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NIETZSCHE ON INSTINCT AND LANGUAGE

Nietzsche On Instinct and Language

Nietzsche Today

Nietzsche on Instinct and Language

Edited by
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and
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IV. The Critique of Morality and the Affirmation of Life

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/Walter 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 (Walter de Gruyter).

KSB Nietzsche, Friedrich (1986), *Sämtliche Briefe. Kritische Studienausgabe in 8 Bänden*, Giorgio Colli/Mazzino Montinari (eds.), München/Berlin (DTV/Walter de Gruyter).

BAW Nietzsche, Friedrich (1994), *Frühe Schriften. Schriften von 1854 bis 1869: 5 Bände*, Mette, Hans J. (ed.), München (DTV/C.H. Beck).

References to published or titled texts by Nietzsche follow the standard abbreviations, which are given below. The German abbreviations are used when a text is quoted in German; the English abbreviations, when a text is quoted in English translation.

Unless otherwise stated, the cited translations are the following:

Works By Nietzsche

Nietzsche, Friedrich (1966), *The Birth of Tragedy*, ed./transl. Kaufmann, W., New York (Random House).

Nietzsche, Friedrich (1967), *On the Genealogy of Morals*, ed./transl. Kaufmann, W., New York (Random House).

Nietzsche, Friedrich (1983), *Untimely Meditations*, transl. Hollingdale, R. J., Cambridge/London/New York/New Rochelle/Melbourne/Sydney (Cambridge University Press).

Nietzsche, Friedrich (1986), *Human, All Too Human*, ed. and tranls. Hollingdale, R. J., Cambridge (Cambridge University Press).

Nietzsche, Friedrich (1997), *Daybreak*, ed. Clark, M./Leiter, B., transl. Hollingdale, R. J., Cambridge (Cambridge University Press).

Nietzsche, Friedrich (1998), *Philosophy in the Tragic Age of the Greeks*, ed. and transl. Cowan, M., Washington (A Gateway Edition).

Nietzsche, Friedrich (1999), *On Truth and Lying in a Non-Moral Sense*, in: Nietzsche, F., *The Birth of Tragedy and Other Writings*, ed. Guess, R./Speirs, R., transl. Speirs, R., Cambridge (Cambridge University Press).

Nietzsche, Friedrich (2001), *The Gay Science*, ed. Williams, B., transl. Nauckhoff, J., Cambridge (Cambridge University Press).

Nietzsche, Friedrich (2002), *Beyond Good and Evil*, ed. Horstmann, R-F./Norman, J., transl. Norman, J., Cambridge (Cambridge University Press).

Nietzsche, Friedrich (2005), *The Anti-christ, Ecce Homo, Twilight of the Idols and Other Writings*, ed. Ridley, A./Norman, J., transl. Norman, J., Cambridge (Cambridge University Press).

Nietzsche, Friedrich (2005), *The Case of Wagner*, in Nietzsche, F., *The Anti-christ, Ecce Homo, Twilight of the Idols and Other Writings*, ed. Ridley, A./Norman, J., transl. Norman, J., Cambridge (Cambridge University Press).

Nietzsche, Friedrich (2005), *Nietzsche contra Wagner*, in Nietzsche, F., *The Anti-christ, Ecce Homo, Twilight of the Idols and Other Writings*, ed. Ridley, A./Norman, J., transl. Norman, J., Cambridge (Cambridge University Press).

Nietzsche, Friedrich (2006), *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, ed. Del Caro, A./Pippin, R., transl. Del Caro, A., Cambridge (Cambridge University Press).

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

Nietzsche, Friedrich (1966), *Beyond Good and Evil*, ed./transl. Kaufmann, W., New York (Random House).

Nietzsche, Friedrich (1984), *Human All Too Human*, transl. Faber, M./Lehmann, S., Lincoln (University of Nebraska Press).

Nietzsche, Friedrich (1994), *On the Genealogy of Morality*, ed. Ansell-Pearson, K., transl. Diethe, C., Cambridge (Cambridge University Press).

Nietzsche, Friedrich, *The Birth of Tragedy and Other Writings*, ed. Guess, R./Speirs, R., transl. Speirs, R., Cambridge (Cambridge University Press).

Nietzsche, Friedrich (2005), *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, transl. Parkes, G., Oxford (Oxford University Press).

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

WEN Nietzsche, Friedrich (2009), *Writings from the Early Notebooks*, ed. Geuss, R./Nehamas, A., transl. Löb, L., Cambridge (Cambridge University Press).

WLN   Nietzsche, Friedrich (2003), *Writings from the Late Note-books*, ed. Bittner, R., transl. Sturge, K., Cambridge (Cambridge University Press).

A few notes from the *Nachlass* not available in WEN or WLN have been quoted from:

WP   Nietzsche, Friedrich (1967), *The Will to Power*, ed. Kaufmann, W., transl. Kaufmann, W./Hollingdale, R. J., New York (Random House).

Notes from the *Nachlass* not available in WEN, WLN, or WP have been translated by either the editors or the authors. Some of the authors have chosen not to have these notes translated.

As a rule, references to the *Nachlass* are given as follows: NL note KSA volume.page; e.g., NL 31[131] KSA 11.464. References to a translation are added after the references to the KSA, e.g. NL 31[131] KSA 11.464 = WLN 10; Some notes have been translated by either the editors or the authors, e.g. NL 11[164] KSA 9.505, my translation. Reference to the date of a note is added when deemed important by an author, e.g. NL 1881, 11[211] KSA 9.525. Sections or chapters that are not numbered but named in Nietzsche's text are given either in complete form (e.g. EH Why I am so Clever 9), or in the abbreviated form usually adopted in English or American books on Nietzsche (e.g. TI Errors 3). Some of the authors have added the KSA page references to the abbreviated references to English translations, e.g. KSA 5.60, BGE 43.

Abbreviations Of Nietzsche's Works In German:

AC   *Der Antichrist. Fluch auf das Christenthum*
EH   *Ecce Homo. Wie man wird, was man ist*
FW   *Die fröhliche Wissenschaft*
GD   *Götzen-Dämmerung oder*
            Wie man mit dem Hammer philosophirt
GM   *Zur Genealogie der Moral. Eine Streitschrift*
GT   *Die Geburt der Tragödie*
GT/VS   *Die Geburt der Tragödie, Versuch einer Selbstkritik*
JGB   *Jenseits von Gut und Böse.*
            Vorspiel einer Philosophie der Zukunft

M   *Morgenröthe. Gedanken über die moralischen Vorurtheile*

MA   *Menschliches, Allzumenschliches. Ein Buch für freie Geister*

NW   *Nietzsche contra Wagner. Aktenstücke eines Psychologen*

UB   *Unzeitgemässe Betrachtungen*

VM   (MA II) *Vermischte Meinungen und Sprüche*

WA   *Der Fall Wagner. Ein Musikanten-Problem*

WL   *Wahrheit und Lüge im aussermoralischen Sinne*

WS   *Der Wanderer und sein Schatten*

Z   *Also Sprach Zarathustra.*
             Ein Buch für Alle und Keinen

Abbreviations Of Nietzsche's Works In English

A   *The Antichrist*

AOM   (HH II) *Assorted Opinions and Maxims*

BGE   *Beyond Good and Evil. Prelude to a Philosophy of the Future*

BT   *The Birth of Tragedy*

BT/AS   *The Birth of Tragedy, Attempt At a Self-Criticism.*

CW   *The Case of Wagner*

D   *Daybreak*

DD   *Dithyrambs of Dionysus*

EH   *Ecce Homo. How One Becomes What One Is*

GM   *On the Genealogy of Morals. A Polemic*

GS   *The Gay Science*

HH   *Human, All Too Human*

NW   *Nietzsche contra Wagner. Out of the Files of a Psychologist*

PTAG   *Philosophy in the Tragic Age of the Greeks*

TI   *Twilight of the Idols. How To Philosophize with a Hammer*

TL   *On Truth and Lying in a Non-Moral Sense*

UM   *Untimely Meditations*

WS   (HH II) *The Wanderer and His Shadow*

ZA   *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*

Abbreviations Of Works By Other Authors

DA   Stendhal (1956), *De l'amour*, Paris (Garnier-Flammarion).

Ideen   Herder, J.G., *Ideen zur Philosophie der Geschichte der Menschheit*, in: Arnold, G. (ed.) (1985–2000), *Johann Gottfried Herder. Werke 10 in 11 Bänden*, vol. 6 Frankfurt am Main (Deutscher Klassiker Verlag).

KpV   Kant, I., *Kritik der praktischen Vernunft*, in: Kant, I. (1955–1966), *Gesammelte Schriften, ed. Königliche Preussische Akademie der Wissenschaften/Deutsche Akademie der Wissenschaften*, vol. V, Berlin (Walter De Gruyter).

KrV   Kant, I., *Kritik der reinen Vernunft*, in: Kant, I. (1955–1966), *Gesammelte Schriften, ed. Königliche Preussische Akademie der Wissenschaften/Deutsche Akademie der Wissenschaften*, vol. 3/4, Berlin (Walter De Gruyter). translations quoted from: Kant, I. (1998), *Critique of Pure Reason*, ed./transl. Guyer, P./Wood, A.W., Cambridge (Cambridge University Press).

FRGL   Herder, J.G., *Fragments on Recent German Literature*, in Herder (2002), *Philosophical Writings*, ed./transl. Forster, M.N., (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press).

TOL   Herder, J.G., *Abhandlung über den Ursprung der Sprache*, translation quoted from: Herder, *Treatise on the Origin of Language*, in Herder (2002), *Philosophical Writings*, ed./transl. Forster, M.N., Cambridge (Cambridge University Press).

WWV I   Schopenhauer, A. (1949), *Die Welt als Wille und Vorstellung. Erster Band*, in Schopenhauer, A. (1946–1950), *Sämtliche Werke, Zweiter Band*, ed. Hübscher, A., 7 vols., Wiesbaden (Brockhaus).

WWV II Schopenhauer, A. (1949), *Die Welt als Wille und Vorstellung. Zweiter Band*, in Schopenhauer, A. (1946–1950), *Sämtliche Werke, Dritter Band*, ed. Hübscher, A., 7 vols., Wiesbaden (Brockhaus).

Acknowledgements

Editors' Introduction

All of the papers included in this volume either presuppose or explicitly emphasize the fact that Nietzsche tried to dissolve the traditional opposition between instinct and language, as well as between instinct and consciousness and instinct and reason. Given that Nietzsche interprets the instincts as affective dispositions, this also means that he tried to dissolve the traditional oppositions between affectivity and language, affectivity and consciousness, affectivity and reason. According to him, what almost all previous philosophers conceived as opposed is in fact fundamentally connected. Thus one may say that this volume as a whole aims at being a fresh look at Nietzsche's attempt to connect language to the instinctive and affective activity of the human body. The different papers consider such Nietzschean themes as morality, value, the concept of philosophy, dogmatism, naturalization, metaphor, health, sickness, tragedy, and laughter – but always from the viewpoint of Nietzsche's dissolution of those oppositions, especially of the one between instinct and language.

Perhaps the simplest way to start understanding the meaning of this dissolution is to see it as a part of a larger task Nietzsche set to himself, namely the task of dissolving all oppositions and opposite valuations created by metaphysics (or "dogmatic philosophy"), as indicated in BGE 2. According to Nietzsche, these oppositions have made us believe in the substantiality and separate existence of the terms opposed (e.g. on the supra-sensible existence of the soul as opposed to the sensible existence of the body), thereby allowing for a negative valuing of the very presuppositions of life – i.e., precisely of such presuppositions as instinct and affectivity. Accordingly, his project of "revaluing all values" and "affirming life" depends, in part, on his showing that language, consciousness, and reason do not belong to a substantially different realm from that of the instincts. Instead, Nietzsche believes, the former can and should be described as natural phenomena that develop or evolve from the instincts, so that there is no ontological ground for us to value them above the instincts.

In fact, language, consciousness, and reason can never become really detached from, even less opposed to the instincts, no matter how far they develop. In countless passages, Nietzsche expresses this idea by speaking of "drives and affects" and describing the human organism as constructed out of a multiplicity of "drives and affects". Thus, in *The Gay Science*, he declares that every conscious mental state is "*only a certain behavior of the drives towards one another*" (GS 333), and in *Beyond Good and Evil*, that "thinking is only a relation between these drives" (BGE 36). In the *Nachlass*, he adds, for example, that "behind consciousness work the drives" (NL 39[6] KSA 11.621), or "below every thought lies an affect" (NL 1[61] KSA 12.26 = WLN 60). By "drives" Nietzsche means the "forces", "under-wills", or "wills to power" that direct our behavior towards the satisfaction of organic needs. An "affect" is simply what it feels like to be driven by a drive. Another way to put this is to say that drives are valuations. In directing our behavior towards the satisfaction of a need, the drive makes us value the satisfaction of this need not only when it occurs, but also *before* it occurs, i.e. as an aim. A drive, as it were, posits an aim as valuable (or as a "value"), thereby making us *will* such a aim and *feel for* it[1]. If the drive remains unconscious, so does the affect that accompanies it. This is what leads not only to the idea that our conscious desires, inclinations, and feelings evolve from drives and affects, but also that those conscious states, once developed, are no more than "surfaces" of relations among unconscious drives and affects.

Nietzsche's use of the word "instinct" (*Instinkt*), as well as "instinctive" etc., seems often interchangeable with his use of the expression "drives and affects" (e.g. in Part 1 of BGE). But the word "instinct" has different connotations than the word "drive" (*Trieb*). Like the drives, instincts have goals that are not set by conscious mental states,

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1   Cf., for example, HH I 32, translation modified: "A drive to something or away of something divorced from a feeling one is desiring the beneficial or avoiding the harmful, a drive without some kind of knowing evaluation of the worth of its aim (*Ziel*), does not exist in man". Note that this kind of description of the drives in terms of "aims", "goals", "ends", etc. is, for Nietzsche, wholly unteleological: such "aims" are not set by conscious mental states (they are unintentional), and thus they do not function as "final causes" (i.e. their activity creates their goal and it is not their goal that "causes" their activity).

but, unlike the drives, they seem to be akin to learned behavior, or to skills. Nietzsche sometimes calls them "automatisms" (organic habits, so to speak). However, he often designates the sum total of processes that constitute the human organism either as an alliance of instincts or as a multiplicity of drives and affects.

In any case, the essential point is that Nietzsche certainly thinks of the relation between instinct and language, as well as between instinct and consciousness and instinct and reason, in terms of continuity. Conscious thoughts have the nature of drives and affects, for they *are* drives and affects that have become partially, i.e. superficially, conscious. This is an idea that Nietzsche tries to make plausible by describing the drives and affects as perceptual, perspectival, interpretative processes, and thus by describing instinct as "the most intelligent type of intelligence discovered so far" (BGE 218). The rationality of our conscious mental life is only derivative of the unconscious rationality of the body as a whole – a continuation and always still a part of the instinctive life of the drives (*Triebleben*, BGE 36). In other words, drives and instincts are processes of unconscious "thinking, feeling, willing", and conscious mental states are only certain developments of these same processes.

As developments and "surfaces" continuous with the drives, affects and instincts, our conscious thoughts are in fact *signs* of unconscious processes. As Nietzsche writes in the *Nachlass*: "A thought, no less than a word, is only a sign: one cannot speak of a congruity between the thought and the real. The real is some sort of movement of the drives (*Trieb-bewegung*)" (NL 6[253] KSA 9.263, our translation). Given the traditional meaning of "sign" (e.g. in Leibniz, Kant, or Schopenhauer), this means that conscious thoughts are abbreviations that give expression to unconscious processes.

This is a key point for understanding Nietzsche's views on language and the relation between instinct and language. Consciousness depends on the formation of concepts, and concepts are "more or less determinate pictorial signs for sensations that occur together and recur frequently, for groups of sensations" (BGE 268). Words, in turn, are "acoustic signs for concepts" (BGE 268). Words are signs of concepts, and concepts are signs of sensations. However, these sensations and their inner experiences (*Erlebnisse*) are always already the result of the unconscious, and yet perceptive and intelligent, activity of the drives and affects. Consequently, conscious thoughts are signs that

express this activity of the drives and affects, and words are signs that express part of our conscious thoughts. Put differently, language in the ordinary sense of the term is only part of the "sign language" of the instincts – it presupposes other signs (sc. conscious thoughts) and, above all, it presupposes the unconscious "language" of the instincts.

This "language" consists of power relations among the drives and affects. It enables the issuing and receiving of orders, i.e. the very struggle among drives from which those relations of command and obedience arise that make the functioning of the organism possible. Thus the idea that conscious thoughts express relations of drives and affects in abbreviated, conceptual form means that they express the power relations that occur among "a multiplicity of wills to power" (NL 1[58] KSA 12.25 = WLN 59–60). Conscious thoughts "are *signs* of a play and struggle of the affects" (NL 1[75] KSA 12.29 = WLN 60), and words are signs of these signs. No matter how neutral and descriptive a particular use of language may seem, it is always an expression of power relations and (ultimately unconscious) power strategies.

This way of describing the drives, the affects, the instincts, consciousness, reason, and language is wholly naturalistic, and it is an important part of Nietzsche's critique of metaphysics. But its status is not unproblematic. If all conscious thoughts and words are signs that express relations among the drives and affects, Nietzsche's naturalistic descriptions are no exception to this. They, too, are only a "sign language" of *his* instincts, they, too, express unconscious strivings for power or growth, and their key words – "drive", "affect", "instinct", "power", "sign", etc. – are no more than signs of the real, all too real life of the drives. And "real" is, of course, only one more sign.

Nietzsche is well aware of this, and this is one of the main reasons why he does not present his philosophy as a pure, disinterested description of reality, but rather as the result of a particular *stance* – a critical and evaluative, as well as creative, stance. Given that all descriptions express relations of drives and affects, all descriptions express instinctive evaluations. Thus, every philosophy is either naive, i.e. blind to its instinctive evaluations, or critical, i.e. purposefully evaluative. Nietzsche's *genealogy* is obviously of the latter type. His aim of "creating new values" cannot be separated from his critical task of "revaluing all values".

It is his genealogical approach that leads him to ask *why*, i.e. in response to what needs, humanity has interpreted everything sensitive,

temporal or historical, and particularly the instincts, drives and affects, as something that should be fundamentally opposed to a more valuable and supra-sensible realm of intelligibility and rationality. In other words, Nietzsche's conception of philosophy makes the question about the relation between instinct and language inseparable from the question on why some valuations of instinct and language emerge rather than others.

But although this genealogical approach is part of a purposeful, conscious effort to revaluate all values and create new values, it is very far from being a product of conscious thoughts separated from the instinctive activity of the body. Nietzsche himself is not an exception to the fact that "most of a philosopher's conscious thought is secretly directed and forced into determinate channels by the instincts" (BGE 3). Put differently, no matter how critical and purposefully evaluative a particular philosophy may be, it always emerges from the instincts and is determined by the life of the drives and affects: "When we criticize, we are not doing something arbitrary and impersonal; it is, at least very often, proof that there are living, active forces within us shedding skin. We negate and have to negate because something in us *wants* to live and affirm itself, something we might not yet know or see! – This in favour of criticism" (GS 307). It is, therefore, not surprising that in *Ecce Homo* Nietzsche explicitly presents his task of revaluing all values as having emerged from "the lengthy, secret work and artistry of my instinct" (EH Why I Am So Clever 9).

This not only raises the question on the relation between consciousness and instinct, but also on the relation between the *language* of philosophy and the instinctual processes that lead to a philosopher's thoughts and written words. As signs of instinctual processes, philosophical texts are always a struggle with the limits of language, and perhaps their limitedness and inadequacy is even greater when a philosopher's instincts strive to a radically new affirmation of life.

Thus we see also that the question about instinct and language leads very naturally to a discussion about the concept of philosophy and philosophical language, and in fact, almost all of the papers in the volume deal with this issue at more or less length.

In the first chapter of the volume – I. Nietzschean Beginnings and Developments — we have assembled the two papers that focus the most on Nietzsche's early writings and trace his mature views on

instinct and language back to his early views. **Andrea Christian Bertino** analyzes the roots of Nietzsche's project of dehumanizing nature and naturalizing man by comparing it to Johann Gottfried Herder's similar intentions in his philosophy of language and philosophical anthropology. Both Nietzsche and Herder present language as originating in natural drives or instincts and strive to overcome the metaphysical separation between nature and culture. Most importantly, according to Bertino, they both understand all human discourse about nature and culture as metaphorical and anthropomorphic. This implies that Nietzsche's naturalism does not purport to be an adequate description of the real, but only another anthropomorphic metaphor.

Maria João Mayer Branco starts by showing how Nietzsche's early views on music, metaphor, conceptualization and communication imply an intrinsic connection between language and the body, i.e. language and the affects, the drives, and the instincts. Those views are never truly abandoned, only transformed and developed in Nietzsche's mature writings. The crucial notions of "will to power" and "perspectivism" imply precisely the kind of intrinsic connection between instinct and language that Nietzsche had already adumbrated in those early writings. This becomes particularly clear when one considers his mature views on style, especially on the style of philosophical writing.

The second chapter – II. Dissolving an Opposition – assembles the three papers most concerned with the idea that in dissolving the opposition between instinct and language Nietzsche rethinks this relation in terms of continuity. **Patrick Wotling**'s paper aims at describing the radical change that Nietzsche imposes on the traditional approach to language. It shows that ordinary, conscious language is to be understood as deriving from a more fundamental form of communication, namely from the particular type of logic that rules over relations of drives. There is an originary, infra-conscious "language of the drives". The drives' ability to perceive and interpret their power relative to each other, i.e. their ability to assess relations of supremacy, and thus to struggle with each other, is the form of communication that makes their hierarchy – their relations of command and obedience – possible. Ordinary language is never neutral because it emerges from these relations and always remains dependent upon them.

João Constâncio's paper is an overview of Nietzsche's dissolution of the opposition between instinct and language in *Beyond Good*

and Evil. First, the paper focuses on the critique of language, and particularly of grammar, implied in Nietzsche's critique of the subject, and it shows how this critique of language leads to the concept of instinct. The crucial point here is that, according to Nietzsche, the grammatical functions of our language and our conscious thought emerge from reason – but from reason as an "instinctive reason". This is one of the bases for Nietzsche's hypothesis that the relations between instinct, reason, consciousness, and language are relations of continuity. The second half of the paper deals with the consequences of this hypothesis to the problem of identity. By redefining our identity in terms of affects, drives and instincts, and particularly by looking at the philosophers' use of language as dependent upon the subterranean paths of their instinctual life, Nietzsche is able to highlight the complex and contradictory nature of human subjectivity – which is perhaps the ultimate implication of his critique of the (atomic) subject, and a crucial aspect of his new conception of philosophy.

Chiara Piazzesi's paper proposes a discussion of aphorism 14 of *The Gay Science*, generally quite neglected by the commentators. This aphorism aims at dissolving a linguistic unity ("love") by showing how its linguistic uses conceal instincts, drives, needs, power struggles and power strategies that influence the acts of nomination as well as the processes of their articulation and affirmation. The paper begins by analyzing the text of the aphorism and discussing how, according to Nietzsche, everything we call "love" is intrinsically entangled with what we call *Habsucht* ("greed"); it then focuses on the influence of Stendhal's *De l'Amour* over Nietzsche's understanding of love, and it ends by revealing the genealogical and critical purpose which inspires and informs Nietzsche's discussion of the use of the word "love" and of the corresponding moral evaluations.

The third chapter – III. Instinct, Language, and Philosophy – consists of two papers that also analyze the complex meaning of Nietzsche's dissolution of the opposition between instinct and language, but so that their main focus is ultimately on the consequences of this idea to Nietzsche's concept of philosophy. **Scarlett Marton** considers the dissolution of the opposition between instinct and language from the viewpoint of Nietzsche's critique of "dogmatic philosophy" in *Beyond Good and Evil*, especially in the Preface and in the last aphorism of this book (BGE 296). In this last aphorism, Nietzsche casts suspicion over the written form of his philosophy. Written

language tends to transform living, temporary experimentations in univocal, monolithic, inflexible truths – in dogmatic doctrines. In calling attention to this tendency Nietzsche underscores the thoroughly experimental, non-dogmatic status of his philosophy, as well as its intrinsic integration in an instinctive form of life.

Werner Stegmaier's paper shows how Nietzsche intertwines instinct and language in Book V of *The Gay Science*. This intertwinement entails that they have reciprocal effects on each other. Language, consciousness, and reason depend on the instincts, but the instincts are not something "simply *given*". As Stegmaier writes, "they involuntarily conduct behavior and manifest themselves as natural because they gradually become obvious through routine or prolonged discipline or even through rational insight". Consequently, Nietzsche's philosophical experimentation, as well as its communication to his readers, may be seen as meant to enable "fearless findings" that unsettle the instincts. Through this unsettling of the instincts, new needs and thus new, subtler, perhaps healthier instincts, as well as better leeways of reciprocal understanding (e.g. between Nietzsche and his readers), become possible.

The fourth and last chapter – IV. The Critique of Morality and the Affirmation of Life – assembles the four papers that are not so much concerned with the meanders of Nietzsche's dissolution of the opposition between instinct and language as with its consequences for his critique of morality and the affirmation of life.

Marta Faustino's paper, like Marton's and Stegmaier's, deals with Nietzsche's new conception of philosophy, but it does not focus at all on how Nietzsche tries to dissolve the opposition between instinct and language. Instead, it aims at showing that *only if this dissolution is assumed* will it make sense to redefine the goals of philosophy in terms of the promotion of health rather than in terms of (absolute) truth. Her main focus is on Nietzsche's concept of "great health" (GS 382) and its connection to the claim that all philosophers so far have been "sick" due to "a misunderstanding of the body" (GS Preface 2). In accordance to these key ideas, Nietzsche's "philosophers of the future" will have to be "physicians of culture" rather than mere theoreticians. Their critique of dominant morality shall have to be capable of actually changing a culture, as well as the moral character and virtues of men (i.e. their instincts), and so the "great health" will

be not only their aim, but also a *pre-condition* of their very existence
as philosophers capable of achieving their task.

André Muniz Garcia begins by focusing on how, according to
Nietzsche's *Beyond Good and Evil*, the language used by philosophers,
and especially the grammar of this language, involuntarily expresses
their instincts and promotes a particular type of life. Garcia's main
concern, however, is with Nietzsche's critique of morality. According
to Nietzsche, philosophers create philosophical propositions because
they are compelled by their instincts to overcome certain needs,
and thus philosophical propositions are always inseparable from
a particular morality that a philosopher's instincts strive to make
believable in order to overcome those needs. As Nietzsche writes
in BGE 6: "to explain how the strangest metaphysical claims of a
philosopher really come about, it is always good (and wise) to begin
by asking: what morality is it (is *he* —) getting at?" Garcia's paper
aims at analyzing how Nietzsche develops this idea in BGE 186 and
BGE 187.

Katia Hay argues that Nietzsche's analysis of tragedy, both in *The
Birth of Tragedy* and in his mature works, cannot be understood as
pessimistic because it emerges from a Dionysian experience of the
comic. Although her main focus is on the "Attempt at a Self-criticism"
(1886), and particularly on its reference to Zarathustra's laughter, her
paper aims at showing how since *The Birth of Tragedy* Nietzsche's
thought on tragedy and comedy is inseparable from his concern with
the possibility of an instinctive affirmation of life.

The volume closes with **Maria Filomena Molder**'s meditation
on Nietzsche's "Attempt At a Self-Criticism". She presents this
important text as evidence of Nietzsche's concern with the limits of
language. The fact that in writing *The Birth of Tragedy* the young
Nietzsche had to "stammer in a strange tongue" (BT/AS 3) was not
exclusively due to his youth and his enthusiasm with Schopenhauer,
Kant, and Wagner. One can never express the Dionysian intoxication
of the instincts without having to "stammer in a strange tongue" –
or, in other words, the Dionysian affirmation of life as a result of an
experience of the tragic can never be adequately expressed within the
limits of language. Thus the "tremendous hope" that speaks from out
of Nietzsche's *Birth of Tragedy* depends on much more than simply
words and consciousness: "tragedy, the highest art of saying yes to

life, will be reborn when humanity has moved beyond consciousness of the harshest though most necessary wars without suffering from it…" (EH Why I Write Such Good Books BT 4).

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I. Nietzschean Beginnings and Developments

"As with Bees"? Notes on Instinct and Language in Nietzsche and Herder

Andrea Christian Bertino

> *Thus the only option that remains is to consider language as a production of instinct, as with bees and anthills, etc.*
> (Nietzsche, KGW II/2.188)

> *The essential feature of our life is never enjoyment but always progression, and we have never been human beings until we – have lived our lives to the end. By contrast, the bee was already a bee when it built its first cell*
> (Herder, TOL, 131)

1. Origin of Language and Origin of Man

Any discourse regarding the origin of language is relevant not only to philosophy of language, but also to philosophical anthropology, for when one determines the nature and origin of language one is also determining the nature and origin of man as the ζῷον λόγον ἔχον. If the discourse about the origin posits a process, then man will necessarily be conceived as the outcome of a process of becoming. If human language is portrayed as the development from a natural, animal language, then the *differentia specifica* of man in relation to animals must be interpreted as something that has become and not as something timelessly given. Thus, the question regarding the relation between instinct and language constitutes an essential part of the classical problem of the origin of language: whether or not instincts are involved in the development of language in human beings is hence crucial for their self-assessment as rational beings. If the instincts play a strong role, the image of an entirely autonomous, self-determining subject will shake, for reason and reflection are commonly presumed to be possible only through language.

Although Nietzsche's critique of language is a central aspect of his critique of metaphysics, it seems, nevertheless, that he has worked only marginally on the problem of the origin of language. The only text in which he deals directly with the classical debate about the origin of language – namely the first chapter of his notes for a cycle of lectures on Latin grammar (*Vom Ursprung der Sprache*, KGW II/2.185–188, Winter Semester 1869/ 70) – is not very original. However, Nietzsche questions some well-known views, and favours the hypothesis of an instinctual origin of language:

> Therefore, the only option that remains is to consider language as a product of instinct, as with bees and anthills, etc. However, instinct is *not* conscious deliberation, nor mere consequence of the bodily organization, nor the result of a mechanism that lies in the brain, nor the effect of a mechanism that comes to the spirit from the outside and is foreign to its essence, but rather the most distinctive accomplishment that springs from an individual's or a group's character (KGW II/2.188)[2].

After concisely rejecting Maupertuis', Plato's, Rousseau's, De Bosset's and Monboddo's theories on the origin of language, Nietzsche refutes, on the basis of a teleological conception of instinct, Johann Gottfried Herder's position as presented in the *Treatise On the Origin of Language*:

> In Germany, the Academy of Berlin placed – a hundred years ago – a prize question 'regarding the origin of language'[3]. In 1770, Herder's work received the distinction. He states that language is inborn in man: 'Therefore, the genesis of language is *as much an inner imperative* as is the impulse of the embryo to be born at the moment when it reaches its maturity'[4]. However, he shares with his

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2   KGW II/2.188: "Es bleibt also nur übrig, die Sprache als Erzeugniß des Instinktes zu betrachten, wie bei den Bienen - den Ameisenhaufen usw. Instinkt ist aber nicht bewußte Überlegung, nicht bloße Folge der körperlichen Organisation, nicht Resultat eines Mechanismus, der in das Gehirn gelegt ist, Nicht Wirkung eines dem Geiste von außen kommenden, seinem Wesen fremden Mechanismus, sondern eigenste Leistung des Individuums oder eine Masse, dem Charakter entspringend". [*Editors' translation*].

3   Neis (2003) gives a detailed reconstruction of the intellectual and institutional context of the prize question. About Herder's prize-essay cf. Ch. IV 550–604.

4   *Editors' note:* TOL, 129.

predecessors the view that language internalizes itself out of spoken sounds. Interjection [is] the mother of language: whereas it is rather its negation.

The correct insight has become current only since Kant, who in the *Critique of Judgement* accepted the teleology of nature as a matter of fact, but on the other hand stressed the marvellous antinomy that something can be purposive and yet without consciousness. This [is] the essence of instinct (KGW II/2.188)[5].

Nietzsche does not attack Herder in the context of a philosophical investigation. One cannot expect an earnest problematization of this subject in an introduction lecture to Latin grammar. Later, however, by the time Nietzsche deals with the problem of language in a deeper and more critical manner, he clearly moves closer to Herder. Between 1872 and 1873, his conception of language develops under the influence of Gustav Gerber, who, in turn, was strongly influenced by Herder[6]. Thus, as Ernst Behler has argued, while in *The Birth of Tragedy* Nietzsche still sees language in the light of a metaphysical, absolute theory of representation, in *On Truth and Lying in a*

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5 KGW II/2.188: "In Deutschland hatte die Berliner Akademie – vor hundert Jahren – eine Preisfrage „über den Ursprung der Sprache" gestellt. 1770 erhielt Herders Schrift den Vorzug. Der Mensch sei zur Sprache geboren. 'So ist die Genesis der Sprache ein so inneres Drängniss, wie der Drang des Embryos zur Geburt beim Moment seiner Reife'. Aber mit seinen Vorgängern theilt er die Anschauung, wie die Sprache aus sich äussernden Lauten sich verinnerlicht. Die Interjektion die Mutter der Sprache: während sie doch eigentlich die Negation ist. Die richtige Erkenntniß ist erst seit Kant geläufig, der in der Kritik der Urtheilskraft die Teleologie in der Natur zugleich als etwas Thatsächliches erkannte, andrerseits die wunderbare Antinomie hervorhob, dass etwas zweckmassig sei ohne ein Bewusstsein. Dies das Wesen des Instinktes". [*Editors' translation*].

6 According to Gustav Gerber it is only with Humboldt that one can escape an inconsequent conception of the emergence of language, that is, a conception that already presupposes human consciousness (Gerber 1871, vol. 1, 119). In this connection, Herder's Prize-essay is, for him, especially important. He takes up Herder's description of man as *sensorium commune*, as well as his semiotics of the *differentiae* or marks (*Merkmale*) on which human reflection or awareness (*Besinnung*) depends (cf. Gerber 1871, Vol. 1, 164). He argues that it is necessary to undertake an empirical critique of language, which should replace the critique of reason, by quoting Herder (cf. Gerber 1871, Vol. 1, 245): "A people have no idea for which they do not have a word" (Ideen, 6.347). Gerber also shares with Herder the concept of a natural reason that is tied to the surrounding world. Thus, Gerber may have conveyed some of Herder's important ideas to Nietzsche. [*Gerber's and Herder's quotations translated by the editors.*]

Non-Moral Sense he clearly moves towards an anthromorphic, non-representative conception of language, which is not based in the idea of "reality" as reference[7]. He consciously abandons Schopenhauer's metaphysical image of language[8], and thus his distance to Herder diminishes, for an unconditional theory of representation is also foreign to Herder's philosophy of language. Both Herder and Nietzsche want to show that language is not absolute and, thus, that it is representative. Language, according to Herder, is invented along with the first "characteristic mark (*Merkmal*) of taking-awareness (*Besinnung*)", i.e. with the first "word of the soul" (TOL, 88). For him, reason and language are inseparable; Herder realized that "the simplest judgement of human awareness is [not] possible without a characteristic mark (*Merkmal*)" (TOL, 91). Our reason cannot express "things",

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7   Cf. Behler (1994). According to Behler there is no break between Nietzsche's first and second theoretical positions on language, as Philippe Lacoue-Labarthe still thought (1979, 31–74), but a gradual development. Behler documents this with numerous notes from Nietzsche's *Nachlass*, especially with one "about the relationship between language and music" (NL 12[1] KSA 7.360–369 = WEN 83–91). For the significance of this note to this topic, see also Hödl (1997, 31–35). Hödl reconstructs the different stages of the note NL 2[10] KSA 7.42f and of the lectures "Das Grieschieche Musikdrama" and "Die dionysische Weltanschauung". Behler (1996, 68) divides Nietzsche's early theory of language further in four moments: "Die erste Phase besteht in den *Vorlesungen über lateinische Grammatik* aus dem WS 1869/79; die zweite in der Schrift Die *Geburt der Tragödie aus dem Geist der Musik* von 1872; die dritte in den *Vorlesungen über Rhetorik* aus dem WS 1872/1873; und die vierte schließlich in der Schrift *Über Wahrheit und Lüge im außermoralischen Sinne* von 1873". In view of Nietzsche's aesthetization of science, Aldo Venturelli (2003) states that there is a continuity between the *Birth of Tragedy* and *On Truth and Lying*. According to him, the latter is the most coherent presentation of the aesthetical character of every form of knowledge and at the same time the perfect attempt to carry out the transformation of science into art – an attempt which is conveyed by the image of Socrates practising music (Venturelli 2003, 63 ff). At the same time, Venturelli remarks that in the unpublished text art does not express itself "im Rahmen einer der rationalen Wahrnehmung entzogenen reinen Sprache des Instinkts und des Unbewussten" Venturelli (2003, 65). Paul de Man (1987, 124 ff) had already identified remains of a logo-centred tradition in BT, which Nietzsche here starts to deconstruct.

8   This is indicative of the enigmatic, special place of TL in Nietzsche's intellectual development. In the Preface to volume II of HH, Nietzsche remarks that he once wrote an essay, "On Truth and Lying in a Non-Moral Sense", he "refrained from publishing", at a time when he "already 'believed in nothing any more', as the people puts it, not even in Schopenhauer" (HH II Preface 1).

only "marks of things", – as Herder will later write in his *Ideas for the Philosophy of History of Humanity* (Ideen, 6.349, editors' translation). For Herder, human reason develops along with language, i.e. by the use of acoustic signs as marks of sensations. And this relation between marks and sensations is not arbitrary. The laws of sensibility, the structure of the senses, determine the coupling of signs and representations. The further articulation of language then presupposes human freedom, which, however, cannot be understood as a complete negation of natural drives but only as their weakening. The concepts by means of which we form the representation of the world are, according to Herder, the result of abstractions developed over time from images linked with affects; therefore, they are not essentially related to the objects they refer to. The fact that we use determinate sounds as words and make concepts out of these words is also for Nietzsche the result of a process, as is shown by the famous text *On Truth and Lying in a Non-Moral Sense* – heavily influenced by Gustav Gerber[9].

To put it briefly: Herder and Nietzsche reflect on the interweavement of language, anthropology and history. They both proceed in a similar way: from the problem of language in their earlier works – Herder's *Treatise on the Origin of Language* (1770, published 1772), on the one hand, and Nietzsche's *On Truth and Lying in a Non-Moral Sense* (1873) on the other) – towards a reflection on history; Herder writes *This Too a Philosophy of History for the Formation of Humanity* (1774) and Nietzsche, his *Second Untimely Meditation On the Uses and Disadvantages of History for* (1874). Later, though, the philosophy of history remains, for Herder, at the centre, as is shown by the *Ideas for the Philosophy of History of Humanity* (1774–1791), which, as Rudolph Haym has argued, is perhaps his most important work[10]. Nietzsche, on the other hand, makes his early critique of language and his insistence on a critical use of historical knowledge fertile for a genealogical questioning of morality, religion, philosophy, and the myths of Modernity. This questioning determines his work

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9 TL has been strongly researched in recent times. Regarding the state of the art, cf. among others Hödl (1997 and 2003), Josef Simon (1999), Emden (2005), Reuter (2009), Andresen (2010).

10 Cf. Haym (1954 [1880], 221).

from the late seventies onwards. At the beginning, however, they both reflect on man's ability to verbalize the world.

Nietzsche's premature rejection of Herder's ideas on the origin of language seems, therefore, rather hasty[11]. He, as well as Herder, seeks to naturalize language without dogmatically reducing it to mere "nature". Both take the rhetorical nature of language as their starting-point and criticise from that perspective the traditional forms of philosophy, the historiography and civilization in general. Taken as a theory, no narrative regarding the origin of language and concepts can be demonstrated; either empirically or historically. One can detect in Herder's *Treatise on the Origin of Language* a continual oscillation between different argumentative strategies, and in 1772 he seems to disown this work by calling it, in a letter to Hamann, "the writing of a joking fool (*Witztölpel)*"[12]. If a discussion regarding the origin of language no longer presupposes that language represents an exterior reality, it is consistent to consider it as a philosophical myth. Although Nietzsche in TL, according to Borsche, narrates his "history of origin" with a stronger scientific tone than Herder or his contemporaries did, we cannot take it as a scientific theory, especially since Nietzsche himself acknowledges the rhetorical status of the truth of natural science: the origin of language, as Borsche has remarked, is a myth in the platonic sense of the word[13]. We may find evidence for this, according to Borsche, in the beginning of TL – for the text begins with a *fable* which seems designed either for those who already know

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11 In his writings, Nietzsche barely mentions Herder and, when he does, it is with polemical intent: cf. HH II WS 118, 125. Almost all of the works that deal with Nietzsche's confrontation with Herder focus only on particular aspects of their thought: the critique of language, the concept of human being, the concept of history, or the critique of culture. Cf. Brodersen/Jablonsky (1935); Harth (1986, 407–456); Borsche (1994, 112–130); von Rahden (2004, 459–477); Zusi (2006, 505–525).

12 To Hamann 1.8.1772, in Johann G. Hamann (1957, Vol. III, 11). Cf. Gaier (1990, 158–159): "Den Begriff des Witztölpels kann man als Formulierung der docta ignorantia im Kontext des von Hamann und Herder bewusst geübten Sokratismus sehen wie auch im Kontext von Sternes Narrenbegriff in dem von Hamann und Herder intensiv studierten *Tristram Shandy*. Herder übernimmt Hamanns Begriff, weil er mit seiner Abhandlung vor einer Akademie auftrat, die beweisende Argumentation erwartete, während er der Überzeugung war, daß ein solcher Selbstbeweis der Vernunft a priori unmöglich ist".

13 Cf. Borsche (1994, 126).