language” is analogous to his project of liberation from the cobwebs of habits via the creation of new, “brief habits” (GS 295/FW 295, HH I 427/MA I 427). The heart of this process is Nietzsche’s “intellectual conscience”, his *Redlichkeit*, a new “intellectual honesty” that recognises that “everything is a mask” and you can only express yourself by growing a mask – or a multiplicity of masks – within the realm of

“appearance” (*Schein*). Nietzsche’s love of appearances, Branco claims, includes a love of language, which is compatible with his mistrust of language. Such a love is a form of “action at the distance” (e.g. GS 60/FW 60).

The fourth and last chapter – IV. On Language, Self-Expression, and Style – assembles two essays that deal with language and self-expression from a different perspective, namely Nietzsche’s way of writing, his “style”, or rather, his “styles”. **Bartholomew Ryan** focuses on Nietzsche’s performative use of one of his favourite metaphors: the star. As Ryan shows, this metaphor has been used throughout human history in a variety of ways and as such this is what attracts and compels Nietzsche to explore and subvert “the star”. The word, which has been mostly neglected by commentators, is of paramount importance in *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, and it functions as a “curtain raiser and closer” in *The Gay Science*, but it is also present in many other texts. According to Ryan, it usually represents “that which is both the creative force and also the result of acknowledging and struggling through the chaos”. Thus the metaphor functions as a means of expressing Nietzsche’s conceptions of chaos, cosmos, and creation. Most importantly, the way Nietzsche uses the metaphor, that is, his artistry in appropriating and deconstructing “the language of the stars”, shows what he wants to say about chaos and cosmos. Put differently, Nietzsche’s use of the metaphorical image of the “star” performatively expresses his conception of the human being as ever changing and “still undetermined” (BGE 62/JGB 62).

The volume closes with **Maria Cristina Fornari**’s essay on Nietzsche’s last letters (1885–1889). These letters are “a sort of autobiography” that reveals the personal experiences behind the ideas expressed in the published writings and the notebooks. Most importantly, the letters are an important part of Nietzsche’s effort to “recapitulate”, that is, to look back “over the experience of his past writings, with the aim of making himself understandable for action on the present”. In the letters he clearly sketches “a personal development of which he can only become aware himself with hindsight”. The retrospective reading of his own works allows him to find coherence in them, but also to give them a new meaning in the light of the philosophical ideas that they prepared but could only emerge later. However, Nietzsche’s reinterpretation of his previous works also makes him reinterpret his whole “task”. It changes his assessment of the posthumous effect of his work and, therefore, they create the need for new forms of expression. Thus, in the letters, we can see Nietzsche constantly searching for new “masks” of self-expression, new “masks” which are in the end different styles that he wants to imprint on his writings. Such styles aim to adequately express not only his new philosophical ideas, but also the personal experiences that lie at their origin. We believe it is wonderfully

fitting to end this introduction with a quotation from one of the letters analysed by Fornari:

My writings are difficult because rarer and more unusual states of mine prevail over normal ones. I am not boasting about this, but that is how it is. I search for signs of similar emotional situations that are not yet understood and often hardly understandable; my inventive capacity seems to me to be revealed in this. [...] Is it not perhaps true that a work's intention must always *create* first of all the law of its style? I require that when this intention changes, the whole stylistic procedure must change too (Bf. an Josef Viktor Widmann 04.02.1888, KGB III/5, Bf. 986).

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