**IN DEFENSE OF RHETORIC: OR HOW HARD IT IS TO TAKE A WRITER SERIOUSLY.**

**The Case of Nietzsche**

**Tracy B. Strong**

**UCSD**

**TO APPEAR IN *POLITICAL THEORY,* August, 2013. Not for citation without permission**

You can find in a text whatever you bring, if you stand between it and the mirror of your imagination. You may not see your ears but they will be there.”

-- Mark Twain, *A Fable* (1909)

[Eloquence](http://www.brainyquote.com/quotes/quotes/p/plato159589.html) is the power to translate a truth into language perfectly intelligible to the person to whom you speak.

R.W. Emerson, “Eloquence”

There is an enormous range and diversity of readings of Nietzsche. Why? For illustrative purposes, I shall start from the point of view of political allegiances. It is well known that those who claim to have learned from or been influenced by Nietzsche have covered the widest possible range, and this from the end of the XIXth century. In Germany, Social Democrats such as Kurt Eisner, murdered in January 1919 just after his defeat for reelection as head of the Bavarian Republic, found Nietzsche to be a “diagnostician of genius.” Additionally, anarchists, progressives hostile to laws oppressing socialists, feminists, youthful populist romantics of the *Wandervogel* movement – all found common ground in Nietzsche. And this is only on the more-or-less left.[[1]](#footnote-1) The great social scientist Max Weber wrote to a student that a modern scholar must, if he is honest, admit, “he could not have accomplished crucial parts of his own work without the contributions of Marx and Nietzsche.”[[2]](#footnote-2) The political right – for instance those who made up the *Georgekreis*, with its Hellenic inspired voluntarist protest against materialism and naturalism --read deeply into Nietzsche and sometimes became fertile ground for sympathies to Nazism (even if the poet Stefan George himself kept his distance until his death in late 1933).[[3]](#footnote-3) Geneviève Bianquis has demonstrated that the range of those similarly affected in France was the same.[[4]](#footnote-4) A simple listing of those whose thought would not have been the same includes, off the top of one’s head, Max Scheler, Karl Jaspers, Martin Heidegger in Germany; in France Albert Camus, Jacques Derrida, Gilles Deleuze and Michel Foucault as well as existentialism and deconstructionism in general. Theologically he crosses religions as one finds Paul Tillich, Lev Shestov, along with Thomas J.J. Altizer, and Martin Buber (who translated the first part of *Zarathustra* into Polish). In psychology, Adler and Jung were deeply influenced, as was Sigmund Freud, who said of Nietzsche that he had “a more penetrating understanding of himself than any man who ever lived or was ever likely to live.”[[5]](#footnote-5) Nor was his influence limited to Europe. Early on he was of importance in Japan; Chinese intellectuals such as Lu Xun and Guo Moro, both later to become prominent in the Chinese Communist Party, were early readers of Nietzsche.[[6]](#footnote-6) Politically, Maurice Barrès, T.E. Lawrence, as well as even less savory characters such as the members of the Cagoule and the Croix de Feu come to mind. Novelists and literary figures include Thomas Mann, Hermann Hesse, André Malraux, André Gide, George Bernard Shaw, H.L. Mencken, Rainer Maria Rilke, and William Butler Yeats, as well as John Gardner and John Banville among contemporaries. One could even come down to Milos Forman and Arnold Schwartzenegger.[[7]](#footnote-7)

In the political theory of the contemporary period the range of readings has remained as extensive. From various points of view and with many others, scholars such as William Connolly, Mark Warren, Bonnie Honig, Dan Conway and Lawrence Hatab have, in different ways, claimed to find in Nietzsche the grounding for a radical rethinking of the basis of a democratic politics. They do not claim that he is a democrat (though Hatab says he should have been) but that his thought permits and in fact requires a rethinking of the bases of democratic politics. Others like James Conant and David Owen (and on occasion myself) find in Nietzsche a perfectionism that is cousin to the thought of Emerson and Stanley Cavell.

This “left-Nietzscheanism,” as Alasdair Macintyre dubbed it,[[8]](#footnote-8) has not gone unopposed. Dom Dombowsky, Thomas Pangle, Peter Berkowitz, Frederick Appel, Bruce Detwiler and many others, have pointed to passages where Nietzsche defends slavery, where he appears as an elitist calling for a great man or great men, where he seems misogynist[[9]](#footnote-9) – this is Nietzsche the “aristocrat,” a “man of the right,” as Allan Bloom once claimed.[[10]](#footnote-10)

This diversity raises a number of important questions. Nietzsche has provided inspiration for almost anyone who cared to seek or claim it. It is perhaps the lot of any great thinker to be greater than the interpretations made of him or her. In this sense, one might (almost) say that none of these interpretations is in itself *wrong*. But then, none would be right and this seems unsatisfactory. Surely Nietzsche meant *something* or was *trying* to mean something: how do we account for passages that appear simply to be incompatible one with the other?

A number of answers have been given. Some have suggested that Nietzsche is *internally inconsistent*, that he is simply confused or that he never understood that various parts of his teaching (say the will to power and the doctrine of eternal return) did not and could not go together. Thus Walter Kaufmann, in a hugely influential book in English speaking countries,[[11]](#footnote-11) found Nietzsche’s doctrine of eternal return to be “of dubious value,” despite the fact that Nietzsche seems to say that it is the centerpiece of his teaching. Others, such as Karl Jaspers and in a different way Wolfgang Müller-Lauter, have allowed that Nietzsche does contain contradictions but that these contradictions are for a dialectical purpose. Thus they argue that he writes in such a way as to provide a negation to any assertion he might be understood as making. On the other hand, Gilles Deleuze has argued that dialectic is precisely what Nietzsche was opposed to.[[12]](#footnote-12)

Others see all this as the result of an *evolution* in his thought. A still somewhat standard reading of Nietzsche divides him into three periods: a youthful Wagner-intoxicated romantic phase; then a “positivist” or “naturalist” phase lasting at least through the first four books of *The Gay Science* though possibly reappearing in portions of *the Genealogy of Morals*. Finally there would be a “mature” phase – the writings of the 1880’s after *Gay Science*, and possibly even a final phase, that of his “collapse,” that would include some or all of the work of 1888.[[13]](#footnote-13) Those who adopt something like these divisions argue not so much that he is inconsistent but that he changes his mind and that this accounts for the wide range of those who find him important. For some he changes his mind in 1874, for others in 1876, or perhaps in 1882, or perhaps in 1887 – it depends on what mind he is said to have, I suppose. Sometimes these shifts are correlated to breaks with important friends, a first one with Wagner and a second with Lou Salomé. I find that this division allows one to take only the parts of Nietzsche that one finds acceptable, whatever the terms of that acceptance may be.[[14]](#footnote-14)

Again, still others have argued that it is not so much a matter of the various supposed doctrines being incompatible with each other, nor of his thought having evolved, as it is the case that he was *analytically confused* and offered unwittingly different versions of the same doctrines, some of them sound, others not.[[15]](#footnote-15) A variant on this finds the confusions to derive from the attribution of an overvalued status to the *Nachlass*, the extensive series of notebooks in which Nietzsche jotted down ideas and sketched out his writing. As it can be shown that much of the material in the notebooks consists not only of material that Nietzsche later explicitly rejected, but also of preliminary and revised drafts of work later published, often in very different forms, hence material corrected by Nietzsche as he got a particular passage right, there is clearly something to this claim.[[16]](#footnote-16) On the other hand, so important a reader as Heidegger claims that it is in the *Nachlass* that one finds his central teaching.

What to make of all this? All of this seems to me to have as consequence to permit the reader to pick and choose the parts of Nietzsche he or she likes the best (or dislikes the most). Most of the above readings, different though they are, refuse to see Nietzsche’s work as a whole. I think that they all also pretty much fail to take seriously the impact and import of David Allison’s claim that Nietzsche writes “for you.” Allison writes: “Nietzsche writes exclusively for you. Not at you but for you. For you, the reader. Only you.”[[17]](#footnote-17) This would mean that when reading Nietzsche, I (or you or she) have at least at some points the feeling that he is speaking directly *to me*. Here it seems to me that in fact Nietzsche writes purposely such that any one (almost anyone?) may respond to him or rather to some part of which work.[[18]](#footnote-18) (Those of us who have taught Nietzsche have perhaps had the experience I have often had, of finding a student entranced with some aspect of Nietzsche – and of being not a little worried about the enthusiasm of the student’s reaction).

More importantly, it means that *how* Nietzsche writes and *why* he writes as he does is of central importance. For if the work speaks to *me,* it also speaks to *you* and *you* and *you.* How might one then take Nietzsche’s work “as a whole”? Here the answer comes, I argue, in *how* Nietzsche writes.Nietzsche, one should remember, was a student and teacher of classical rhetoric and to a depth that in our world has almost been lost: he knew it intimately and used it.[[19]](#footnote-19) Classical rhetoric expected the speaker to pay particular attention to the specific audience – words and arguments were to be shaped by whom they were aimed at: at *you* and at *you* and at *you*, as modified by the circumstances.[[20]](#footnote-20) With Nietzsche, however, the particular quality of the man’s work seems, as we have seen, to lend itself to every appropriation – and thus also to mis-appropriation also. This is true is ethics, in epistemology, in aesthetics. Here our concern is with politics.

All of this raises a range of questions about the quality and nature of rhetoric in Nietzsche, about the role of style and rhetoric in philosophy, questions that have lurked on the periphery of Anglo-American mainstream philosophy for some time and only recently – most especially in work on Plato, on Wittgenstein – and on Nietzsche – have begun to reassume the place that they had in ancient times. If I raise the question of style on my way to a consideration of Nietzsche’s thought overall, it is because the rhetorical quality of what he says is prominent. It is the case that in recent years a number of authors (several of whom are considered below) had turned their attention to the question of rhetoric in Nietzsche. For the most part, however, this has remained at the level of showing that he used rhetoric, not in what his rhetoric *does*, and especially not what the political implications are.

***The philosophical and political import of ‘rhetoric’***

Can one – should one – take all of Nietzsche’s writings seriously? No one can fail to recognize the rhetorical quality of his writing. He lectured about rhetoric and related matters regularly[[21]](#footnote-21) and it is worth noting here in passing that Nietzsche is explicit that this work on rhetoric forms a “background” to the *Birth of Tragedy*, a book that might appear less “rhetorical”; he notes, however, that he had consciously left out of that book all that was “metaphysical, all that was deductive.”[[22]](#footnote-22)

Some have argued that Nietzsche moves from a concern with music in the *Birth* to a concern with rhetoric (*Truth and Lie in the Extra-Moral Sense*) and that this move, as marked in the early 70’s, is correlative to his break with Wagner. [[23]](#footnote-23) This is a problematic position, as it assumes that the *Birth* has a theory of language as related to music and that the later material on rhetoric has no such theory. It also assumes that N made no relation between his early work on rhetoric and the understanding that he developed in the *Birth*.[[24]](#footnote-24) Nietzsche will insist to the end on the importance of his formation as a philologist, as, that is, a scholar concerned with rhetoric and language. The work on rhetoric is simultaneous with the work on music and informs all of his work.

Some scholars have taken the matter of rhetoric very seriously and find Nietzsche's style to be the source of political danger. In a recent book, Heinz Schlaffer has argued that Nietzsche’s style has had the effect of hyperbolizing contemporary political understandings. Thus, after Nietzsche, when one speaks of leadership in a political context, one thinks of a “super“-leader, one who is a leader of leaders. Nietzsche may have thought of such a person as a philosopher (as Heidegger was shortly to do), but when that possibility fades away, Schlaffer remarks, the “word is unbound” and that idea of what a leader ought to be remains. And this can have, he argues, deleterious political consequences.[[25]](#footnote-25) Max Weber’s “plebiscitarian Caesar” – whom some have also blamed for providing the terms for a legitimation of fascism[[26]](#footnote-26) -- would be a close cousin.

This is a serious argument and I will return to it -- but it is notably *not* that of most of those who take note of the Nietzsche’s rhetoric and style. Most of those who pay political philosophical attention to his rhetoric generally avail themselves of it to *excuse* Nietzsche from one or another claim or to point out a philosophical “mistake,” an “unacceptable” political stance. This is often phrased as his “rhetorical excesses.” The general form of such argument is that behind or besides such rhetoric there is an argument that one can reconstruct: an attempt to see what one can get “out” of Nietzsche –a tacit reproach goes with such attempts. What this has led to, however, is a multitude of readings that seek to *excuse* Nietzsche from some apparent implications of his writings on the grounds that “Nietzsche certainly did not believe X” – it is a bit as if one were trying to prevent his work from being taken as the platform of a particular party. And of those who do consider his rhetoric, few relate it to any political concerns.[[27]](#footnote-27)

After the Second World War, Walter Kaufmann was the first great master of the apology based on rhetoric (although Richard Schacht has availed himself of this approach on occasion, as have others.)[[28]](#footnote-28) Aside from interpretive choices, there were political-historical reasons for this approach: not only had the first world war been tagged by British journalists as “Nietzsche’s War,” not only had a copy of *Zarathustra* been standard issue to each soldier in the *Wehrmacht*,[[29]](#footnote-29) but the subsequent appropriation of Nietzsche by the Nazis required a rehabilitation for him to be granted admission to a philosophical host. “Though a professor,” Bertrand Russell had sniffed, he was a “literary rather than academic philosopher” whose “basic outlook remained very close to that of Wagner in the Ring.”[[30]](#footnote-30) Nietzsche could appear to be responsible (in some sense of the term) for the military horrors of the century. To distance him from these events, Kaufmann generally proceeded by suggesting that when Nietzsche spoke of, e.g., war, he really meant a war like the Franco-Prussian war. To Nietzsche’s apparently derogatory remarks about Jews,[[31]](#footnote-31) Kaufmann adduced as counters anti-anti-Semitic quotations with the explicit or latent assertion that any offending words elsewhere were consequent to the spirit of the times or to Wagner’s baleful influence. (Thus Kaufmann casts ridicule on everything in the *Birth of Tragedy* after chapter fifteen, even asserting that Nietzsche should have stopped there).

This approach leads to much work that seeks to present what Nietzsche *would have said* had he been writing in a manner aimed at publishing in a contemporary philosophical journal. So we are given what would have/should have been Nietzsche’s arguments, which are then subjected to the kind of critical analysis that philosophers are good at. I should say that I do not criticize this work in a blanket fashion. The material on Nietzsche in a book like Alasdair MacIntyre’s *After Virtue* strikes me as important as does the work of Alexander Nehamas. James Conant, following a lead from Stanley Cavell, helps us read or reread some of Nietzsche’s early work. David Owen’s, Dan Conway’s and Aaron Ridley’s respective books on *The Genealogy of Morals* provoke one in fruitful ways, whether or not one ultimately agrees with the conclusions.

However, relatively few commentators have centered their political-philosophical readings of Nietzsche around his rhetoric. Most of these work in a vein that one might call “continental” and are often European.[[32]](#footnote-32) However, those who deny that Nietzsche’s style and rhetoric are centrally important—although he is far from the only one, exemplary here is Brian Leiter who argues that Nietzsche’s “penchant for hyperbolic rhetoric and polemics often leads him” to “overstate” his case[[33]](#footnote-33) -- to his philosophical teaching are, I think, seriously wrong. [[34]](#footnote-34)

To start with, Nietzsche does not separate “rhetoric” from language itself. In the lecture course he prepared for 1874 he writes: “There is obviously no unrhetorical ‘naturalness’ of speech to which one might appeal: speech itself is the result of nothing but [*lauter*] rhetorical arts [,] the power – which Aristotle names rhetoric – to discover and make expressive [*geltend*] that which works and makes an impression on each thing and this is at the same time the essence of language [*Sprache*]… it does not wish to instruct but rather to transmit a subjective arousal [*Erregung*] and acceptance to another person.” [[35]](#footnote-35) This tells us that language is ineluctably rhetoric: the question then is what that means in terms of one’s inevitable use of language.

Nietzsche’s concern with rhetoric and style is continuous. In 1872, for instance, he sketches an outline for a book “Considerations on Reading and Writing.” In 1875 he prepares a document on style for two of his students.[[36]](#footnote-36) The most important elaboration, however, comes in “The Doctrine of Style,” ten notes or commandments presented to Lou Salomé in 1882[[37]](#footnote-37), Nietzsche writes the following:

1. The first necessary matter is life: Style must *live*.
2. Style must in retrospect be appropriate for you in relation to the whole particular person with whom you wish to confide. (The law of *double relation*).
3. One must first be quite clear about this:  thus and thus do I wish to speak and *express* myself – before one has the right to write.  Writing must be an emulation (*Nachahmung*)
4. Because many of the means of those who speak (*Vortragenden*) are missing to those who write, the person who writes must have an overall highly developed expressive ability to present discourse as a model: the presentation of that which is written must necessarily turn out as much paler.
5. Wealth in life betrays itself as *wealth* in *gestures* (*Gebärde*). Everything, the length and brevity of sentences, punctuation, the choice of words, pauses, the sequence of arguments – must be learned to be understood as gestures.
6. Be careful about the use of periods [full stops -- TBS]. Only those beings that have a lengthy breath in speaking have the right to periods. For most, periodizing is an affection.
7. Style should show (*beweisen*) that one believes in ones thoughts, and does not only think them, but rather *feels* them.
8. The more abstract is the trust that one wishes to teach, the more must one bring (*verführen*) sense (*Sinne*) to it.
9. In the choice of its means, the rhythm of a good writer of prose (*Prosaiker*) approaches that of poetry, however without ever surpassing it.
10. It is neither proper nor intelligent to anticipate the small objections (*leichteren Einwände*) for ones readers.  It is very proper and very intelligent to leave it to ones readers to express themselves the essential point of our wisdom. [[38]](#footnote-38)

Let me pick out a few passages. “Style must in retrospect be appropriate for you in relation to the whole particular person with whom you wish to confide (*der du dich mitteilen willst*).” He calls this the “law of the double relation.” One must shape what one says according to the particular qualities of the person or persons one is addressing and the circumstance. I repeat here from my epigraph Emerson’s phrase: “Eloquence is the power to translate a truth into language perfectly intelligible to the person to whom you speak.”

At the end, he urges that it is the reader (in any particular case the person for or with whom the writer wishes to confide) who must come to express for him or herself these claims; they must, that is, become part of the assessment the reader has of the world. Earlier he had insisted: “Wealth in life betrays itself in a wealth of gestures. Everything, the length and brevity of sentences, punctuation, the choice of words, pauses, the sequence of arguments – must be learned to be understood as gestures.” What “everything” means is that Nietzsche *crafted everything that he published with great and purposive rhetorical care*. If one takes this claim seriously it means that *everything* in his published texts is there for a purpose, including that which appears as “excessive.”[[39]](#footnote-39)

This is a strong claim – it is a bit like saying that there is *nothing* in da Vinci’s *La Gioconda* (the “Mona Lisa”) that is not essential to that painting and that there is nothing that is not there that could have been part of that painting.[[40]](#footnote-40) It is like saying that *every* word in Robert Frost’s “Stopping by the Woods on a Snowy Evening” is exactly necessary to the poem. Or it is like Schumann’s response when asked, upon finishing a piece, as to its meaning. His response was to play it again, every note. Presumably not even Nietzsche was able to attain perfection in all of his writing; but it is significant that this is what he sought to do and this means that dismissing some aspect of his writing as “overblown rhetoric” will most likely proceed from an unrecognized prejudice.

***Rhetoric and the reader***

In the *Phaedrus* (274e-275b), calling upon the story of the presentation of the art of writing by the god Theuth to the Egyptian king Thamus, Socrates instantiates Thamus’s distress with the written word: writing reminds but does not remember; it give the simulacrum but not the reality of wisdom. As if responding to Plato, one reading of the commandments above indicates that what Nietzsche is pressing on Lou Salomé is how to write in order that your writing acquire the quality of speech – with all its hesitations, gestures, embodiments and so forth.[[41]](#footnote-41) In analyzing Nietzsche’s work, one must then proceed very carefully and slowly – one must *listen* to it -- for writing is always a temptation to conclude. Note for instance number six above: the point about periods means that you have to have done a lot to be entitled to put an end to a thought. As such his work is also meant to be a temptation and to be experienced as such: the rhetorical tropes are of utmost importance, of a necessity embedded in our very use of language. In his “Presentation [*Darstellung*] of Ancient Rhetoric,” the lecture course of 1874, he notes that “[t]here is in fact no unrhetorical ‘naturalness’ of speech to which one might make appeal…To sum up [*in summa*]: tropes do not attach themselves now and then to words, but are their most particular nature.” Tropes are not a “special meaning” applying only in special cases. “In fact all that is called ordinary speech is figuration.”[[42]](#footnote-42) It is worth noting here that this does not mean that Nietzsche thought that “everything is metaphor” – which would make the idea of metaphor impossible – but that the concept of metaphor gave him a way of dealing with what he would understand in an increasingly complex manner as the relation between language, mind, the natural world and the body.[[43]](#footnote-43)

Importantly rhetoric is what Nietzsche calls “an essentially republican art.” It is such because one has to be “used to bearing the strangest opinions and outlooks and even be able to feel a certain pleasure in their conflictual play (*Widerspiel*).” He continues on, sounding almost like Hannah Arendt, to indicate that rhetoric was the culmination of the education of the men of antiquity: “the highest spiritual activity of a well-educated (*gebildeten*) political man.”’ This is, he says, an “odd notion for us,” and proceeds to quote the *Critique of the Power of Judgment* to the effect that “the speaker gives notice of a matter to be considered and, in order to relate to (*unterhalten*) his listeners, presents it as if it were a play with ideas.”[[44]](#footnote-44) The point is that rhetoric permits thoughts to be addressed to a wide range of individuals, with different formations and understandings.

What difference then does it make to pay attention to rhetoric and style? Here is a preliminary example where a translator has paid insufficient attention to a rhetorical trope.[[45]](#footnote-45) If you have the Kaufmann edition of the *Genealogy of Morals*, you will find that all of the sections in the first essay begin with a capital letter. If, however, you go to the German edition (I have looked at the Schlechta and the de Gruyter), you will find that sections 1, 4, 7, 8, 9, 12, 13, 14, 17, begin with a dash, what in German is called a *Gedankenstrich* – a “thought-stroke.[[46]](#footnote-46) Just to make matters more complex, Kaufmann does give the dashes at the end of several paragraphs (one (8) has a double dash) but does not give the two dots at the end of 6, nor the three at the end of 7, 10, 11, 12, 16.

What to make of this? I remind you of his strictures to Lou von Salomé. About the dots we can say that they indicate an ellipsis, the intentional omission of something from an original thought. I am unclear why there is an ellipsis with only two dots. The dashes, however, mark an aposiopesis[[47]](#footnote-47) – the word means “becoming silent” and is a rhetorical device indicating that something has been left out, as in Darth Vader’s, “I sense something, a presence I have not felt since --.”[[48]](#footnote-48) Here at the *beginning* of the section, they seem to me to indicate that what follows is addressed to a particular person, hence that the text that follows is a response by that person. (A clue comes from the fact that sections 14 and to some degree 15 are in fact actual dialogues).

What difference does this make? Take the following passage from section seven of the *Genealogy of Morals*, one in which Nietzsche appears, and is often taken, to contrast the noble with the base. Larry Hatab, for instance, speaks of it as providing the oppositional framework between the warrior and the priestly.[[49]](#footnote-49) Brian Leiter reads it as the “marked” contrast of “the values of ‘the warrior caste’ with the ‘priestly caste’.”[[50]](#footnote-50)

Nietzsche writes in the first part of the section:

--You will have already guessed how easily the priestly way of evaluating can split from the knightly-aristocratic and then continue to develop into its opposite. Such a development receives a special stimulus every time the priestly caste and the warrior caste confront each other jealously and cannot be one with the other as to the prize. The premise of the knightly-aristocratic value-judgments is a powerful physicality, a radiant [*blühende*: Diethe (Cambridge UP) gives ‘blossoming’, Kaufmann, ‘flourishing’], rich, health that overflows the self [*selbst überschäumende*: D: ‘even effervescent’; K ‘even overflowing’], which includes all that it needs to maintain itself, war, adventure, the hunt, the dance, combat games (*Kampfspiele*: D ‘jousting’, K ‘war games’) and above all contains in itself all that is strong, free, happy activity.

This sounds pretty much like the classic vision of Nietzsche’s master/aristocrat. Yet what about that little dash (omitted from Kaufmann, unmentioned in Hatab or Leiter)? One is, I think, entitled to take the passage as addressed to someone. To whom? One answer would be to German Christian anti-Semites. They might read the part of the section quoted in the passage above and respond with something like: “Yeah! That’s us knights! *Jüden ‘raus*!” Yet what one finds later in the section is that these Jews give rise to the Sermon on the Mount. Much of the last half of the section is in fact a paraphrase of Matthew 5.13. “We know now,” says Nietzsche, -- who here is the “we”? – “*who* became heir to this Jewish revaluation*.”* Those who became heir to the “Jewish revaluation” are the Christian anti-Semites who had been lapping up the first part of the section. So: even Christian anti-Semitism is itself consequent to the “Jewish revaluation.” The next section (eight) begins with another dash, now indicating presumably the voice of the author of the above paragraph responding to the readers of the previous one. He writes there: “But don’t you understand that? You don’t have eyes for something which needed two millennia to achieve victory?” “Two millennia” and the “you” obviously orient the designation to contemporary Christianity and Christians. One can and should continue through sections eight and nine constantly asking who the interlocutor is. In anticipation of and in an improvement on Sartre,[[51]](#footnote-51) Nietzsche is telling us that the distance between anti-Semites and Jews is constructed by Christian anti-Semites to serve to their advantage.

Nothing in Nietzsche (at least in what he published) can be read properly without hearing the resonance that any section of a sentence sets up, both with the rest of the sentence and with the rest of the entry of which it is a part, and with those that are around it.[[52]](#footnote-52) Here is a more extensive example. Werner Dannhauser, in an excellent book on Nietzsche’s relation to Socrates, properly points to the importance of the aphorism in Nietzsche’s thought. He writes: “It is not easy to determine when he is being quoted out of context because it is not easy to see whether there is context or what it is.” Dannhauser continues on by (properly, I think) indicating that the aphorism is a counter to the treatise as a form of philosophizing. Then he says that aphorisms “broach problems rather than solve them” and indicates that aphorisms are “generalizations [which] are to be taken as stimulating insights rather than as final truths.” He gives as an example: “One aphorism declares ‘What doesn’t kill me, makes me stronger’.”[[53]](#footnote-53)

The citation is from *Twilight* *of the Idols* (Epigrams # 8). What Dannhauser gives is indeed a generalization, to which, he properly notes, one could find all sorts of counter-examples. To the degree that the sentence he cites would be the aphorism, it is indeed a kind of stimulus, not a “final truth.” However, for whatever reason, Dannhauser has not given us the aphorism that Nietzsche wrote. Nietzsche rather wrote: “*From the military school of life*. -- What doesn’t kill me makes me stronger.” The two parts of the aphorism resonate with each other (as do the italics) and forbid a simple conclusiveness about what Nietzsche “means.” What does it mean to speak from “the military school of life,” -- especially as the aphorism now becomes part of a military *training*, perhaps a training that is necessary to write a book like the *Twilight*, one which Nietzsche says to be a “declaration of war”? And “war” is here, Nietzsche says, a way of wounding *oneself*, so that one can heal from being “too inward, too deep.”[[54]](#footnote-54)

I leave these questions unanswered except to call attention to the fact that they make the whole matter of reading anything in Nietzsche much more complex than the conclusion that Nietzsche is a propagandist for *Conan the Barbarian*. However, a few things can be noted. First, whatever an aphorism is, it is *all* of its words. The sentence that Dannhauser gives (as Nietzsche’s) is something very different than the sentences that Nietzsche gives. A sentence does not an aphorism make*; resonance between the parts of the whole aphorism does*. Secondly, Nietzsche’s sentences *lend themselves to being wanted to be remembered* as Dannhauser gives them -- without the shaping tone that gives thickness to an otherwise bald assertion*. Therefore part of recovering the whole involves remembering that one did not want to remember it.* Wanting to get it wrong is part of getting it right. As Babette Babich has written:

The reader who falls short of the aphorism’s resonant or entire meaning, i.e. the reader who misses its musical significance, not only fails to ‘get it,’ as we say, but this failure is ineluctable because it is a failure unawares, hence, and effectively, incorrigible. Any aphorism, every Nietzschean text, has at least two points, if not indeed many more, which excess permits most readers to come away with at least a partial notion of the text.... Taking up the musical sense of the aphorism, one keeps both its subject matter and its development as part of a whole. Thus positions, statements at variance with one another are not simple contra*dictions* but contra*puntal*...[[55]](#footnote-55)

The aphorism – his writing -- must thus, in a third manner, be read musically, *concinnously*, that is, as a musical unification of dissonant themes.[[56]](#footnote-56) This has two elements to it. First is the resonance that occurs within and between sections, even within sentences themselves. Second, this is a text which draws upon the classical style, while subverting its elements in terms of the apparent relations of consonance and dissonance that it creates.

As a more extended example of the (“musical”) complexities of a rhetorically conscious reading Nietzsche, let me take section five of “Morality as Anti-Nature” of *Twilight*. Nietzsche begins (the emphases are mine):

*Given that* ***one*** *has grasped the sacrilege of such a revolt against life, like the revolt that has become nearly sacrosanct in Christian morality,* ***one*** *thus has, fortunately, grasped something else as well: the uselessness, illusiveness, absurdity, and mendacity of such a revolt.*

The operant subjectivity of the paragraph is not defined: it is “one.” This realization is available in principle to anyone, at least any-one in our historical position. The sentence is a kind of invitation: “are you part of this ‘one’? might you see yourself that way?” The whole entry is premised on a conditional (“Given that…”), a conditional that already requires inverting one’s normal understanding of the idea of sacrilege. The previous numbered paragraph ends with the statement that “Life ends where the ‘kingdom of God’ begins.” This is the source of the “sacrilege.” The sacrilege is identified in the previous entry as the claim that God can in fact look into one’s heart. Now this section takes up the theme that it is *sacrilege* to claim that God can in fact look into one’s heart. We say we assume that God can look into one’s heart (the traditional musical tonic chord, one might say). To *claim* this, however, must appear as sacrilege, that is, as a profanation of God. The text appears first to offer a stance towards life, but it does so in precisely terms (sacrilege) which it takes over from that which it claims to criticize. The first move in this paragraph requires, in other words, the use of religious language and categories in an irreligious manner. So far one proceeds without much anxiety: one might think that this constitutes a condemnation of religion by Nietzsche. However, the initial resolution appears now to not resolve the matter but to call up something else. Nietzsche continues:

*A condemnation of life by* ***one*** *who is alive remains, in the end, just a symptom of a particular kind of life: this does not at all raise the question of whether the condemnation is justified or unjustified.*

Any condemnation of life as such is a manifestation of something possibly profoundly wrong. A condemnation of life requires that one tacitly assume a position outside life, i.e. that is false to oneself, one that lies. So attacking God is to still remain inside a framework which *lies*. It is to assume the stance of God in the name of denying God -- hardly an advance. Again, grasping this is available to anyone – as shown by the persistent use of “*man*” - “one” -- in the first part of this entry. Nietzsche continues:

***One*** *would have to occupy a position outside life, and on the other hand to know it as well* ***as one, as many, as all*** *who have lived it, in order to be allowed even to touch upon the problem of the value of life:*

To even raise the question of the value of life means to have placed oneself in the position of being abstractly outside life. It means to adopt a promiscuous stance all at once monarchical, aristocratic and democratic (one, many, all) and to claim exemption from the judgment that it makes of and on the world. To understand in this way, however, would be to change who is the subject. Nietzsche again, following the colon that ended the previous excerpt:

*these are the reasons enough to grasp that, for* ***us****, this problem is an inaccessible problem. When* **we** *speak of values,* ***we*** *speak under the inspiration , under the optics of life: life itself is forcing us to posit values, life itself is valuing by means of* ***us****, if [and/or when:* wenn*] we posit values...*

Note how the insistent “one” yields here to a “we.” A seductive new resolution is proposed: that of “life.” Those who understand (“we”) that “life” is the answer will realize that there is nothing to do but to succumb to the realization that there is nothing to say, that the problem is “inaccessible.” (In “How the ‘True World’ Finally Became a Fiction”, the capsule history of Western philosophy Nietzsche has just given in the previous section he associates this position with positivism). Again the reader is tempted to feel a part of the apparent fraternity of insight. With this move the subject-reader (if s/he has joined this “we”) finds itself particular, non-universal, implicitly an elite. It makes a difference who is asking -- the passage leads the reader to accept this by implicitly offering the reader a resting space with the new “we.”

*It follows from this that even that anti-natural morality that takes God to be the antithesis and condemnation of life is only one of life’s value judgments. -- a judgment made by which life? Which kind of life?*

This is what “morality as it has been understood up to now” is -- a condemnation by the condemned, and this includes *even the judgment that God is the antithesis to life*. When the reader started this section -- “Morality as Anti-Nature” -- there seemed to be an expectation that morality would be opposed to “nature.” Now it appears that, as Nietzsche says in the next paragraph, that the problem comes when morality “condemns on its own grounds,” that is, when morality moralizes itself. Notice that an example of morality’s self-moralization is the judgment that God is the antithesis to life. The question (“… which life? Which kind of life?”) is raised therefore about the kind of life that makes such a judgment, that requires such a judgment. Who is it that says there is nothing to be said about “life”?[[57]](#footnote-57) This question itself succumbs to a temptation to think that consonance has been achieved. Thus Nietzsche will immediately undermine the apparent finality of this “we” by subtracting himself from it – but then who and what is left of the “we”? We had associated ourselves with what we thought to be Nietzsche’s position but now he tells us this was wrong***.***

*--* ***I*** *already gave the answer: declining, weakened, tired, and condemned life.*

The sudden intrusion from the “I” announces that there is no help from Nietzsche here: what he has to say he has already said; the reader did not grasp it *but thought that s/he did* and should now realize that s/he was wrong, mistaken. The answer is what it has always been and has been here since before we started the paragraph. It is as if we missed the tonic when it went by. In effect we have to start over: we are back at the beginning, knowing it, however, perhaps for a first time.[[58]](#footnote-58) In wanting to agree with Nietzsche on this I have shown myself to be declining, weak, tired: I have condemned my life.

Nietzsche’s writing thus calls up (or can call up) a *critical relation between what the reader wants and what the text makes available and requires of the reader*. The effect is to call into question precisely the desire to give resolution and to bring consonance to the experience. Nietzsche has reversed the traditional picture of the reader and the text: *it is as if the text has become the analyst and the reader the analysand.* (Heidegger will do the same with language). We are not to interpret the text but to allow ourselves to be available to the text. Nothing should stand between the two of us. (In a like manner, Tyndale and other early Protestants urged a direct (literal) engagement with Scripture).[[59]](#footnote-59) In reading Nietzsche, one should/can come to call into question precisely what one wants to make of Nietzsche – and that teaches one something about oneself. The text is intended to produce a “self-critique” – the basis of a (perhaps non-Kantian) autonomy. This critique is what Nietzsche in his preface to *Twilight* calls “sounding out idols,” idols which function here as “eternal truths,” that is, as truths which claim for themselves a permanent moral standing. To “sound out an idol” means rather to produce a *dissonance*, the contrast between the tuning fork and the sound the idol makes when struck. This is why Nietzsche says that the human being is a dissonance.

***Producing self-criticality: where is authority?***

(Almost) all of Nietzsche can and should be read like this.[[60]](#footnote-60) Even the *Birth of Tragedy* presents itself as a test for the reader – can you respond to *this*?[[61]](#footnote-61) In reading Nietzsche, and especially in reading Nietzsche about politics, this means the following. When one thinks that one understands Nietzsche (whether affirmatively or negatively) the first thing one should do is ask oneself “why is it that I want to think that *this* is what Nietzsche means?” Typically, one will find, as with my analysis of the aphorism above, that one has left something out, and a conclusion about which one was confident finds itself undercut. This requires a self-examination as why it is that one was drawn to find one’s initial conclusion correct. Nietzsche’s writing would thus generate a self-critical relationship of the reader to the conclusions that he or she wishes to draw. In this way it has a therapeutic aim – it requires the reader to be (self-) critical. It also means that what Nietzsche writes does not spring from a position in which Nietzsche has assumed the position of a final arbiter, something he avoids, paradoxically, most often by writing in such a way that you think that this is what he is precisely what he is doing.[[62]](#footnote-62) At his best, which is often, Nietzsche forces the reader to come to grips with his or her own unexamined needs and desires: to be self-critical and thus to become his or her own authority. Such is autonomy; thus a truth is translated *for me* – Emerson’s understanding of rhetoric (see the epigraph). The multiple understandings of Nietzsche all start (shall I say “almost all”?), to some degree, with the understandings of those who have not adequately turned their understanding back on themselves.[[63]](#footnote-63)

I am not arguing that each of us has his or her “own” Nietzsche. I am arguing that Nietzsche *purposively* writes in such a manner as to make many of those whose read him think that they have understood Nietzsche, only to find, on further careful or more careful reading or rereading – Nietzsche tells us he is a proponent of the *lento* in reading – that they have made something out of Nietzsche after their own image, an image or an idol that they must now call into question. In a section of *Ecce Homo* that echoes in my epigraph from Mark Twain, he explains why he writes such good books. He says:

Ultimately, nobody can get more out of things, including books, than he already knows. For what one lacks access to from experience one will have no ear. Now let us imagine an extreme case: that a book speaks of *nothing* but events that lie altogether beyond the possibility of any frequent or even also a rare experience – that it is a *first* language for a new series of experiences. … This is in the end my average experience and, if you will, the *originality* of my experience. Whoever thought he had understood something of me, had made up something out of me, after his own image…[[64]](#footnote-64)

From this we can see why both the “aristocratic” and “democratic” readings of Nietzsche are possible and why they are incomplete without each other. Aristocracies are about elites. There are, however, two ways of thinking about the question of an “elite,” a conception that Nietzsche clearly has. The first consists in holding the position that some individuals are, by the nature or their endowments, simply superior to the others. These are by their order or rank, entitled to whatever is theirs, perhaps to rule. At times, for instance in the early text *The Greek State*, Nietzsche sounds like he shares this position. The other way of thinking about an “elite” consists in asking why is it that most humans are content to, as Thoreau put it, “live lives of quiet desperation,” that they are not more than they are. Here one would look the way in which a sense of possibility and transformation has been slowly erased from human capacities. (This is the source of Nietzsche’s distress with the consequences of Socratic rationalism and Pauline Christianity). This more critical reading, to which I generally subscribe, also shows how “critical theorists,” such as Theodor Adorno and Max Horkheimer, could think to draw upon Nietzsche.. This reading raises the question of the possibility of human excellence in an age that tends to make human mediocrity seem all there is or can be.[[65]](#footnote-65)

A final discord: What this means – to speak too briefly here – is that Nietzsche would have seen fascism as a possible outcome of Western slave morality (an outcome that includes and has and will generate *Geisterkriege* as well as absurdly acquiescent attitudes towards the authority of science). But it also means that any reading of Nietzsche that excludes a priori the reading(s) that the Nazis made of him is wrong. This in turn raises a very complex question of the degree to which one can hold someone responsible for what is made of their thought – which is the question raised by Schlaffer in his book mentioned above. Here the question of whether or not “Nietzsche would have been a Nazi” is not of primary importance. (I think that it is obvious he would have not, just as figures like Oswald Spengler, Hermann Rauschning, Stefan George – I pick very conservative people whom one might have thought potentially sympathetic -- were not). If, however, what I have said above is true – that Nietzsche writes for each of us – then he also writes for a Nazi. If he wishes or expects or hopes that such an appeal -- this is my reading -- will be engaged by the dissonance of self-criticism, the political question becomes how long should – how long must -- one allow for such a move to happen?

The author wishes to thank the participants at a meeting of the Conference for the Study of Political Thought, Babette Babich, Jane Bennett, and two anonymous reviewers for their comments.

1. See Seth Taylor, *Left-Wing Nietzscheanism. The Politics of German Expressionism, 1910-1920* (Berlin. Gruyter, 1990) [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Cited in Ed. Baumgarten, *Max Weber: Werk und Person* (Tübingen, Mohr, 1964), 554. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. See Kurt Rudolf Fischer, “Nazism as Nietzschean Experiment.” In Tracy B. Strong, ed, *Nietzsche*. Farnham. Ashgate, 2009, 27-34. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. Geneviève Bianquis, *Nietzsche devant ses contemporains*. Monaco. Du Rocher, 1954.; On Germany see R. Thomas, R. Hinton. *Nietzsche in German Politics and Society, 1890-1918.* Manchester, Greater Manchester, Dover, N.H.: Manchester University Press, 1983); Ernst Behler, „Nietzsche in der marxistische Kritik Osteuropas.” *Nietzsche-Studien*. 10/11 (1981/82): 80-110. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. My list to here draws on one formulated by Bernd Magnus – it is the obvious one and nonetheless important for that. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. Hans-Joachim Becker, *Die Fruhe Nietzsche-Rezeption in Japan (1893-1903): Ein Beitrag zur Individualismusproblematik im Modernisierungsprozess***.** (Harrasowicz. Wiesbaden, 1983). Graham Parkes, ed. *Nietzsche and Asian Thought* (Chicago, 1993) as well as several works by Chiu-Yee Cheung, including *Lu Xun: The Chinese "Gentle" Nietzsche*, Peter Lang, Frankfurt am Main, 2001, as well as his Nietzsche *in China: An Annotated Bibliography 1904-1992*, Faculty of Asian Studies Monographs New Series No. 19, The Australian National University, Canberra (1992). See Graham Parkes, ed. *Nietzsche and Asian Thought*. Chicago. University of Chicago Press, 1991 as well as his essay in Bernd Magnus and Kathleen Higgins, eds. *The Cambridge Companion to Nietzsche* (Cambridge. Cambridge Up, 1995) [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. I cannot resist recalling that *Conan the Barbarian* has as epigraph a truncated quote – to be considered below --from Nietzsche (“Whatever does not kill me makes me stronger.”\) [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. Alasdair MacIntyre, *After Virtue* (Notre Dame. Notre Dame University Press, 1981) where the present author is labeled such. [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. See the texts collected in Kelly Oliver and Marilyn Pearsall, eds., *Feminist Interpretations of Nietzsche* (State Farm. Pennsylvania State University Press, 1988) – which cut, however, in many directions. [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
10. In conversation with the author some twenty years ago. [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
11. Walter Kaufmann, *Nietzsche. Philosopher Psychologist Antichrist*.(1950) Fourth edition: Princeton. Princeton University Press, 1975. [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
12. Gilles Deleuze, *Nietzsche et la philosophie.* Paris. PUF, 1962. [↑](#footnote-ref-12)
13. The tripartite division is very widespread. Erich F. Podach, *Friedrich Nietzsches Werke der Zusammenbruchs*. Heidelberg. Rothe, 1961 adds the fourth division. [↑](#footnote-ref-13)
14. For a fuller discussion see my “The Optics of Science, Art and life: How Tragedy Begins,” forthcoming in Vanessa Lemm, ed. *Nietzsche and Life* and my *Nietzsche, Wagner and the Case of the Advance Scout*, forthcoming in *New Nietzsche Studies.* See also Alan Schrift,”Language, Metaphor, Rhetoric: Nietzsche’s Deconstruction of Epistemology,” *Journal of the History of Philosophy*, 23.3, (July, 1985), 372. [↑](#footnote-ref-14)
15. Alexander Nehamas in his early work is the most sophisticated exemplar of this approach. See his *Life as Literature*. Cambridge, MA. Harvard University Press, 1987. [↑](#footnote-ref-15)
16. See Magnus, Bernd, “Nietzsche’s Philosophy in 1988: The Will to Power and the Übermensch,” *Journal of the History of Philosophy* 24, 1 (January, 1986), pp 78-100. [↑](#footnote-ref-16)
17. David Allison, *Reading the New Nietzsche* (Rowman and Littlefield. 2001), vii. [↑](#footnote-ref-17)
18. See Tracy B. Strong, "Nietzsche's Political Aesthetics," in M. Gillespie and T. Strong, eds.*Towards New Seas: Philosophy, Aesthetics and Politics in Nietzsche* (University of Chicago Press, 1988) and Tracy B. Strong, "The Political Misappropriation of Nietzsche,"*Cambridge Companion to Nietzsche,* ed. Bernd Magnus and Kathleen Higgins,(Cambridge University Press, 1995). A politically complex version (a combination of Louis Althusser, Mao Zedong and Leo Strauss) of this has been given in Geoff Waite, *Nietzsche’s Corps/e. Aesthetics, Politics, Prophecy, or, the Spectacular Technoculture of Everyday Life.* Durham/London. Duke University Press. 1996. [↑](#footnote-ref-18)
19. See Babich, Babette E., *Words in Blood, Like Flowers : Philosophy and Poetry, Music and Eros in Hölderlin, Nietzsche, and Heidegger.* SUNY Series in Contemporary Continental Philosophy. Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 2006), 19-36: “Philology and Aphoristic Style: Rhetoric, Sources and Writing in Blood”. [↑](#footnote-ref-19)
20. Cicero in *De invention* and other texts (c 50 BCE) and Quinitilian in *Institutuo Oratoria* (c 96 CE) formulate the basic five canons of rhetoric. [[Invention](http://rhetoric.byu.edu/canons/Invention.htm); [Arrangement](http://rhetoric.byu.edu/canons/Arrangement.htm); [Style](http://rhetoric.byu.edu/canons/Style.htm); [Memory](http://rhetoric.byu.edu/canons/Memory.htm); [Delivery](http://rhetoric.byu.edu/canons/Delivery.htm)] . But the canons predate their formulation. See the discussion in Josiah Ober, *Mass and Elite in Democratic Athens* (Princeton UP, 1989), concentrating on rhetoric in politics, and in Jeffrey Walker, *Rhetoric and Poetics in Antiquity* (Oxford UP, 2000)who shows its close relation to poetry. [↑](#footnote-ref-20)
21. These lectures are in the second set of volumes from *Werke Kritische Gesamausgabe* (Berlin. de Gruyter, 1966ff), henceforth WKG (and are not in the paperback *Studienausgabe*). [↑](#footnote-ref-21)
22. Nietzsche to Rohde, middle February, 1872 *Nietzsche Sämtliche Briefe. Kritische Studienausgabe*. Eight volumes. Berlin. De Gruyter, 1986 [ henceforth NSB], 3.293. On August 4, 1871 (NSB 3.215), he had written to Rohde indicating that with the publication of BT much of the “purple darkness” [to which Rohde had apparently referred] of his earlier work would become clearer. [↑](#footnote-ref-22)
23. Ph. Lacoue-Labarthe, “Le détour,” in *Poétique* 5 (1971), 53-76 [translated in *The Subject of Philosophy.* Minneapolis. University of Minnesota Press, 1993, 14-36]; Ernst Behler, *Confrontations: Derrida, Heidegger, Nietzsche*.  (Stanford, CA, Stanford University Press),10. Lacoue-Labarthe’s claim that Nietzsche abandons rhetoric after 1875 (p. 15, English edition) is incorrect: see the discussion of “the doctrine of style” below. See in support of the Lacoue-Labarthe/Behler position the book by Hans Gerald Hödl, *Nietzsche’s frühe Sprachkritik. Lekturen zu ‘Ueber Wahrheit und Lüge im aussermoralischen Sinne’*, (Vienna. WUV Universitätsverlag, 1997) and against it the very convincing review by Holger Schmidt in *New Nietzsche Studies*, volume 5 ½, pp 179-185 and Babette Babich’s footnotes to that review. The Lacour-Labarthe position is repeated in Deman, op.cit., 104-106, working directly from the original article. See also Schrift, op. cit., 381. [↑](#footnote-ref-23)
24. Nietzsche is clear that there is such a relation. See my “Nietzsche, Wagner and the Case of the Advance Scout,: *New Nietzsche Studies* (forthcoming). [↑](#footnote-ref-24)
25. Schlaffer, Heinz, *Das entfesselte Wort. Nietzsches Stil und seine Folgen*. München. Hanser Verlag (2007) es pp 142ff. Thanks to Babette Babich for calling this book to my attention. [↑](#footnote-ref-25)
26. See Hans Mommsen, *Max Weber und die deutsche Politik* (1st edition., Tübingen. Mohr, 1959; second edition, 1974) and Jürgen Habermas, *Knowledge and Human Interests*. Boston. Beacon, 1972. [↑](#footnote-ref-26)
27. A partial exception is Bradford Vivian, “Freedom, Naming, Nobility: The Confluence of Rhetorical and Political theory in Nietzsche’s Philosophy,” *Philosophy & Rhetoric*, 40.4 (Winter, 2007), 372-373. Vivian, however, tends to read the rhetoric as reinforcing the “aristocratic” or “right” reading of Nietzsche. See the discussion below. [↑](#footnote-ref-27)
28. Walter Kaufmann, *Nietzsche. Philosopher, Psychologist and Antichrist*. New York. Meridian, 1950 (First edition; now in its fourth edition at Princeton University Press; Richard Schacht, *Nietzsche*. *The Arguments of the Philosophers*. London. Routledge,1985. [↑](#footnote-ref-28)
29. See the discussion in William Salter, “Nietzsche and the War,” *International Journal of Ethics*, 27, 3 (November 1917) 357-379 [reprinted in Tracy B. Strong, *Nietzsche*]; the link is made also by W. W. Willoughby, “The Prussian Theory of the State,” *American Journal of International Law, 12,.2 (April,* 1918), 257 [↑](#footnote-ref-29)
30. Bertrand Russell, *History of Western Philosophy*, 687 [↑](#footnote-ref-30)
31. On the general question of Nietzsche and the Jews, see Sarah Kofman, *Le mépris des Juifs* (Paris. Galilée, 19xx) [translation by Tracy B. Strong in *New Nietzsche Studies*, (volume 7 ¾ (2007/2008), as well as the other articles in this issue]; Jacob Golomb and Robert Wistrich, *Nietzsche: Godfather of Fascism?* (2002); Yirmiyahu Yovel, *Dark Riddle. Hegel, Nietzsche, and the Jews*. University Park: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1998. [↑](#footnote-ref-31)
32. Aside from those mentioned here, one might note Babette Babich, Angèle Kremer-Marietti, Jacques Derrida, Sarah Kofman, Peter Sloterdyck and a number of others [↑](#footnote-ref-32)
33. See, for instance, his contribution of “Nietzsche” to the online *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy.*  [↑](#footnote-ref-33)
34. A number of works are important partial exceptions here. In addition to the work by Lacoue-Labarthe (discussed above, footnote 23) and Paul DeMan, *Allegories of Reading. Figural Language in Rousseau, Nietzsche, Rilke and Proust*. New Haven. Yale University Press, 1979, 79-134, see Claudia Crawford, *The Beginning of Nietzsche's Theory of Language*. Berlin. de Gruyter, 1988; and Douglas Thomas, *Reading Nietzsche Rhetorically*. Guilford Press, 1998. Both Crawford and Thomas argue (in Crawford’s words) that for Nietzsche “the deepest philosophical knowledge lies already prepared in language," although Thomas (an erst-while student of Crawford) appears to modify that position by apparently claiming that rhetoric is “something other than philosophical” (156) – true, if only one has a narrow understanding of what philosophy is. [↑](#footnote-ref-34)
35. “Darstellung der antiken Rhetorik” [WKG II-4.413-502**],** 425-426. A translation has appeared in *Friedrich Nietzsche on Rhetoric and Language****.***  Edited by Sander L. Gilman, Carole Blair, David J. Parent. Oxford. Oxford University Press, 1989. [↑](#footnote-ref-35)
36. WKG III-4. 330 – at one point this was to be a book that would be one of the *Untimely Meditations;* WKG IV-1. 205; [↑](#footnote-ref-36)
37. # Nietzsche to Lou , August 24, 1882 NSB 6: 243-245. To a considerable extent these ten commandments represent a condensation of the main subjects of his lecture course “*Darstellung der antiken Rhetorik*.” Extended considerations in the secondary literature are few. See the *Studienarbeit* paper by Tania Straniello, *Stilistische Verpflichtung? Nietzsches "Lehre vom Stil" und der Stil in "Also sprach Zarathustra"* Berlin. Grin, 2012. There are brief remarks in Karl Heckel, *Nietzsche; sein Leben und seine Lehre* (Lepzig. Phillip, 1933), 125-126. Compare the entry on “The Best Style“ in *Human-All-Too Human* II – Wanderer and his Shadow, 88 WKG IV-3. 231. See also by Hans-Martin Gauger, “”Nietzsche: Zur Genealogie der Sprache” in Joachum Gessinger and Wolfert von Rahden, eds. *Theorien Vom Ursprung Der Sprache,* Bd I (Berlin de Gruyter, 1988, pp 585-606, at 587-588; *ÜberSprache und Stil*. München. Beck, 1995; „Nietzsches Stil im Beispiel von ‚Ecce Homo‘.“ *Nietzsche Studien* 13 (1984). 332-356. And Linda Simonis, “Der Stil als Verführer. Nietzsche und die Sprache des Performativen,“ *Nietzsche Studien, 31 (2002),*57-74.

    [↑](#footnote-ref-37)
38. WKG VII-1. 34: He signs this: “A good morning to you, my dear Lou, F.N.” See the discussion in Linda Simonis, “Der Stil als Verführer. Nietzsche und die Sprache des Performativen,“ *Nietzsche Studien, 31 (2002),* 59-60. Simonis emphasizes the seductive (“VerfÏhrer”) aspect of these commandments.

    **Zur Lehre vom Stil**.

    1.

    Das Erste, was noth thut, ist Leben: der Stil soll leben.

    2.

    Der Stil soll dir angemessen sein in Hinsicht auf eine ganz bestimmte Person, der du dich mittheilen willst. (Gesetz der doppelten Relation.)

    3.

    Man muß erst genau wissen: „so und so würde ich dies sprechen und vortragen“ — bevor man schreiben darf. Schreiben muß eine Nachahmung sein.

    4.

    Weil dem Schreibenden viele Mittel des Vortragenden fehlen, so muß er im Allgemeinen eine sehr ausdrucksvolle Art von Vortrage zum Vorbild haben: das Abbild davon, das Geschriebene, wird schon nothwendig viel blässer ausfallen.

    5.

    Der Reichthum an Leben verräth sich durch Reichthum an Gebärden. Man muß Alles, Länge und Kürze der Sätze, die Interpunktionen, die Wahl der Worte, die Pausen, die Reihenfolge der Argumente — als Gebärden empfinden lernen.

    6.

    Vorsicht vor der Periode! Zur Periode haben nur die Menschen ein Recht, die einen langen Athem auch im Sprechen haben. Bei den Meisten ist die Periode eine Affektation.

    7.

    Der Stil soll beweisen, daß man an seine Gedanken glaubt, und sie nicht nur denkt, sondern empfindet.

    8.

    Je abstrakter die Wahrheit ist, die man lehren will, um so mehr muß man erst die Sinne zu ihr verführen.

    9.

    Der Takt des guten Prosaikers in der Wahl seiner Mittel besteht darin, dicht an die Poesie heranzutreten, aber niemals zu ihr überzutreten.

    10.

    Es ist nicht artig und klug, seinem Leser die leichteren Einwände vorwegzunehmen. Es ist sehr artig und sehr klug, seinem Leser zu überlassen, die letzte Quintessenz unsrer Weisheit selber auszusprechen. [↑](#footnote-ref-38)
39. It also means that to a certain extent Heidegger’s insistence on the *Nachlass* as Nietzsche’s “true philosophy” means that he may tend to underplay the importance of rhetoric. [↑](#footnote-ref-39)
40. This is Freud’s conclusion in his analysis of the Moses statue of Michelangelo and is the assumption that permits his analysis. See Tracy B. Strong, *Politics without Vision. Thinking without a Banister in the Twentieth Century.* Chicago. University of Chicago Press, 2012, Chapter Four. It is to counter this understanding that Salvador Dali adds a moustache (his) to the woman’s face in his *Self-Portrait as Mona Lisa* – the success of which seems to me mostly *de scandale*. [↑](#footnote-ref-40)
41. Here is an opening for an extended comparative analysis of Nietzsche and Jacques Derrida, “Plato’s Pharmacy,“ in *Disseminations* (Chicago. University of Chicago Press, 1981, 63-171, esp. 84-94. [↑](#footnote-ref-41)
42. Darstellung der antiken Rhetorik 1, WKG ii-4.425, 427; see ibid 449. See the discussion in the excellent Christian Emden, “Metapher, Wahrnehmung, Bewusstsein. Niezsches Verschränkung von Rhetorik und Neurophysiologie,: in *Text und Wissen*. Eds. Renate Lachmann and Stefan Rieger. Tübingen. Gunter Narr, 2003, 134. [Translated in *Nietzsche on Language, Consciousness and the Body*. Urbana, IL. University of Illinois Press, 2005, 88-123, at 91; see also importantly 45-46.] The middle passage from Nietzsche is also cited in Schrift, op. cit., 379 from the Musarion edition. Nietzsche notes (ibid., 425) that we call a book, an author, a style “rhetorical” when there is a conscious turning to the artistic means of speech, but that we always do so with a slight tone of censure. This is what he wishes to reject. The same point is made in Paul de Man, *Allegories of Reading.* New Haven, CT. Yale University Press, 1979, 130.

    Much of Nietzsche’s discussion of metaphor draws upon but recasts Gustav Gerber’s *Die Sprache als Kunst.* Berlin. Gärtner, 1885 (2nd edition). See the discussion in Martin Stingelin, “Nietzsche’s Wortspiel als poet(olog)ische Verfahrung,” *Nietzsche-Studien* 17 (1988), 336-349 and especially Anthonie Meijers, “Gustav Gerber und Friedrich Nietzsche: Zum historischen Hintergrund der sprachphilosophischen Auffassungen des frühen Nietzsche,” ibid., 369-390. One must be careful, however, not to fall too easily prey to *Quellenforschung*. [↑](#footnote-ref-42)
43. See the fine discussion in Emden, op. cit., 61-86. [↑](#footnote-ref-43)
44. Ibid., 415-416. The cite is from the *Critique of the Power of Judgment* (Cambridge. Cambridge University Press, 2005), section 51 (p. 198). Translation extensively modified (The English edition gives “imagination” for “*Ideen*”). So much, by the way, for the canard that Nietzsche knew little Kant. I resist the translation of *unterhalten* in Gilman et al as “entertain” which, while not wrong, carries a trivializing note. The Cambridge translation simply leaves it out. [↑](#footnote-ref-44)
45. I borrow and extend this example from Babette Babich, “The *Genealogy of* *Morals* and Right Reading: On the Nietzschean Aphorism” in Christa Davis Acampora, ed., *Nietzsche’s* On the Genealogy of Morals. Lanham. Rowman and Littlefield, 2006, 163-176. [↑](#footnote-ref-45)
46. For those counting, that is nine out of seventeen, one more than half. I note that *Strich* also means “street-walking” or “prostitution.” [↑](#footnote-ref-46)
47. See Babette Babich, *Nietzsche’s Philosophy of Science*. Albany. SUNY Press, 1994, 290; see Adrian del Caro, *Grounding the Nietzsche Rhetoric of Earth*. Berlin de Gruyter, 2004, 9. See the discussion (cited also in part by Caro) by David Allison, “Have I Been Understood,” in Richard Schacht, ed. *Nietzsche, Genealogy and Morality*. Berkeley and Los Angeles. University of California Press, 1994, 460-466. [↑](#footnote-ref-47)
48. Isidorus, *Orig* 2. 21.35: *aposiopesis est, cum id, quod dicturi videbamur, silentia intercipimus* cited in David Orton, R. Dean Anderson, eds. *Handbook of Literary Rhetoric*. Leiden. Brill, 1998, 395 and ff. I have appropriated the *Star Wars* example from somewhere I have forgotten. [↑](#footnote-ref-48)
49. Larry Hatab, *Nietzsche’s* On *the* Genealogy of Morality. *An Introduction.*  Cambridge. Cambridge University Press, 208, 41. [↑](#footnote-ref-49)
50. Brian Leiter, *Nietzsche on Morality*. London. Routledge, 2002, 219. [↑](#footnote-ref-50)
51. Jean Paul Sartre, *Anti-Semite and Jew: An Exploration of the Etiology of Hate*. New York. Schocken, 1995. [↑](#footnote-ref-51)
52. The material in the next few pages draws upon my “Preface” to Nietzsche’s *Twilight of the Idols* (Indianapolis. Hackett, 1995) [↑](#footnote-ref-52)
53. Werner Dannhauser, *Nietzsche’s View of Socrates*. Ithaca, NY. Cornell University Press, 1974, pp 195,197, 203-204. [↑](#footnote-ref-53)
54. *Twilight* *of the Idols*- Foreword, WKG VI-3, 51 [↑](#footnote-ref-54)
55. Babette E. Babich, “*Mousike techne:* The Philosophical Praxis of Music in Plato, Nietzsche, Heidegger” in Robert Burch and Massimo Verdicchio, eds., *Gesture and Word: Thinking Between Philosophy and Poetry.* London: Continuum, 2002. 178 [↑](#footnote-ref-55)
56. The word derives from the Latin *concinnitas* meaning “skillfully put together”. The term and the argument for it can be found in Babette Babich, “On Nietzsche’s Concinnity: An Analysis of Style,” *Nietzsche-Studien* 19 (1990), pp 59-80. Her footnote 17 gives a good summary of various commentators who have read Nietzsche as musical. Note that such considerations mean that the material in Nietzsche’s notebooks, the so-called *Nachlass*, is by and large *not* a “Nietzschean” text. It comprises the elements that become a composition, but not a composition. Babich makes the same point. The concept itself has its origins in Cicero (*Orator*, xxiii) and Alberti , *De re aedificataria* [*On the Art of Building*], book 9. All of this in great part confirms Bernd Magnus’ argument for “splitters” over “lumpers” (of the published work over the *Nachlass*) in Bernd Magnus, Stanley Stewart and Jean-Pierre Mileur et al, *Nietzsche’s Case*, (London. Routledge, 1993). [↑](#footnote-ref-56)
57. One is taken back here to what Nietzsche in the 1886 “Attempt at a Self-Critique” says is the subject of *the Birth of Tragedy*: to see “*science through the optic of the artist, but also to see art through optic of life”* *Birth of Tragedy* Attempt 2 WKG III-1.12 – his italics*.* [↑](#footnote-ref-57)
58. Cf the opening lines of “Peoples and Fatherlands” in *Beyond Good and Evil*: “I hear it again for the first time -- the overture to *Die Meistersinger*...” [↑](#footnote-ref-58)
59. See the discussion in the chapter on Tyndale in Stephen Greenblatt, *Renaissance Self-Fashioning*, Chicago. University of Chicago Press, 2005. Samuel Beckett once spoke of “the power of the text to claw” and this is what he meant. [↑](#footnote-ref-59)
60. For another example, see the excellent passage on the rhetoric of *Beyond Good and Evil* 2 in Thomas, op. cit., 64-69 [↑](#footnote-ref-60)
61. See my “Philosophy and the Politics of Cultural Revolution,” *Philosophical Topics, 33,2 (2008).* Reprinted in Strong, ed. *Nietzsche (*Ashgate, 2009*)* [↑](#footnote-ref-61)
62. See the extended discussion in my “Texts, Pretexts and the Subject: Perspectivism in Nietzsche,” chapter ten of Strong (2000), esp. 308. An earlier version appeared in my "Texts and Pretexts: Reflections on Nietzsche's Doctrines of Perspectivism," in*Political Theory*(May, 1985). [↑](#footnote-ref-62)
63. DeMan comes close to this position when he writes: “If we read Nietzsche with the rhetorical awareness provided by his own theory of rhetoric we find that the general structure of his work resembles the endlessly repeated gesture of the artist ‘who does not learn from experience and always falls again into the same trap.’ What seems the most difficult to admit is that this allegory of errors is the very model of philosophical rigor.” (op. cit., 118) [↑](#footnote-ref-63)
64. Ecce Homo Why I Write such Good Books 1 WKG VI-3, 296: Zuletzt kann Niemand aus den Dingen, die Bücher eingerechnet, mehr heraushören, als er bereits weiss. Wofür man vom Erlebnisse her keinen Zugang hat, dafür hat man kein Ohr. Denken wir uns nun einen äussersten Fall, dass ein Buch von lauter Erlebnissen redet, die gänzlich ausserhalb der Möglichkeit einer häufigen oder auch nur seltneren Erfahrung liegen, — dass es die erste Sprache für eine neue Reihe von Erfahrungen ist. … Dies ist zuletzt meine durchschnittliche Erfahrung und, wenn man will, die Originalität meiner Erfahrung. Wer Etwas von mir verstanden zu haben glaubte, hat sich Etwas aus mir zurecht gemacht, nach seinem Bilde,... [↑](#footnote-ref-64)
65. See here the discussion of “becoming hard” in my *Politics without Vision. Thinking without a Banister in the Twentieth Century* (Chicago. University of Chicago Press, 2012), pp 393-396. [↑](#footnote-ref-65)