Nietzsche on Argumentation and Rhetorics

Born, Jelle

2025

Universiteit Leiden

Nietzsche on Argumentation & Rhetorics

JELLE BORN, S2937409

Master thesis Modern European Philosophy

Supervisor: Johan de Jong

Date of submission: 10-6-2025

Table of Contents:

1. **Introduction** 2
2. **Language and rhetorics in early Nietzsche: OTL and DaR** 4
3. **Truth, argumentation, & the rhetoricity of philosophy in later Nietzsche: GS and BGE** 12
4. **Discussion** 26
5. **Conclusion** 34

Reference list 37

1. Introduction

„Er missfällt mir.“ — Warum? — „Ich bin ihm nicht gewachsen.“ — Hat je ein Mensch so geantwortet?” (BGE 185).

1.1. A fierce debate

If you are going out to eat with a friend.

‘Let’s get McDonald’s,’ you would say.
‘No thanks,’ says your friend. ‘I don’t really like hamburgers.’
‘But they have fries, too.’
‘Oh, no, that’s fine; McDonald’s is too far away, anyways.’
‘We can just take my car.’
‘Oh, I’d rather not – I usually get carsick.’
‘We can just bike.’
‘Oh, no –,’ etc.

1.2. Introduction-A/abstract

In *Beyond Good and Evil* section five, Nietzsche tells us that philosophers usually only defend their “prejudiced proposition, idea, or "suggestion," which is generally their heart's desire abstracted and refined”, with “arguments sought out after the event”. This raises a question. If these arguments are only produced “after the event”, why do philosophers produce them, at all?

In my thesis, I shall endeavor to provide a response. It is my view that this passage – and similar passages found in *The Gay Science,* and further in *Beyond Good and Evil,* should be understood in the context of Nietzsche’s earlier work on rhetorics. More specifically, in Nietzsche’s early work *A Representation of Ancient Greek Rhetorics,* Nietzsche makes the bold statement that “*language is rhetoric* because it desires to convey only a *doxa* [opinion], not an *epistēmē* [knowledge]” (DaR, p. 107).[1] I shall try to show why I believe this position is a relatively stable one throughout Nietzsche’s career, and discuss its forms and implications throughout his later works. As we shall see, in his early work, language is rhetoric because it is based on ‘tropes’, such as metaphor and synecdoche. It never teaches the ‘truth’, but only ever shares impressions. In his later work, however, language, and more specifically argumentation become rhetoric, because ‘truth’ is always only a *value-judgement* made by the body. ‘Logic’, i.e. viewing the world in a logical manner constituted by ‘beings’, is one of these value-judgments. Nietzsche regards logic as an instinctive *imperative* by the body; meaning that arguments, insofar as they are based on logic, play into this imperative in order to impose a value-judgment.

[1] When I refer to DaR, I am doing so specifically to Blaire’s translation (1983).

By following the development of this position, I believe we can better understand Nietzsche's philosophy of language (more specifically: argumentation), society, and his meta-philosophy as presented in *The Gay Science* and *Beyond Good and Evil.* Paradoxically, Nietzsche presents language and argumentation in these texts as essentially the imposing of value-judgment, and hence as rhetoric. Philosophy, insofar as it is based on logical argumentation, is a struggle of manipulation: philosophers are "all advocates" (BGE 5).

My thesis is therefore chiefly an *interpretative* one; though where textual evidence falls short, I will compensate by making my own suggestions. I will keep in line with Nietzsche's overall framework, however. My focus will be primarily on the early texts *On Truth and Lie in a Nonmoral Sense* and *A Representation of Ancient Greek Rhetoric;* and the two middle to later texts *The Gay Science* and *Beyond Good and Evil.* I do this because these texts appear to deal most explicitly with issues of language, persuasion, and argumentation. I moreover have consulted the *Nachlass,* but I will develop my arguments separately from it, taking the published works as authoritative for Nietzsche's later thought. Finally, I will also deal with *Twilight of the Idols,* specifically with regards to Clark's (1991) argument that the notion of truth being a value-judgment is abandoned in Nietzsche's very latest works. I argue that she is mistaken, and that she misinterprets Nietzsche's stance towards experience. Experience is fundamentally a value-judgment for the later Nietzsche, but since it is a value-judgment most of us share, it becomes possible for experience and science, insofar as it is based on experience, to become rhetoric to a lesser degree than e.g. philosophy.

I proceed as follows:

(2.) looks at two early works: *On Truth and Lie in a Nonmoral Sense* (OTL), and *a Representation of Ancient Greek Rhetoric* (DaR). The former will lay the groundwork for Nietzsche's later views on language and truth as *social* and *biological*. DaR is a collection of lecture notes, and describes language as *functionally,* as well as *structurally* rhetorical. We combine these two texts to form an overall image of Nietzsche's early views on language, and consider what these views imply for argumentation.

(3.) will discuss the evolution of the positions seen in **(2.)**. Starting in *The Gay Science* (GS) we see that compared with DaR, Nietzsche conceives of the structure of language differently: instead of tropical it becomes logical. Far from this implying that language is no longer rhetoric, however, it reiterates this position, because logic fundamentally falsifies by positing 'beings' instead of a flux, and because 'truth' becomes a value-judgment. This new element of value-judgement also makes of language and conscious argumentation a kind of 'effect' of whatever the body judges to be valuable. We utilize this conception to discuss what, exactly, conscious arguments are and how they work: here we move away slightly from Nietzsche's writing. We see that if an argument is convincing, this is because our logical instincts try to avoid contradiction; or, the conclusion is valuable on its own. Afterwards, we turn to *Beyond Good and Evil* (BGE), and interpret his account of philosophy. I show how the notion that language and argumentation are aimed at imposing *doxa*

makes a strong reappearance in this work. Philosophers are represented as lawyers of their personal taste/value-judgments, i.e. perfect rhetoricians.

(4.) will provide two discussions. The first, which concerns *science,* argues against Clark's view (1991) that Nietzsche abandons his position of logic as presented in GS. I will show, however, that her perspective brings to light a specific aspect of Nietzsche's view of argumentation with regards to science. Though scientific argument still appears as rhetorical; it does so to a lesser degree than e.g. in philosophy, because most people agree on sensuous information. Afterwards, I discuss three options for overcoming the inevitable self-contradictoriness of the proposition that language aims at imposing *doxa* as opposed to *epistēmē.* These are to (1) argue that Nietzsche's position is *scientific,* and therefore less rhetorical than it would be if it were philosophical; (2) argue that the proposition of something self-contradictory being necessarily false is begging the question; (3) argue that since language is rhetoric, and arguments convince by playing into logical instincts, self-contradiction is a form of honesty and therefore *good,* in this case.

(5.) provides a summary and conclusion. We conclude that the view of language and argument being rhetoric, is a relatively stable one throughout Nietzsche's career. It does change, however, in the manner indicated above. Here we will also consider some implications, such as what it means for the common distinction between demagogues, and politicians who use arguments. This distinction becomes less clear.

2. Language and rhetorics in early Nietzsche: OTL and DaR

2.1. Introduction-B

The purpose of this chapter is to lay the groundwork of Nietzsche's early views on language. To this end, we shall be looking primarily at two early texts: *On Truth and Lie in a Nonmoral Sense*, and *A Representation of Ancient Greek Rhetoric*. Here we find Nietzsche arguing for an anthropological and naturalized account of language. Already Nietzsche blurs the distinction between language and reason on the one hand, and instinct on the other: he compares language to bees and their honeycombs, or ants with their anthills (KGW II/2.188). There is, however, also an aesthetic component to Nietzsche's early understanding of language. This is exemplified by Nietzsche's association of language and music (NL 1871, 12[1]), or Plato and poetry (BT 14) found elsewhere in his early work.

We thus observe a break with classical ideas on language in Nietzsche's early thought. Schopenhauer, for instance, saw language as essentially an instrument of reason: language is a copy of representations through a necessary connection (WWR, ¶ 8,9). But to conclude from this that Nietzsche's was an extraordinary and radically original account would be a mistake. Much study has been done into the intellectual landscape of around

the time Nietzsche wrote these texts, and it is evident he was deeply enveloped in much thinking and writing about language in terms of a natural and artistic drive (Emden, 2005, e.g. pp. 10-13; 62-70). Qua influence, Gerber's *Language as Art* is a notable example (Behler, 1995, pp. 6, 14). Of course, however, Nietzsche ends up radicalizing these ideas and will draw them to their ultimate conclusions.

Let us now turn to our two main texts of this chapter: OTL and DaR. Though it has been argued that the latter of these was actually composed prior to the former (Behler, 1995, pp. 6-15), OTL offers the more focused yet comprehensive account of language as a whole. For this reason I start with that text first. Afterwards, DaR will supply us with a more detailed account and place what we have learned in the context of rhetorics, specifically. Afterwards we shall attempt a systematization/summary for us to use later.

2.2. On Truth and Lie in a Nonmoral Sense: people, bodies, and poetry

A short text, written somewhere in 1873, OTL in many ways prefigures statements Nietzsche would later make concerning language, logic, and truth. It was never officially published in Nietzsche's own lifetime. It contains a naturalistic, and one might even say deconstructionist account on language and truth – and indeed it was with an eye for their deconstructionist elements that authors first became interested in these early texts on language (Behler, 1995, pp. 3-4).

In my view, the image of language Nietzsche sets forth in OTL can be understood to have three separate, but deeply connected dimensions. They are all unsystematically expressed across the text. The dimensions are *social, biological,* and *artistic.* Specifically the social and biological dimensions will become important for our purposes. The dimensions are as follows:

Social. The social aspect of language in this text cheekily refers to Hobbes. Nietzsche conceptualizes pre-linguistic man as in a "state of nature" (*natürliche Zustande*): he is in a gross "bellum omnium contra omnes": a war of all against all (OTL 1). He represents language and truth as being invented as a social contract, a "peace treaty", as Nietzsche says. The truth that is established this way, Nietzsche tells us, is therefore strictly speaking a lie. The difference is that it is lying according to a fixed convention. What therefore comes to be called a 'lie' in a given society are, according to Nietzsche, those statements/designations that deviate from the established "laws of truth". This is especially the case if the lie is told for selfish reasons and is harmful to others. For Nietzsche, then, people do not despise lying *per se,* but rather the harm done by certain *types* of lying.

Biological. Especially the second dimension of Nietzsche's account of language in OTL prefigures positions he would later adopt. For starters, an evolutionary side is already highlighted. Nietzsche makes the analogy of humans with their language on the one hand,

and beasts with their claws and teeth on the other. He also talks about the "life preserving consequences" of certain types of deception being termed 'true'. There is further the materialistic, i.e. physiological aspect of language being discussed. We can represent it in a kind of model:

Nerve stimulus → image → sound

As Nietzsche says, each transference from one sphere to the next is a 'metaphor' (understood in the technical sense of "a transposition of data from the physiological to the mental sphere"; see Zavatta (2018, p. 202), who follows Emden (2005, p. 99)). This means that, e.g., an image is a 'metaphor' of a nerve stimulus. Nietzsche goes on to note that there is "no causality, no correctness, no expression" between these spheres, "but at most an aesthetic relation" (OTL 1). This "aesthetic relation" means an artistically mediated translation, comparable to how one cannot with logical strictness translate most sentences from one language to another. To use Nietzsche's example: it is like "a handless painter who wishes to express what he sees in a song". We therefore see the artistic dimension being highlighted already.

Artistic. Finally, Nietzsche describes language as being a product of *art,* a *poem* that humans instinctively compose. He speaks of concepts originating as "unique, wholly individual experiences", but which lose their uniqueness and come to stand for many similar, but unequal cases . This artistic aspect of language goes incredibly deep: Nietzsche explains what happens when a given set of 'metaphors' becomes rigid, i.e. counted as 'true'. The drive re-channels itself, and gives rise to myth and art in general. Nietzsche uses this to explain why man sometimes thinks he dreams when witnessing art: his reality becomes distorted (OTL 2).

...

We thus have a conception of language as consisting of 'metaphors', which are physiologically based products of art that become 'true' through social conventions. Nietzsche proceeds to explain how this "army of metaphors" eventually loses its artistic and manmade status, which he attributes to forgetfulness. Originally, words are highly subjective, sensuous, and even emotional depictions of nerve stimuli. Over time, however:

> When the same image has been recreated millions of times and has been passed down across many generations, and finally appears for all of humanity every time the same thing occurs, does it eventually come to acquire the same significance for everyone, as if it were the only necessary image, and as if the relation between the original nerve stimulus and the original image were of a strict causal nature (OTL 1)

It is thus because "man forgets he is an artistically creative subject"; because his metaphors become rigidly petrified, that his world comes to appear understandable, necessary, or logical overall.

Finally, Nietzsche remarks what this entails for our belief and satisfaction at sometimes discovering truth. Nietzsche does not hold it in high esteem. He uses the example of someone hiding an object behind a bush, looking for it later in the same place, and finding it again. This, Nietzsche says, no one would be impressed with. He also mentions making up the definition 'mammal'. If *we* make the definition, and we proceed to find a camel and attribute our newly invented concept to it – we might have 'discovered' something 'true', but this feat is of limited value. We might go on to say that in some ways Nietzsche strays not too far off from the Kantian tradition: the things we discover in the world, e.g. natural laws or chemical properties, are things *we* have placed within it. The fundamental differences are that for Nietzsche, these things emerge as part of an animalistic, artistic, and highly contingent impulse; and that here, instead of being 'true', all our descriptions are fundamentally false. In fact, there *is* no truth – what this implies for Nietzsche's own writing shall be discussed in **(4.2)**).

This is thus the view of language Nietzsche sets forth in *On Truth and Lie in a Nonmoral Sense.* Language is essentially a poem, an artistic product emerging from biological impulses. Words start off as sensuous depictions, but over time and through social convention come to appear rigid, 'true', and as representing the world in a logical, necessary way. Let us now turn to our second early text, *A Representation of Ancient Greek Rhetoric.* Here we will see Nietzsche making the claim that language is rhetoric, and that it is structurally 'tropical'.

2.3. A Representation of Ancient Greek Rhetoric: "language is rhetoric"

A Representation of Ancient Greek Rhetoric consists of notes for a course Nietzsche taught; the date of its composition is debated (Blair, 1983, p. 94). As the title suggests, the text offers an overview of classical interpretations of rhetorics, and is mostly aimed at informing students with regards to intellectual history and linguistics. In the third chapter of the text, however, Nietzsche seems to stray from the path, and puts forward what appears to be a more personal account of rhetorics. It is this chapter that I will be primarily interested in.

The text opens by pointing out how in modern times, the art of rhetorics has fallen into a state of disrepute. With this, we are today of course somewhat familiar:

> We call an author, a book, or a style "rhetorical" when we observe a conscious application of artistic means of speaking; it always implies a gentle reproof. We consider it to be not natural, and as producing the impression of being done purposefully (DaR, p. 106).

It is a 'sly', manipulative manner of speaking; Nietzsche quotes Locke:

> All the Art of Rhetorik, …all the artificial and figurative application of Words Eloquence hath invented, are for nothing else but to insinuate wrong Ideas, move the Passions, and thereby mislead the Judgment; and so indeed are perfect cheats (DaR, p. 127; from Locke, *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding,* III, x, 34).

Nietzsche ends up turning this notion on its head.

But before we can understand what Nietzsche says about rhetorics, we need to discuss briefly 'what' rhetorics is. So, generally speaking, we can make the distinction between honest, natural discourse on the one hand, and rhetorical, 'unnatural' discourse on the other. There are, in my view, at least two distinguishing features in this regard. First, there is the role of *figurative tropes.* Figurative tropes are those forms of writing and speech that stylistically 'transform' whatever one is talking about. So, for instance, we can consider 'metaphor' (this time in the more usual sense) as a figurative trope. If I say that 'last night was a movie', I am speaking metaphorically. That is, it was not 'literally' a movie. The metaphor just plays into common features between these two objects: e.g. excitement or romance. This is the first way in which speech can be rhetorical. It is when someone speaks using figurative tropes, instead of speaking 'literally'.

The second way in which we can make the distinction, comes down to a text or speech's *function:* i.e., whether it informs the receiver, or is trying to convince them. In 'honest' discourse, we believe we are speaking with the goal of 'truthfulness' in mind. We suppose ourselves to be the possessors of some 'truth', and by laying it down in a careful, honest manner, we attempt to convey this truth to our listener. This is a notion that of course has a long history behind it, and figures quite prominently in Plato, whom Nietzsche references in DaR. Plato distinguishes himself from the Sophists, whom he sees as rhetoricians *par excellence.* The Sophists, in Plato's view, speak with neglect as to what is 'true', speaking rather with the intent of convincing their listener through rhetorical, as opposed to dialectical means. The difference between the two, Sophists and someone like Plato, has been nicely portrayed by Benedetta Zavatta (2018, p. 200), who puts it down to a difference in anthropological models. Plato, on this view, sees "man as a rich being who transcends the biological determination of the animals and is somewhat similar to God". To speak honestly, is for someone like Plato therefore a communication of a possessed truth. The Sophists, on the other hand, flip this optimistic image right on its head. They see "man as a poor being, lacking the necessary instinctive equipment for survival and forced to devise artificial means to adapt to his environment". Instead of communicating the truth, which the Sophists deny to be possible, they therefore conceive of rhetorics "as a tool to compensate for its loss". For the Sophists, rhetorics is thus a means to artificially construct a reality and impose an opinion (as those cannot be properly distinguished) – and it is this view that Nietzsche adopts.

As Paul de Man points out (1979, p. 105), Nietzsche's position in DaR boils down to a theory of tropes. As I explained in the previous section, words, for Nietzsche, are essentially artistic depictions of some nerve stimulus: they do not refer to anything 'out there'. In DaR, Nietzsche emphasizes this position, by blurring the distinction between figurative tropes on the one hand (and as I explained above), and honest, 'literal' language on the other. The way Nietzsche goes about this is somewhat typical, for he uses a genealogical (in this case, indeed *etym*ological) argument. He speaks about the *synecdoche,* a figurative trope in which one uses a feature of an object, to designate that object as a whole (as Behler says, most of these terms and arguments Nietzsche picks directly from Gerber's *Language as Art;* see Behler, 1995, pp. 15-18). One example Nietzsche uses is 'serpens',

which qua example works well in the English language. In English, we are used to referring to snakes as being 'serpents', to the point of us considering the term to 'literally' refer to such things. However, as Nietzsche points out, 'serpens' in actuality meant "that which crawls". So "why is *serpens* not also a snail?" (DaR, p. 107). One especially striking example of this (which for obvious reasons Nietzsche does not use himself) is actually the word 'true'. It originally meant something that is 'firm', 'steadfast', or even 'trustworthy'; something exemplified by the word's cognates such as 'tree' or the Dutch 'trouw' (loyal).[2] Nietzsche's claim is, that if we were to perform such etymological research on every word we know, we would end up with the same results. That is, we would discover that these words originally referred to something in a tropical manner.

After discussing several etymologies, referring to a couple of kinds of tropes, Nietzsche says the following "in sum: the tropes are not just occasionally added to words *but constitute their most proper nature*. It makes no sense to speak of a "proper meaning" which is carried over to something else only in special cases" (DaR, p. 108, my italics). This, combined with what we said in the previous section, leads to two pretty baffling conclusions.

...

Language is rhetoric: functional aspect.

Let us begin with the first conclusion, which is that **qua function, language and rhetorics are identical** (the terminology of language as 'functionally' and 'structurally' identical to rhetorics I take from Kopperschmidt, 1994, p. 50). This bears especially on what we said in **(2.2.)**. As Nietzsche now says in DaR:

> Man, who forms language, does not perceive things or procedures, but impulses: he does not apprehend sensations, but merely copies of sensations. The sensation, evoked through a nerve impulse, does not take in the thing itself: this sensation is presented externally through an image […] The things do not pass over into consciousness, but the manner in which we stand toward them, the *pithanon* [power of persuasion] (p. 107).

In other words, what strikes us of a given sensation, i.e. the image we have of it, is determined by what is most striking about it *to us.* We might say we convince 'ourselves' of an interpretation (more on this in a moment). This means that anything anyone ever says is a conveying not of something objective, but of an *impression.* In other words, "*language is rhetoric* because it desires to convey only a *doxa* [opinion], not an *epistēmē* [knowledge]" (DaR, p. 107, italics in original).

[2] See https://www.etymonline.com/word/true

Language is rhetoric: structural aspect.

The second conclusion is that **language and rhetorics are also structurally identical**. This is of course the same as saying that language is essentially tropical. What this means, however, is that tropes constitute the *logic* of our thinking and speech. This in itself means two things. First of all, it means that conscious rhetorical strategies (e.g. metaphor and synecdoche) are, as Zavatta says "a continuation and intensification of similar procedures that are performed automatically and unconsciously by all human beings in their everyday thinking and speech" (2018, p. 201). This means that whenever one studies rhetorical strategies, one simultaneously studies the structure of *thought.* But this raises the question: *why is this* the structure of our thought? This leads us to the second point, which is that thought and language *themselves* are shaped in such a way so as to induce impressions. I said above that we "convince 'ourselves' of an interpretation". What I meant is, the impression we have of a given nerve stimulus is somewhat determined with an eye as to what will be convincing to others. We naturally do not think e.g. 'giraffe' when looking at a chair. This is because that impression would not have as much '*pithanon*', to use the expression Nietzsche borrows from Aristotle. This view of language being structurally aimed at creating impressions makes sense, because, as Kopperschmidt says:

> Language *as* language is both the expression and the result of a specifically human interest in the world. This human interest in the world, however, does not primarily aim at its representation or theoretical recognition, but at its "metamorphosis into human" (KSA I, S. 883), to wit, at its alignment with "*our* conditions of survival" or "practical needs" (1994, pp. 50-51, my translation, italics by Kopperschmidt. Nested quotations are referring to Nietzsche).

In other words, we are a *social* and *biologically evolved* creature. For us it is important to share impressions and create consensus, and language, and indeed even thought are shaped to accommodate these needs (compare GS 354, which I believe is influenced by this view).

...

This is the image of rhetorics and language Nietzsche sets forth in DaR. Language is both functionally and structurally rhetorical. It is shaped and formed to have a *social* function. It has nothing to do with 'truth', but is aimed at creating and maintaining consensus. As I demonstrate in the following chapter, this notion will resurface in *The Gay Science,* as well as in *Beyond Good and Evil.* For now, let us attempt a summary and systematization of what has been discussed so far.

2.4. Synthesis and preliminary discussion with regards to argumentation

Language for Nietzsche, as we said, has three separate dimensions. These were social, biological, and artistic. Let us begin by situating rhetorics as we have discussed it in the previous section within this naturalistic framework:

Social. As we saw, the social dimension of language is already essential at this stage. Both functionally and structurally, language is rhetoric. This means that (1) language is aimed not at 'truth', but at creating and maintaining consensus. (2) Language is *shaped* so as to induce impressions, i.e. it is tropical.

Biological. Simultaneously, language is a bodily and instinctual phenomenon (nerve stimulus → image). This means that the tropes Nietzsche distinguishes as the structure of language, are somehow situated in the body. This is why Zavatta characterizes tropes for Nietzsche as "embodied schemata" (2018). The further implication of this is that these tropes must have evolved. As such the tropes imply a practical use and a certain way of life.

Artistic. Finally, language is essentially art. Let us not forget that the tropes are figurative and artistic manners of speaking. If language is essentially tropical, then that means that whenever we utter a sentence, we are using our artistic faculties to create an image with the aim to impress. The difference between what we ordinarily think is a poetic sentence, and a didactic, factual one, merely comes down to the tropes that we use. The one may e.g. make use of some unusual metaphors in a peculiar structure, while the other uses metaphors and structures that are used more generally.

...

I propose that in the context of the texts we have looked at, this image we may hold as representative of Nietzsche's early thought on language. I should now like to halt for a moment and consider the implications this view brings with regards to my central issue in this thesis, i.e. argumentation. Nietzsche does not say a lot about argumentation specifically. So, how should we understand it?

For starters, it would seem that *persuasion* is a central aim of language as described here. It is, however, persuasion in a special sense. For what language in this respect aims to do, is create and maintain *consensus.* That is, to the degree we assume language to aim at communicating information, it actually seeks to make as many people as efficiently as possible, think and feel the same things.

As to what this means for argumentation as a specific form of persuasion, here, it appears again as essentially rhetorical. Though only few arguments we encounter are strictly speaking syllogistic, we can use syllogism as a prime example. In the classical understanding, then, a syllogism is convincing because – if its premises are accepted, it supposedly tells you the truth. That is, because a syllogistic argument uses universal logical necessity, it makes it so that its conclusion is undoubtedly 'true' – again, if the premises are given. The alternative picture that Nietzsche's account implies, however, is that the syllogism is not some universal logical law, but rather an evolved figurative trope. It is a

'style' we can incorporate into our persuasion, which for some purposes is more effective than others. In fact, this view accounts far better for the phenomenon we frequently encounter, which is that, really, sound arguments are often not as convincing as we assume. Far more often than not, a good analogy can be more forceful; a trustful appearance, even *rhyme* can be more convincing than argument. In the view of language as tropical this makes sense, because, at base, there *is no difference between rhyme and reason.*[3] In the classical image, on the other hand, people are just stupid.

Now that we have set out what language, and more specifically *argumentative persuasion* are for Nietzsche's early thought, it is time to turn to Nietzsche's later works. As we shall see, there remain clear traces of language as rhetorical in the sense described above in his later works. As we shall also see, however, these ideas become largely transformed, and appear in different contexts.

3. Truth, argumentation, & the rhetoricity of philosophy in later Nietzsche: GS and BGE

3.1. Introduction-C

It is important to note right from the start that from 1875 onward, virtually all reference to tropes and rhetorics stops occurring in Nietzsche's writing. This has been explained by Lacoue-Labarthe as rhetorics having been just a passing interest for Nietzsche; "if you will, an accident" (1979, p. 37). Nevertheless, most authors persist in their belief that rhetorics had a towering influence on Nietzsche's later thought, specifically with regards to his critique of metaphysics.[4] Zavatta, for instance, concludes that "quite simply, Nietzsche no longer uses rhetorical terminology" (2018, p. 206), adding that Nietzsche's early works on rhetorics "have to be carefully examined as an important anticipation of his mature epistemology" (p. 208).

In my view, this interpretation is quite right. As we shall see in this chapter, though Nietzsche lets go of the notion of language as structurally tropical, the view of language as desiring "to convey only a *doxa* [opinion], not an *epistēmē* [knowledge]" remains largely intact, in any case in *Gay Science* and *Beyond Good and Evil* (DaR, p. 107). This will happen from a different angle, however, as now 'logic' will be the fundamental falsifier – as we shall see. The following section **(3.2.)** will concern itself with this matter. It will show how logic and truth become for Nietzsche essentially a matter of *value-judgement.* As we shall

[3] In the times of Nietzsche's writing, much speculation was happening regarding the origins of language. One un-dismissible fact that came up in this regard, is that most ancient myths – frequently the earliest examples of language we have – are composed in *verse.* In this sense, rhyme and rhythm can be viewed as *the* tools for creating consensus: poems are incredibly transmissible and easily remembered. In other words, they spread rapidly and can be passed down across generations, increasing the probability that people believe the same thing, i.e. the myth.

[4] See e.g. de Man (1979, pp. 103-131), Behler (1989, pp. 282-307), Emden (2005), and Zavatta (2018).

then see **(3.3.)**, this view has implications for argumentation and opinions which can be seen clearly in GS. We also look specifically at logical arguments, as seen e.g. in philosophy. Here we move away slightly from GS, and consider implications for Nietzsche's view for such arguments. In **(3.4.)** we look at BGE. As I will demonstrate, in light of what has been said up to that point, it becomes possible to understand Nietzsche's meta-philosophy as presented there more deeply. Philosophers, for Nietzsche, become advocates of their value-judgements/taste, and insofar as they use logical arguments are true rhetoricians.

3.2. Truth & value-judgement; or why language remains rhetoric

As we saw in **(2.3.)**, in DaR, language and thought were understood as structurally *tropical.* As we shall now see in GS, Nietzsche presents the structure of language in a more common way, i.e. logic. The way Nietzsche treats with logic, however, makes it so the functional aspect of language as seen in DaR – rhetoric – remains the same. Moreover, the biological dimension of language as seen in **(2.2.)** remains important for Nietzsche. For our purposes, this is because logic is presented as being a product of *evolution,* and because it is a *drive.*

For Nietzsche, 'logic' is a specific perspective that emerged over time through natural selection. Its most basic form is the positing of 'objects', i.e. the equating of what is similar:

> [He] who did not know how to find 'identity' often enough, […] that is, he who subsumed too slowly and was too cautious in subsummation – had a slighter probability of survival than he who in all cases of similarity immediately guessed that they were identical. The predominant disposition *[Hang]*, however, to treat the similar as identical – an illogical disposition, for there is nothing identical as such – is what first supplied all the foundations of logic (GS 111).

What is interesting is that Nietzsche says this is "an illogical disposition – for there is nothing identical as such". For this to make sense we need to understand that for Nietzsche, the world is essentially in a 'flux'. The world contains no 'things', no 'being'. As Nietzsche says later in his oeuvre: "Heraclitus will always be right in this, that being is an empty fiction" (TI, Reason, 2). What this means for Nietzsche, and as Mader has pointed out (1999, pp. 87-96), is that logic, in its equating what is similar, is the 'original falsifier'.

What this means for language and truth we discuss in a moment. For now, notice that besides 'logic' evolving, it is also a "disposition", a *"Hang"* – this will become important later. What it means is that there is no underlying structure of the universe; there is no 'logical law' that *forces* us to be 'logical'. What logic is, then, is a specific way of viewing the world that our body favors. Specifically, our bodies 'want' us to view the world as inhabited by objects; as a place where there is bivalence, etc. As such, to 'be logical', i.e. all logical 'laws' should be seen here as imperatives; and, as we see in a moment, also as value-judgements/taste.

With regards to language, this emerges as a continuation of these same logical processes. As several authors have shown (e.g. Abel, 2001; Constâncio, 2011), for Nietzsche,

language is based on and largely = these processes. That is, our bodies segment the world into objects, and language is merely the aspect of this segmentation of which we are conscious. This has two implications. The first is that "being continuous, conscious and unconscious states interpenetrate and communicate with each other" (Constâncio, 2011). The second, more important for our purposes, is that truth, insofar as it is based on language, which itself is a continuation of logical, i.e. falsifying processes, becomes impossible. That is, for Nietzsche, there *is* not truth in the traditional sense (in **(4.2.)** we discuss how to overcome the fact this is self-contradictory). What then becomes of 'knowledge' – though strictly we cannot use that word – is useful fictions. "Those who hit upon or inherited these [errors] had better luck in their struggle for themselves and their progeny" (GS 110).

Here we arrive at the sense in which 'truth' is always only ever a value-judgement/taste (I will use these terms interchangeably). Like with logic, we can no longer say that 'truth' is determined with reference to anything 'out there'. The only determining factor at this stage, rather, is *value:* in this case specifically the value of being useful (the body picks up a taste for 'truth'). Where it becomes interesting, however, is when usefulness can no longer be the determining factor when deciding what is true. That is, according to Nietzsche, there once came a point where different, contradictory sentences became applicable to life:

> Also wherever new propositions, though not useful for life, were also evidently not harmful to life: in such cases there was room for the expression of an intellectual play impulse, and honesty *[Redlichkeit]* and skepticism were innocent and happy like all play. Gradually, the human brain became full of such judgments and convictions, and a ferment, struggle, and lust for power developed in this tangle (GS 110).

As he continues: "not only utility and delight but every kind of impulse took sides in this fight about "truths"" (idem.). A battle of instincts, then, where the arrangement of drives determines what we hold for 'true'. Every drive wants a say in this game; every drive *wants* something else. This one wants a pretty picture; this one wants to fit in. Yet a another one likes feeling good, secure; this one prefers logic. For indeed, as we see later, here the logical instincts "honesty and skepticism" become more refined. We discuss further in **(3.4.)** and **(4.2.)** how this enables science, and the *realization* that our truths are a matter of taste.

The notion of the body making value-judgements, and these value-judgements constituting our 'truth', I think is most accurately – though indeed poetically expressed by Nietzsche in *Thus Spoke Zarathustra.* Here, however, yet another dimension is added. Not only 'truth', but consciousness itself is the result of our body's taste. Here is a segment, from the chapter *the Despisers of the Body:*

> Behind your thoughts and feelings, my brother, stands a mighty ruler, an unknown sage – it is called the subconscious self; it dwells in your body, it is your body.
>
> There is more reason, sanity and intelligence in your body than in your best wisdom. And who knows why your body requires precisely your best wisdom?
>
> Your subconscious self laughs at your "I", and its bold leaps. "What are

> these leaps and flights of thought to me?" it says to itself. "A detour to my purpose. I am the leading-string of the ego, and the prompter of its thoughts."
>
> […] The creative subconscious self created for itself respecting and esteeming and despising, it created for itself joy and sorrow and pain. The creative body created spirit as a hand of its will.

Similar to the psychoanalytical view that would emerge later, here, conscious experience is described as the result of subconscious processes. More specifically, it is the result of the body making value-judgements. It might be interesting to note, that the artistic dimension of language as seen in **(2.2.)** makes a reappearance here. Consciousness itself is depicted as the ultimate work of art – the body, the ultimate artiste.

…

As we see, 'logic', for Nietzsche, consists in the instinctually positing of objects and schematization onto a world in flux. As such, i.e. because there are no real 'beings', this logicizing is essentially a falsifying. But it is a *valuable* falsification, to the point that our body has gotten a *hang* for doing it. Therefore, being logical is to be regarded as an imperative of the body, or, specifically, as a value-judgement/taste.

We also saw this subsequently happen to knowledge. Language is a continuation of our logical falsifications, meaning that 'knowledge', insofar as it is based in language, participates in the original falsification. Every article of faith is erroneous: at first, some just proved to increase our rate of survival. But when eventually several 'truths' emerged, none of which were more 'useful' than the others, different drives become involved in selection. What results is a battle of drives. Every drive wants a say in what is 'true' – so that eventually, whoever wins, determines our world. This means that, essentially, what one holds for 'true' gives an indication of the arrangement of one's drives. Put differently, it indicates what their body thinks is important.

From this we can conclude that for Nietzsche at this stage, language is still essentially rhetoric. That is, language – or more specifically, 'knowledge' is never aimed at 'truth'. In fact, there *is* no truth. What someone holds for 'true', rather, is always already a value-judgement by their body. But that is the same as if to say it is an *opinion.* This means that when someone convinces you, e.g., that the earth is 'round' – we have to accept that for Nietzsche in this context, they are convincing you of their value-judgement. Therefore, "*language is* [still] *rhetoric* because it desires to convey only a *doxa* [opinion], not an *epistēmē* [knowledge]" (DaR, p. 107). (As we shall see in **(4.2.)**, however, for a scientific statement such as 'the earth is round' we have to make special considerations, at least starting from BGE). This position, however, as we have seen, comes from a different angle than in DaR. Whereas there language was structurally tropical, and therefore functionally rhetorical; here, structurally, it is logical. But since logic is a falsification, and 'truth' is determined by the body's value-judgement, language remains functionally rhetoric.

Language is thus rhetoric, and 'truth' an opinion. Let us now turn to what this means for argumentation, specifically. As we shall see, this perspective forces us to reconsider what it means to argue.

3.3. Argumentation in GS

A. Arguments in general, consensus, and a change in taste

As we saw in the last section, what is 'true' is determined by the body and its judgements of value. The biological dimension of language as prefigured in OTL, then, appeared as ever-important. Now that we look at the implications of this view for argumentation, as one might expect, it is the *social* dimension that becomes especially prominent. For, similarly to what we saw in the whole of the second chapter, for Nietzsche at this stage, humans are regarded as for all intents and purposes a social animal. This animal, just like we saw there, still has significant benefit to having and maintaining *consensus.* In fact, for Nietzsche, more often than not consensus is the key reason for humans for believing anything.

But before moving on, it will be useful to redefine argumentation in general outlines. So, we said, 'truth' is a value-judgment made by the body. In this sense, what is 'true' is always already for the body a *conclusion.* For instance, as we saw, usefulness is often a good 'reason' for believing e.g. in 'objects'. In other instances, e.g., a beliefs' making us feel good is a convincing argument for holding it. In this manner, 'argument' becomes a much broader term than we usually assume. The body has become the central locus of 'reason'. And, anything that influences the eventual value-judgement our body makes, should be regarded as an 'argument'.[5]

With this in mind, let us look at consensus. Generally speaking, consensus is when a great deal of people believe the same thing. Within our physiological framework, this means that these people's bodies' value-judgements lead to the same conclusion or 'truth'. This might lead us to suspect that these people all share the same physiological composition (i.e., the same distribution of drives). But this is not necessarily the case. That is, the specific truth itself might not be worth most to these bodies *per se.* What I mean is, if, hypothetically, these bodies would be isolated, and allowed to independently arrive at their value-judgements, then they would not necessarily come to the same conclusion. The importance of consensus is so prevalent, however, that the mere fact of those around us believing something, is, for our bodies, a good reason to believe it, as well. Nietzsche refers to this as a "virtuous stupidity":

> The virtuous intellects are needed – oh, let me use the most unambiguous word – what is needed is *virtuous stupidity*, stolid metronomes for the slow spirit, to make sure that the faithful of the great shared faith stay together and continue their dance. It is a first-rate need that commands and demands this (GS 76).

But this drive for conformity, important as it is, we should also not overestimate. Other drives which are more 'individual' of course remain active. This can lead to more differing perspectives within a society. This is so to the point that the more physiological types there are in a society, the more differing perspectives it can endure. Nietzsche says the following:

> The more general and unconditional the influence of an individual or the idea of an individual can be, the more homogeneous and the lower must the mass be that is

[5] Understood in this manner, both propaganda and advertisement should be regarded as arguments.

> influenced […] Conversely, we may always infer that a civilization is really high when powerful and domineering natures have little influence and create only sects (GS 149).

That is to say, just like how we can deduce someone's values by what that person believes; so can we form an idea of physiological types in a society according to the opinions of the people.

This also forms an explanation of why people disagree. It is not that we consciously and rationally consider an opinion, and autonomously reject it. Rather, our body is simply averse to certain truths: they do not fit its taste. This, for Nietzsche, is what critique consists of. It is our bodies saying 'no'; and feeding us superficial reasons for its conclusion:

> What killed that opinion for you was your new life and not your reason: you no longer need it, and now it collapses and unreason crawls out of it into the light like a worm. When we criticize something, […] it is, at least very often, evidence of vital energies in us that are growing and shedding a skin (GS 307).

It moreover indicates how new opinions arise. For starters, the emergence of a new opinion always entails the emergence of a certain physiological type. Certain conditions need to be met, i.e. the body needs to attach a relatively low worth to conforming, and its composition needs to draw conclusions sufficiently distinct from those that prevail in society. Only if this is the case can a new opinion arise. This also means that any linguistic formulation of an opinion, or an argument defending it, is always *secondary.*[6] That is to say, like with critique, our conscious 'reasons' for accepting or declining an opinion are mere aftereffects of our taste. Why our bodies produce these conscious reasons, then, we discuss in a moment.

This further implies that the spreading of an opinion entails that the bodies that are its medium, in some form have a prior correspondence to the opinion to be accepted. That is, unless an opinion is enforced in an unusual manner (e.g., accept it or die), it will find no footing in a society unless the bodies it spreads across are in some way receptive to it. This, however, makes the following passage somewhat difficult to understand:

> The change in general taste is more powerful than that of opinions. Opinions, along with all proofs, refutations, and the whole intellectual masquerade, are merely symptoms of the change in taste and most certainly not what they are still often supposed to be, its causes. What changes the general taste? The fact that some individuals who are powerful and influential announce *[aussprechen]* without any shame, *hoc est ridiculum, hoc est absurdum*, in short, the judgment of their taste and nausea: and then they enforce it tyrannically. Thus they coerce many, and gradually still more develop a new habit, and eventually *all* a new need. The reason why these individuals have different feelings and tastes is usually to be found in some oddity of their life style, nutrition or digestion, […] in brief, in their physis. […] Their

[6] This point is also made in GS 29.

> aesthetic and moral judgments are among these "subtlest nuances" of the physis (GS 39).[7][8]

The difficulty for me is that this makes the spreading of a new opinion both unlikely, as well as harder to understand. For surely, for an opinion to be received, the general corpus of society needs to be receptive to it – as it seems to me. Nietzsche, however, appears to be saying that the general taste *only* changes when someone forces an opinion on it, e.g. by kings or dictators. But of such tyrannous types we have had a deficiency in the last hundred years; though opinions appear to be changing more rapidly than ever. Perhaps we should understand Nietzsche not to be referring to "powerful and influential" individuals in this more traditional sense, but also to what today we would understand as 'influencers' (including e.g. members of artistic movements). This makes the passage somewhat more understandable, but then we are left with the question why people adhere to 'influencers' in the first place. Nietzsche is not saying this is due to people finding their physiological type reflected in them. So why then? I leave this an open question.

Now, however, let us turn to a specific form of argumentation. As we saw, within this framework, we are to understand the entire process of value-judging as argumentation. But what I want to consider right now, is a specific form that this process takes. Namely, those forms of argumentation that we more commonly think of under that name: arguments that are enforced through *logic.* These are the arguments we assume to be used in debate; in philosophy. How should we understand them?

B. Logical arguments

My discussion of logical arguments in Nietzsche's anthropo-physiological sense, will consist of three central questions. I want to know (1) *what* a logical argument is; (2) *how* such arguments do, or do not work; and (3) *why* people argue. Now, it is true that Nietzsche has not spent much time on discussing this issue. I shall therefore not fret to draw my conclusions independently from his texts, though I will stay within his overall framework. Moreover, I shall use a syllogistic argument as an example to illustrate my point. Most arguments we encounter (e.g. in a philosophical text; at a dinner-table, or political debate; theological disputes) are, as I said before, not of this form. Because of their logical strictness, however, I believe they are most suited to explain the logical workings that can be found in persuasion. But I do believe that what I discuss here, in an idealized form, can be extended to include those more ordinary forms of argument, as well. That is, because I show how logic should be understood to persuade in this perspective, other forms of argument, insofar as they *use* logic, should function in an analogous manner.

The example I use I have taken from Peter Singer's *Famine, Affluence and Morality*

---

[7] "Physis" here thus refers to physique.

[8] Far from denying any rhetorical function to language, on the contrary, this passage iterates it. Generally speaking, however, any great, i.e. big change in what is 'true' has to be explained through a change in taste: for Nietzsche, the taste of a small number of individuals, who, through their *announcing* or *aussprechen* of their taste, gradually change the taste of the populus. 'Causally', taste takes priority, and is more "powerful". This does mean that, relatively speaking, argumentation is not that convincing.

(1972). Though there are many arguments I could have chosen, I believe this one suits my purposes best. This is because the argument is *sound* – but at the same time, I personally do not find it convincing. Here is the argument, in general outlines:

1. Suffering and death by lack of food, shelter, or medical care are *bad.*
2. If we can do something to prevent these bad things from happening, without thereby sacrificing anything of comparable moral significance (e.g. your new shoes), then we ought, morally, to do it.
3. Morally, distance is not an issue. It makes no moral difference whether someone is dying five, or five thousand kilometers away from us. They are equally bad.
4. Just because other people besides us are in a position to prevent bad things from happening, that does not make us less morally obliged. If e.g. someone is chocking, and there are twelve other people around; I am not less obliged to save him.

If you are like me, you will be looking at these premises and nodding your head. That is, all of these statements are *true.* What this would mean for Nietzsche, is that the body instinctually attaches value to all these sentences, separately. The crux, of course, is the conclusion, which follows logically from these premises:

> ➔ *I can and* should *waylay my purchasing of luxurious goods (e.g., you do not* need *the new Nintendo console; you do not* need *those shoes), save money, and donate said money to charity.*

Indeed, having accepted the premises above, logically, I *should* now accept that I am a bad person. I have an obligation which I can fulfill; yet what am I doing? There are at this point, in my view, two approaches I can take. Both are out of mine – but in my body's control. That is, my body, having accepted the premises above, can either be *logical* and *accept* the conclusion; or, it can decide not to be convinced, and *deny* it. Let us consider these two approaches.

…

Acceptance: Let us say I accept the conclusion. Evidently, my body has looked at it, and instinctively decided that it must be true, i.e. valuable. What has happened? What can this value consist in? I believe there are two possibilities.

(1). The first option is that the conclusion *by itself* is valuable to my body. In this case, the argument would be superfluous. This is something we see happen frequently. For instance, if someone argues that "Socrates is a man, and, since men are mortal, Socrates, too, is mortal", then they might as well have said "Socrates is mortal". I do not *need* to be convinced: he has been dead for some time, and I know this. If we consider, however, what was said above about arguments being "secondary", then we realize that this is usually how arguments arise in the first place. I will come back on this in a moment.

(2). It is the second option in which I am being logical. As we saw in **(3.2.)**, for Nietzsche, logic should be understood as an imperative by the body to view the world in a certain way. In this case, because I had accepted the premises, since the conclusion is *implied* by

these premises, my logical drives would urge me to accept it, too. A kind of tension arises in this respect: were I not to accept the conclusion, then clearly, my world is contradictory. These specific drives push my body to avoid such a situation. In fact, what has happened is a *battle* between my drives. There will have been some drives that pushed me to end up *denying* the conclusion. There may e.g. have been a drive attaching value to new shoes; perhaps there was a drive for conformity. However, if I have accepted the conclusion regardless, then evidently my logical drives were stronger than these other, conclusion-denying drives. To me these situations seem to be the only genuine instances of logical argumentation. It is, however, a rather sly, indeed rhetorical picture. For, to a certain degree (depending on how strong my other drives fought *against* accepting the conclusion), I have been manipulated to accept something I did not want to. That is, it is only because my body attaches worth to logic, and my persuader managed to cleverly play into this value, that they eventually managed to impose *their* general value-judgement, or 'truth'. This is why Nietzsche refers to logic as the "enforcement of agreement [*Erzwingen* der Zustimmung] by force of arguments" (GS 348, my translation). This makes of philosophy, insofar as it is based on logical argument, a kind of courtroom where everyone tries to force their opinions down each other's throats. But we look more at philosophy in **(3.4.)**.[9]

...

Denial: What happens when we *deny* the conclusion? It is of course true that in some cases, the premises really do not add up. Sometimes we see an argument, accept its premises, only to realize later we have been duped. But that does not seem to be the case here. If we assume, then, that the argument is sound, then the following must have happened. We saw above an instance where my drives to be logical, ultimately defeated my drives in favor of e.g. luxury. If I deny the conclusion, however, even though I have accepted the premises, and if the argument is sound; the opposite has happened. In this case, the conclusion was so appalling to my body as a whole, that it would prefer being illogical. But here, it seems something interesting can happen. If I deny the conclusion, i.e. I do *not* think I should save money on luxuries and instead donate it to charity; instead of my opposing drives serving my logical drives – as happened before – now, it seems once again the opposite occurs. That is, my logical drives will be forced into conjuring up a picture for myself, that makes it so my luxury-loving drives were making sense, all along. This is once again what we saw Nietzsche say about critique. It is not so much that the argument 'really' was illogical if I deny it. Rather, my body did not like the argument, and *therefore* it is illogical. In this case, my body will give me an objection to the argument, e.g., maybe distance is morally relevant, after all? In fact, if we continue this line of argument, suddenly a lot of behavior starts making sense. A flat-earther always has 'proof' that their view is correct. Shoot one into space, and who knows: they might think they are hallucinating. In

[9] As I said in the previous section, however, it seems that arguments *do* require some form of prior physiological correspondence *in order* to be accepted. If my general taste is too strongly opposed to the conclusion, that is, it makes logic comparatively weaker, and more likely to lose the battle.

a great deal many cases, the point is, people can and do make anything they wish seem 'logical'. Why do we do this?

...

We have, then, a situation where logical arguments are used to *impose* a value-judgment, and one in which they are used to defend a value-judgement in the face of critique. In the former, the body makes a value-judgement, and subsequently formulates an argumentation defending it. In these cases, is appears that the argument is made solely for the purpose of persuading others. For why else, would a body argue for something, it already believes? The question *why* bodies want to persuade, now, is relatively simple. We have seen the importance our bodies attach to consensus. In these cases, we seem then to argue because we want to create consensus; but it has to be consensus on *our* general value-judgment. For indeed, if it was merely consensus that was at issue, we also could have accepted someone else's value-judgement. Our body must therefore have attached worth primarily to our more personal taste: consensus is good, but personal taste takes priority.

In cases where we *defend* our personal value-judgement, it seems something analogous happens, i.e., we want to keep it. In some cases, this can be a preemptive defense, so that people cannot critique our judgment without refuting our argumentation first. This seems akin to the imposing of a value-judgement. In other cases, like the one I indicated above, it seems that the argumentation is more of a coping-mechanism.[10]

Now that we have discussed the nature of argumentation, let us turn to *Beyond Good and Evil.* As we shall see, what we have said brings to light specific aspects of Nietzsche's meta-philosophy as it is there presented.

3.4. Philosophy and rhetoric in BGE

The notion that philosophy is essentially a judging of value, is actually an old one in Nietzsche's oeuvre. It can be found, e.g., in a posthumously published text, where he describes philosophy as a "legislating of greatness" (PHG 3). In that same text, which was written around the same time as DaR, he also compares the dialectics of the philosopher to the verse of the poet. This accords with the almost romantic view of language as tropical which we saw in **(2.3.)**. As we have seen however, Nietzsche's thought would go on to become more sophisticated, scientific – perhaps even 'darker' and more bitter. This will be the case for Nietzsche's meta-philosophy in BGE as well. But, as we shall see, the notion of language as rhetorical remains stable here, too.

As we saw, in Nietzsche's anthropo-physiological framework, what becomes of logical argumentation is the imposing, or defending of a value-judgment. As we shall now see in BGE, this image makes a reappearance – and Nietzsche uses it to smash philosophy to

[10] We can of course inquire *why* people are urged to dress up their judgments in logical fashion. One possible explanation is that we do this because we fear critique: in more 'advanced' stages of logic (i.e. long after the positing of objects), perhaps the logical instinct exists precisely in order to defend ourselves in society. The body fears prosecution for its taste; since logic has the taste of being 'true', perhaps it instinctively grabs onto it for protection.

pieces. The central question I seek to address in this section is what a philosopher *is* in this view, and I want to discuss the different *types* of philosophers that this view implies. I want to start, however, with a brief discussion of a central passage of BGE. Mentioned in the introduction, I believe it is one of the most comprehensive when it comes to Nietzsche's meta-philosophy in BGE. For this reason I think it is useful to cite it almost in its entirety:

> That which causes philosophers to be regarded half-distrustfully and half-mockingly, is […] that there is not enough honest dealing with them, whereas they all raise a loud and virtuous outcry when the problem of truthfulness is even hinted at […] They all pose as though their real opinions had been discovered and attained through the self-evolving […] dialectic (in contrast to all sorts of mystics, who, fairer and foolisher, talk of "inspiration"), whereas, in fact, a prejudiced proposition, idea, or "suggestion," which is generally their heart's desire abstracted and refined, is defended by them with arguments sought out after the event. They are all advocates who do not wish to be regarded as such, generally astute defenders, also, of their prejudices, which they dub "truths," – and *very* far from having the conscience which bravely admits this to itself […] [T]he Tartuffery of old Kant […] with which he entices us into the dialectic by-ways that lead (more correctly mislead *[verführen: can also be translated as "seduce"]*) to his "categorical imperative" – makes us fastidious ones smile. […] Or, still more so, the hocus-pocus in mathematical form, by means of which Spinoza has, as it were, clad his philosophy in mail and mask – in fact, the "love of *his* wisdom," to translate the term fairly and squarely – in order thereby to strike terror at once into the heart of the assailant who should dare to cast a glance on that invincible maiden (BGE 5).

As this passage iterates, just like all forms of argumentation, in philosophy it consists of the enforcement of – or indeed the seduction *to* one's taste. "*His* wisdom", Nietzsche says; for as Nietzsche explains in *Philosophy in the Tragic Age of the Greeks,* what in ancient Greek meant 'wise man', belonged etymologically to the word for 'taste': *sapio* (PHG 3). That Nietzsche refers specifically to Kant and Spinoza is, in my view, no accident. These authors, with their apparent logical rigor, are within this context depicted as rhetoricians *par excellence.*

Viewing philosophy in this manner we can also make sense of what Nietzsche says in BGE 6. For in truth, the entire philosophical system a person has, is just what their bodies judge to be valuable. This is why Nietzsche asserts that "to understand how the abstrusest metaphysical assertions of a philosopher have been arrived at, it is always well (and wise) to first ask oneself: "What morality do they (or does he) aim at?"" What Nietzsche is saying is that the entire system should be regarded as a manifestation of their body's value-judgement. Presented in a logical manner, it is at the same time a seduction *to* said judgment.

That philosophers, for Nietzsche, treat their value-judgments in this logical manner is significant. In some instances, as Nietzsche seems to imply in BGE 5, it is a matter of defense. Spinoza, as he is represented there, *wanted* to live up to his taste, "his wisdom" – i.e. his personal taste took priority over conforming. But in order not to be prosecuted by

the instinct for consensus of the people, he had to "clad [it] in mail and mask". He tried, in other words, to *legitimize* his value-judgment. You cannot prosecute him, that is to say, because, look, his view is 'correct': he has mathematically proved it. In other cases, however, as, it seems Nietzsche is saying, is the case with Kant; though his logic still serves the purpose of legitimizing his opinion, it is more a matter of offense than defense (in the terms I used in the previous section: Kant imposes, Spinoza defends). Kant has his judgement, and through his arguments he is actually saying that "with you it *shall* not be otherwise than with me!" (BGE 187). This is also the case according to Nietzsche for the Stoa, who 'trueify' their judgement so as to impose it onto nature itself: "you [the Stoa] insist that it shall be Nature "according to the Stoa," and would like everything to be made after your own image, as a vast, eternal glorification and generalism of Stoicism!" (BGE 9).

According to BGE, therefore, philosophy is a matter of legitimizing one's value-judgement through reason. But if we stop to consider once more what this 'value-judging' consists of, we remember it is the result of a battle of drives **(3.2.)**. For instance, again, there may be fight between a will to conforming, to pleasure, to doubt, etc. The final result will be that some drives are stronger than others, and with the eventual hierarchy there corresponds a certain general value-judgment. What this means, now, is that in e.g. "the abstrusest metaphysical assertion", or indeed in philosophical arguments in general, what is in fact 'arguing' is a specific hierarchy of impulses. It is this hierarchy, specifically, and the 'winner' among them, at that, that is trying to legitimize itself:

> But whoever considers the fundamental impulses of man with a view to determining how far they may have here acted as *inspiring genii* (or as demons and cobolds), will find that they have all practiced philosophy at one time or another, and that each one of them would have been only too glad to look upon itself as the ultimate end of existence and the legitimate *lord* over all the other impulses. For every impulse is imperious, and as *such*, attempts to philosophize (BGE 6).

It is in this sense specifically that a philosophy is "the confession of its originator, and a species of involuntary and unconscious auto-biography" (idem.). This implies one can take any philosopher one pleases – and through their position determine the organization of their drives. If a philosopher thinks truth = correspondence to external reality, for instance, according to Nietzsche, we can deduce e.g. that they have a strong drive for security. Their skeptical, "evil instincts" (GS 110) might be relatively weak. Or, if someone subscribes to a view of aesthetic objectivity, perhaps they have a strong attachment to their personal value-judgement, etc. In short: philosophical opinions reflect the arrangement of drives; and every drive seeks to legitimize itself as 'true' or 'logical'.

Therefore, philosophers are all "advocates" (BGE 5): lawyers legitimizing their taste. But this view contains another layer, one which implies philosophers are faced with a choice. Their 'truths' are all value-judgements; their arguments are all manipulative. What 'type' of philosopher one then becomes, depends on whether they *know* what they are, and also how they deal with this knowledge. But indeed, these factors ultimately come down once again to a value-judgment. They do not really 'choose': whatever type one becomes, is once again a reflection of one's soul. To me it seems that the drives that are

essential in this regard, are those which concern *"Redlichkeit".* This term is usually translated as "honesty", and appears in similar contexts to what Nietzsche calls "intellectual conscience", e.g. in GS 2. This notion, which we saw briefly in **(3.2.)**, and which we see again in **(4.2.)**, amounts to the degree to which one is 'truthful'. Someone who is *Redlich,* is someone who has a strong "will to truth", as White (2000) explains. This person does not deceive themself: e.g. a belief feeling pleasant is not considered an argument to them (BGE 39).

For my purposes, I shall split this concept in two, remembering that Nietzsche does not make this distinction explicit. I therefore use it more as a heuristic tool: I believe it helps for understanding this philosopher's choice. The distinction in question concerns the 'direction' our honesty is aimed at. *Redlichkeit* usually seems to refer to an inward honesty; this is what I refer to as being 'aware'. Someone who is *Redlich* in this context is someone who is aware of their 'truth' being merely a value-judgment. Someone who lacks *Redlichkeit* in this inward sense – someone who thinks their value-judgements are 'true', I refer to as 'innocent'. But I am also suggesting there is an 'outward' sense of being honest. If someone is outwardly honest in this sense, i.e. does not present their value-judgement as being 'true', I refer to them as 'honest'. Lacking this outward form of honesty, simply means one is 'dishonest'. We can depict this distinction in a table:

Categories of Philosophers	**Aware**	**Innocent**
Honest	non-philosopher	self-deceptive
Dishonest	actor/deceiver	liar[11]

We assume that usually, philosophers are not so easily put into categories. The arrangement of honest drives, that is, is not so clearcut. Even still, I believe this gives a rough indication of how we should understand different types of philosophers for Nietzsche.

One category of philosophers has been innocently honest, or what I call self-deceptive. I believe Nietzsche refers to these people as being "childish" (BGE 5). They are not aware that their arguments and treatises are aimed at imposing *doxa.* For these people, therefore, it is not so much that they were consciously tricking people. Rather, they *themselves* were deceived just as much as their listeners. This means that their bodies defended its own value-judgements *to the philosophers,* using arguments. This way the body forces consciousness to believe its opinions are true. In this manner, the arrangement of drives comes to look eerily like the essence of the world to these people. The drives project

[11] This category is irrelevant for our purposes. But granted, if someone thinks one thing is true, but says something else, that person is simply a liar.

themselves *onto* the world: the latter begins to reflect the former. This, according to Nietzsche, is what happened with the Stoics:

> What happened in old times with the Stoics still happens today, as soon as ever a philosophy begins to believe in itself. It always creates the world in its own image; it cannot do otherwise; philosophy is this tyrannical impulse itself, the most spiritual Will to Power, the will to "creation of the world," the will to the causa prima (BGE 9).

A different type of philosopher *knows* that their philosophies are, at the end of the day, a matter of taste. That is, they are inwardly honest, i.e. 'aware'. This type, however, while being inwardly honest, deceives outwardly: they present their opinions as if they were true. These philosophers Nietzsche calls "actors" and "seducers". This is the philosopher who "aspire[s] to become a great play-actor, a philosophical Cagliostro and spiritual ratcatcher—in short, a misleader" (BGE 205). As Nietzsche goes on to say, whether one chooses this path is "in the last instance a question of taste, if it has not really been a question of conscience" (idem.). (This, moreover, is what Nietzsche says Diogenes thought of Plato and the Platonists; see BGE 7).

What happens to philosophers who are aware that their truths are value-judgments, i.e. are inwardly honest or "*Redlich",* but are too outwardly honest to become actors? According to Nietzsche, "it is perhaps just the refinement of his intellectual conscience that makes him hesitate and linger on the way [to becoming a philosopher], he dreads the temptation to become a dilettante, a millepede, a milleantenna" (BGE 205). In short: this person does not become a philosopher. Too self-conscious to take a position and stand firm, "he knows too well that as a discerner, one who has lost his self-respect no longer commands, no longer *leads*" (idem.). They can choose to become a specialist, a scientist, etc.

Of course the interesting question is: where on this table would Nietzsche see himself? As I said before, the arrangement of drives is not so clearcut. Philosophers, it is fair to assume, are generally a little bit innocent, a little bit aware, etc. That said, I think Nietzsche should be placed somewhere in the center; but it also depends on the precise text. He is very honest sometimes: to me he has what he refers to as a "cheerful confidence and self-ridicule" (BGE 5). Moreover, in a way I discuss further in **(4.3.)**, since Nietzsche denies truth in the traditional sense, he is the ultimate non-dogmatist. For 'there is no truth' is a contradiction: and within this perspective there is perhaps nothing as honest as self-contradiction (as we shall see there, this brings Nietzsche somewhat close to "the philosopher of the future" (BGE 43)). But in his more polemical texts (e.g. *Genealogy of Morals*), of course, we get a different picture. Here Nietzsche – if he is consequential with what has been set out in this section – is clearly being dishonest, in the sense of being an actor. He is arguing, and trying to get us to accept *his* value-judgment, even though he knows it is not 'true'. Indeed, as de Man (1979, p. 119) says, Nietzsche even uses figurative tropes for this purpose. He uses "pragmatic and demagogical value oppositions [such] as weakness and strength, disease and health, herd and the "happy few," terms so arbitrarily valorized that it becomes difficult to take them seriously". Finally, without a doubt Nietzsche is also

innocent at times. Unless we should understand him as thoroughly skeptical and ironical, there are things which he regarded as 'true' and did not wish to deny. Though he seemed to have realized superficially that these judgements were not 'really' true, his body could also not get him to accept this fact to the point of firmly denying them.

...

Philosophers, therefore, are lawyers of their taste. Though their bodies do not need to argue for this taste *per se*, so as to impose it onto others, it produces reasons that make it persuasive. As I tried to show in **(3.3.)**, they do this by playing into your instincts for logic. Different philosophers, due to their different tastes, deal with this fact differently, as we have seen. Some philosophers are quite innocent: they defend their opinions, thinking they are defending the 'truth'. Others are aware of what they are doing: these philosophers are seducers and actors. It also seems to be possible for a philosopher to achieve a form of *honesty.* For these people, they can try to present their opinions as what they are: opinions. Usually, however, philosophers of this kind are too self-conscious to become 'real' philosophers, i.e. lawyers.

Now that we have discussed argumentation and philosophy in Nietzsche's later works, showing how elements of his early work on rhetorics resurface in grand manner on these topics, let us move to a discussion. The view of argumentation as rhetorical has to be considered in a peculiar manner when concerning science, as we shall see. We also need to address the question of self-contradiction. If argumentation is rhetorical for Nietzsche, what should we do with this statement itself?

4. Discussion

4.1. Scientific arguments

In recent times, some authors (e.g. Clark, 1991; Nehamas, 2017) have argued that the view of human experience being essentially a *falsification* (as we saw in **(3.2.)**, through its positing of 'being'), is one that Nietzsche gives up starting from *Genealogy of Morals* (GM). In other words, these authors argue that for the later Nietzsche, the senses give an accurate depiction of the world. For our purposes, that would mean that the senses, and science insofar as it is based on them, allow statements to be 'true' and consequently scientific argument to be unrhetorical. In my response I will respond specifically to Clark (1991) since it is the most influential.

In my view, Clark is fundamentally wrong. Her view, however, brings to light an important aspect of Nietzsche's philosophy that we have thus far neglected. It is that, indeed, Nietzsche does in fact deal differently with knowledge gained through the senses; compared with e.g. philosophy. This is so to the point that, from an epistemological perspective, the senses, and science insofar as it is based on the senses, come out as more legitimate than language. The caveat in my view, however, is that even though it *is* more

legitimate in this way, the senses still fundamentally provide value-judgements. Therefore, even regarding those realms of knowledge firmly based in the senses, we are still dealing with rhetorics. But – in a sense, this is so to a lesser degree, as we shall see. Finally, the position in question, while Clark traces it back to GM, I do so to as early as BGE. Let us now first consider Clark's argument.

Her first piece of evidence, then, is from GM. Here, Nietzsche talks about truths: "plain, harsh, ugly, repellent, unchristian, immoral" truths. Because, he says, "such truths do exist" (GM I, 1). To this Clark adds that "nowhere does this work qualify its initial claim, suggest that such truths are illusions, or that they are not really true" (Clark, 1991, p. 103). Her conclusion is that "in works after BG[E], we find a completely different view", referring to the view of truth being illusory (idem.). Further on, she cites two passages from *Anti-Christ* (52, 59), in which Nietzsche praises the "sense of facts" of the ancient Greeks and Romans. These latter two passages do have a slight importance for my point; but I will focus on two passages we find in *Twilight of the Idols* (TI). I do this because they are stronger for her case, and also because they are more commonly used for the point Clark is making (see e.g. Kim, 2022, pp. 38-45).

Clark cites the following:

> And what magnificent instruments of observation we possess in our senses! . . . Today we possess science precisely to the extent that we have decided to accept the testimony of the senses – to the extent to which we sharpen them further, arm them, and have learned to think them through. The rest is miscarriage and not yet-science – in other words, metaphysics, theology, psychology, epistemology – or formal science, a doctrine of signs, such as logic and that applied logic which is called mathematics (TI, Reason, 3).

A passage she does not use, but which I find stronger still:

> [The senses] do not lie at all. What we do with the testimony of the senses, that is where the lies begin, like the lie of unity, the lie of objectification, of substance, of permanence… 'Reason' makes us falsify the testimony of the senses. The senses are not lying insofar they show becoming, passing away, and change… (TI, Reason, 2).

Clearly, Nietzsche is praising the senses, and science insofar as it is based on them. It is, then, of importance that we address these passages. Is it true that Nietzsche perhaps changed his mind?

First, I should like to point out the following. The texts, and indeed the specific passages authors use to defend Clark's view, are highly *polemical* in nature. We must remember this. A glance at the titles confirm it: *Genealogy of Morals: a* ***Polemic****;* ***Anti****-Christ.* Perhaps *'Reason' in Philosophy,* the chapter from TI we have cited requires explanation. It is a polemic against the emphasis philosophers traditionally put on 'reason', at the cost of the senses. The 'style' of these texts, then, would have us expect Nietzsche to simplify and condense his positions. He does not aim at meticulously setting out 'the truth', no, he is trying to *convince*. In my view, if one is arguing for such a nuanced, yet deeply impactful change of mind in someone's philosophy, one should preferably rely on less polemical texts and passages; especially if these same texts contain statements that lead us to the opposite

conclusion. And that brings me to my second point, which is that my alternative reading accounts better for these contradictory statements – and can trace back their meaning as constant to a non-polemic text, i.e. BGE.

If we look again at TI, Reason, we find a passage I cited back in **(3.2.)**: "Heraclitus will always be right in this, that being is an empty fiction" (TI, Reason, 2). A bit later he reiterates this, saying that "we see ourselves as it were entangled in error, *necessitated* to error, to precisely the extent that our prejudice in favour of reason compels us to posit unity, identity, duration, substance, cause, materiality, being" (TI, Reason, 5). Clearly, then, 'being' is still regarded as the falsifying culprit. This means that in order to resolve the problem of whether the senses falsify, we have to know whether we can use the senses without positing 'being'.

Now, it is understandable that people read the chapter in question, and garner from it that Nietzsche thinks we can, indeed, use our senses this way. This reading would put special emphasis on what Nietzsche says about *language,* as the "perpetual advocate" in favor of 'being' (TI, Reason, 5). Therefore, the senses would be able to register pure becoming; it is when we start *describing* their data that we introduce falsification. I do not think this reading is quite right, however. Nietzsche talks of the "the basic presuppositions of the metaphysics of language", which he calls "reason" (idem.). These presuppositions, according to Nietzsche, and language more generally, "belon[g] in [their] origin to the age of the most rudimentary form of psychology" (idem.). It is this

> rudimentary form of psychology […] that sees everywhere deed and doer; […] which believes in the 'ego', in the ego as being, in the ego of substance, and which *projects* its belief in the ego-substance on to all things – only thus does it *create* the concept 'thing' (idem.).

What we have, therefore, is a remarkably similar situation to what we had in **(3.2.)**. There are, however, two slight differences. The first is that here 'being' is represented as derivative, the 'ego' being the most primal concept (does this not remind us of Kant? The 'I' as requirement for the existence of objects). The second difference is that what in **(3.2.)** Nietzsche referred to as 'logic', here is called 'reason'. But that is it. Experience, therefore, does *not* give us access to pure becoming (we *might* say something else about the senses qua senses, e.g. light hitting the retina – but this is not = experience, i.e. we have no conception of it. This is what Nietzsche refers to in TI, Reason, 3 as "what we *do* with the senses" falsifying them). Our experience of the senses, therefore, and science, which is based on this experience, are still "necessitated to error" insofar as they require 'beings' (TI, Reason, 5). The role of language in this, is that because it repeats the same errors inherent to experience; and since we believe language to be the locus of 'truth', our faith in language seduces us to keep putting more faith into 'being'.

This is, therefore, the degree to which I disagree with Clark. However, as the quotes above clearly show, Nietzsche does in fact *praise* the senses and science. The following explanation seems to me the most logical, and as mentioned, I trace it back to BGE. I therefore am not saying, as opposed to Clark, that these polemical texts provide a change of opinion on this point.

The senses, then, or more specifically experience *do* still falsify, because they give us 'beings' instead of a flux. They do this *not,* therefore, because there are 'really' beings; but because our bodies *judge* this to be useful. That is, our experience constitutes a value-judgement. This means that even a statement, based on the senses, and as obviously true as that the earth is round, is essentially still a rhetorical one. Furthermore, an argument building upon sensuous information, e.g. Newton's second law, 'proves' what is technically *doxa,* instead of *epistēmē.* But one notices that such an argument being essentially the forcing of *doxa* is becoming harder to accept than e.g. an argument in favor of a correspondence theory of truth. This is because, it seems to me, the manner in which what Nietzsche calls "reason" (what we previously called logic) shapes experience, is incredibly deeply baked-in. The general outlines of experience, in other words, may indeed be a value-judgment; but it is a value-judgement almost all of us share.[12][13]

Say, for instance, two bodies walk into a room where in the middle there is a sphere. These two bodies, sharing the same evolutionary history, have both made the value-judgement long ago – long before hominids existed, to shape experience in such-and-such a way. This will make the bodies 'feed' their consciousness the same overall form of experience, so that both persons will eventually experience what we ordinarily call a 'sphere'. For both people, moreover, this sphere will have all the qualities that spheres inevitable have, e.g. that all points at the edge are equidistant from the center, that it is relatively smooth, etc. This means that, regarding this sphere, both people are in perfect agreement. *In this sense* we can say that those 'obviously true' statements regarding the qualities of the sphere, are in fact 'true' (I think one is justified in saying I attribute a kind of 'formal theory' of truth to Nietzsche here; but we must remember that all these qualities are technically "logical fictions" (BGE 4)). For this reason, now, it becomes possible for scientific arguments to become, to a degree, less rhetorical, indeed more 'objective' than arguments in e.g. philosophy. Scientists argue about details that everyone, if they were to make 'proper' use of their senses, would agree on. If someone 'proves', for instance, the Pythagorean theorem that the hypothenuse of a right triangle squared, = the sum of the legs squared, they are 'not' *pushing* a value-judgement (although, indeed, they *are*). Rather, using their logical faculties, they describe a fact about the way our bodies shape experience – a fact that is just as applicable to the experience of their listener. In a sense, therefore, such arguments are more a matter of getting the listener to understand their *own* opinion, rather than accepting someone else's (you may argue that this happens sometimes in philosophy, too; i.e. if there was a prior correspondence between the value-judgement constituting the thesis and the listener's physiology). In short: the senses give an 'accurate' depiction of reality, in the sense that all humans depict said reality in an analogous manner. Science, based on these senses, merely describes this experience and draws inferences *from* these descriptions. In this way, scientific arguments are generally less rhetorical than philosophical arguments. They *are,* however, still essentially rhetoric, because our experiences of the senses still constitute value-judgements.

[12] I say "almost" because I cannot exclude the possibility of people deviating from this norm; as there are undoubtedly people with certain afflictions that make them unable to e.g. distinguish objects.
[13] The argument is inspired by a conversation, in a wildly different context, with F. Chouraqui.

This view, as mentioned, I am able to trace back to before GM. It is in BGE that I find my strongest source, specifically the sections where Nietzsche talks about the 'objective', or 'scientific' man. He describes this man as a 'mirror': as someone who lays on his back to merely objectively reflect the world. This I can only explain in the manner set out above. As a matter of fact, however, very similarly to what I said about philosophy in **(3.4.)**, this view of science is clearly prefigured in Nietzsche's early work. For in the same work I cited there, Nietzsche says that "science throws itself unto anything that can be known, in the blind desire to know everything, against any price" (PHG 3). Now to look again at BGE 6, we find Nietzsche saying this:

> For every impulse is imperious, and as *such*, attempts to philosophize. To be sure, in the case of scholars, in the case of really scientific men, it may be otherwise—"better," if you will; there there may really be such a thing as an "impulse to knowledge," some kind of small, independent clock-work, which, when well wound up, works away industriously to that end, *without* the rest of the scholarly impulses taking any material part therein. The actual "interests" of the scholar, therefore, are generally in quite another direction—in the family, perhaps, or in money-making, or in politics; […] he is not *characterized* by becoming this or that.

I can interpret this as follows. As we have seen, for Nietzsche, what the body holds for 'true' is the result of a complex battle of drives. Some of these drives, as we said, concern those of the *logical.* In the philosopher, now, these logical drives of course take part in their eventual judgement of truth. That is, besides logic functioning merely as a tool for pushing or defending an opinion, logic is required to make judgements in the first place; the logical structuring of thoughts being a good example. Comparatively, however, in the philosopher, these specifically logical drives play a smaller role in the eventual judgement, when placed besides the man of science. For this latter person, namely, the logical drives are the main ingredients when it comes to creating 'truth' or 'knowledge'. To make that clearer, again, exactly like how a philosopher's truth reflects the arrangement of their drives; a scientist's truth reflects the preponderance of specifically the *logical* drives. The advanced logical drives of *Redlichkeit,* mentioned in **(3.2.)** and **(3.4.)**, are crucial in this respect. Again, as White (2000) explains, they constitute a "will to truth"; in the passage above "impulse to truth". In this context, it means that the scientist is someone who observes carefully, using our most primitive logical drives; and honestly describes what they see. So, for instance, a person who is *Redlich* in this sense, after experiencing something seemingly paranormal will ask themselves "what did I really experience? What happened in me and around me at that time? Was my reason bright enough? Was my will opposed to all deceptions of the senses and bold in resisting the fantastic?" (GS 319). Through such careful considerations, the scientist ends up with a faithful and 'objective' description of experience.

Compared with the scientist, indeed, the philosopher is closer to the priest. Scientists, insofar as they do science, *are,* more or less, these logical drives, i.e. this "impulse to knowledge". Qua scientists they are relatively unpersonal, since the drives that constitute their thought are largely shared across all humans. This is why Nietzsche says that the

drives of the scientist that *are* more personal, find expression not in the creation of truth, but e.g. in their family (BGE 6). It is also why Nietzsche says the following:

> The objective man, who no longer curses and scolds like the pessimist, the *ideal* man of learning in whom the scientific instinct blossoms forth […] is assuredly one of the most costly instruments that exist, but his place is in the hand of one who is more powerful. He is only an instrument, we may say, he is a *mirror*—he is no "purpose in himself". The objective man is in truth a mirror accustomed to prostration before everything that wants to be known, with such desires only as knowing or "reflecting" implies (BGE 207).

That is, when it comes to those drives which we commonly associate with value-judgement, i.e. 'what is good', in the scientist they are controlled by someone else's, most likely through their instinct for conformity. This is why Nietzsche a bit later in the same passage calls the scientist "a slave, though certainly the sublimest sort of slave". In my opinion, this is also how we should understand BGE 191. Talking about "instinct" having triumphed as opposed to "reason" with regards to morality, Nietzsche makes an exception for Descartes. But he immediately follows this by saying that "reason is only a tool, and Descartes was superficial". That is, Descartes is superficial because he represents a preponderance of logical drives: he was a kind of *scientist.* And science, constituted by "reason" or logic, is, of course, a tool for the more 'personal' drives.[14]

We therefore have a two-sided judgement. The scientist *is* less of a rhetorician. They more 'accurately', 'objectively' argue about the world. Their arguments, in this sense, do not so much push a *personal* value-judgment. Rather, their arguments use the same logical faculties as philosophers (who use them to push their personal value-judgment); to instead logically set out the general forms of experience, and to draw conclusions from sensuous data. This would imply a kind of compliment for the scientists. But, according to Nietzsche, these logical drives are – or perhaps *should* always be in the control of someone's more *personal* value-judgments. The philosopher (or even the priest) is therefore in their right if they want to use their rhetorics to control a scientist. The scientist is a *tool* for the philosopher, according to Nietzsche. The comparative value-lessness of science must therefore be compensated for by the philosopher, who with their personal judgments decides what its goals, its value shall be.

4.2. Addressing self-contradiction

When someone speaks of truth, as Nietzsche did; or in our case argues about argumentation and philosophy, one does not escape some form of self-reference. Now, the problem more specifically for us is that everything we have seen Nietzsche say is, strictly speaking, self-contradictory. Remember: 'being' is a falsification. 'Truth', which is based on this falsification, is a falsification as well. Therefore, truth is impossible – and there goes our

[14] I place this against Constâncio's interpretation (2011, p. 96), which states that we should understand the passage as referring to the 'big' reason, i.e. the body, being the master of the 'small' reason, i.e. conscious reason. It is a good interpretation, but given the passage as a whole I believe mine is more plausible.

thesis. Put differently and contextualized: the thesis is that for Nietzsche, philosophical argument is rhetoric, i.e. pushes a (personal) value-judgement. But if this is the claim, and if what I am saying is a philosophical argument, then why would anyone trust either of us? I believe there are three different approaches to this problem; we will discuss them in turns.

...

Option 1: 'being' is scientifically, and not philosophically false

The first option is to claim that what Nietzsche says should be regarded as a *scientific,* and not a philosophical claim. For as we saw in **(4.2.)**, science, since it is based on the value-judgements of the senses, which are largely universal to humans, is able to achieve some form of objectivity. This argument would then consist in proving scientifically that 'being' is a falsification, and that therefore 'truth' *cannot* strictly be truth insofar as it is based on this falsification. If we cannot refer to real 'beings' to decide what is true or not, then, we must rely on alternative determining factors. These would be the 'drives', or the 'value-judging' (though both terms would have to be scientifically de-mystified). This would then indicate that language is indeed the pushing of value-judgement, and therefore, along with philosophical argument, rhetorical. The problem with this approach is that it wildly transgresses the scope of my thesis. It is, moreover, further complicated by the fact that, scientifically, we have no idea whether 'things' exist – but indeed we cannot get into this to the degree it deserves. Suffice it to say that to take this specific approach, one would need to work in a different context than I currently am, and we would need scientific interpretation of quantum mechanics to progress further.

Option 2: is contradiction really bad?

The second option, then, is a better option for our present context. This approach would consist in arguing that in our case, self-contradiction is not as problematic as it might seem. We would say that the proposition that there is no 'being', and that truth is therefore based on falsification, implies that contradiction is *inherent* to truth. Every statement, every 'truth' is inherently contradictory. If someone were to then object that this proposition is itself contradictory, we could simply accuse them of begging the question. That is, they are saying we cannot be correct, since we contradict ourselves. But this is exactly our claim: we say that self-contradiction is inherent to truth, and therefore not problematic *per se.* In other words, they assume that self-contradiction entails non-truth, *in order to prove* that the self-contradictory claim that truth is contradictory is false. But this is begging the question, and therefore not a proper objection.

Option 3: self-contradiction is good in this case

My preference, however, goes out to the third option, which also seems to align with what Nietzsche thought himself. It should be noted, however, that this approach is circular – though I do not think it is viciously so. It consists in arguing that it is in fact a *good* thing for a thesis to contradict itself. Self-contradiction, in this sense, should be regarded as a

form of *honesty.* This is the circular aspect: if it is true that there is no 'being', and that philosophical argument seeks to impose a personal value-judgement; then to convincingly argue – (as we saw in **(3.3.)**, by playing into logical instincts) – means to potentially force a belief on someone that does not suit them physiologically. In some ways, Nietzsche was a forerunner of modern diversity politics: he thought it was *good* for people to believe different things, sometimes. Different value-judgements, after all, are considered to suit different physiologies: by letting go of the urge to logically impose our *doxa,* we give others the space to find judgements that suit *them.* Self-contradiction is an excellent tool for achieving this. A self-contradictory 'truth', in this sense, is like an easily digestible meal. Unlike logically convincing opinions, which rhetorically get stuck in our stomach and become part of us; the self-contradictory opinion more or less digests *itself.* It *destroys* itself, leaving room in our stomach for us to believe other things. This method, therefore, is essentially *non-dogmatic.* Talking about the "philosophers of the future", Nietzsche says:

> Assuredly they will not be dogmatists. It must be contrary to their pride, and also contrary to their taste, that their truth should still be truth for every one—that which has hitherto been the secret wish and ultimate purpose of all dogmatic efforts. "My opinion is *my* opinion: another person has not easily a right to it"—such a philosopher of the future will say, perhaps. One must renounce the bad taste of wishing to agree with many people[15] [...] In the end things must be as they are and have always been—the great things remain for the great, the abysses for the profound, the delicacies and thrills for the refined (BGE 43).

Besides this indicating that, really, Nietzsche was not too worried about convincing people, the end of the passage seems to attach worth to complements of physiologies and truths. That is, "abysses for the profound, the delicacies and thrills for the refined" – meaning that if you do not believe the thesis of 'being' being a falsification, then that is a good thing. Apparently, it did not suit your taste. And instead of forcing you to eat it up regardless, by it being self-contradictory, you are free to believe whatever *does* suit your taste.

...

As for my own thesis, specifically, I think it may be argued that I am not arguing *fully* philosophically, but rather *scientifically*. As we saw, scientific argument manages to be more 'objective' compared to philosophy. This is because philosophical argument represents a preponderance of the more 'personal' drives; while science is a working-out of the logical drives, shared by most humans. So, from this point of view, interpretation could be a *science.* We are confronted with a collection of texts, and, the assumption is, by arguing carefully and keeping note of all relevant factors, we should be able to come up with the 'correct' interpretation. But, this is of course assuming that it is primarily our 'logical' drives that are active in the 'art' of interpreting, but this may of course be doubted. Undoubtedly there is a degree – a degree comparatively larger than e.g. studying biomechanics, to which

[15] *My note:* in fact this is a good example of self-contradiction. "One must renounce the bad taste of wishing to agree with many people". The part "one must" ironically implies that others should agree with Nietzsche. But he does refer to "taste", which in turn implies that it is, at the end of the day, still a matter of taste whether one does so.

what we have done concerns the so-called more 'personal' drives. The answer to whether I should be trusted scientifically, then, comes down to the exact proportions to which logical drives are active in the art of interpretation. If this proportion is relatively slim, then it seems that interpretation cannot be called 'science' in the way we have described that term here; it means that 'correct' interpretations are impossible; and that therefore interpretation is to a large degree a matter of rhetorics and taste. But, indeed, it is hard to determine the proportions of drives on this subject. For this reason we can merely conclude that *if* interpretation is scientific, whether I should be trusted is determined by reading the texts by oneself and figuring out what Nietzsche meant. But if it is *un*scientific, i.e. a matter of personal drives, then whether I am right comes down to (1) whether I have properly deployed my rhetorical skills, or (2) taste.

5. Conclusion

5.1. Summary and conclusion

We began with *On Truth and Lie in a Nonmoral Sense,* and *A Representation of Ancient Greek Rhetoric:* two early texts of Nietzsche which describe the nature of language. The former presented language as *social, biological,* and *artistic,* and denied the existence of 'truth'. The latter text developed this denial, by describing language as aimed at imposing impressions, or *doxa,* as opposed to *epistēmē.* In other words, it claimed *language is rhetoric.* We saw this was the case for language both *functionally,* and *structurally:* functionally because language transmits opinions, and structurally because language is tropical. After discussing these texts, we moved on to *The Gay Science.* Here we saw Nietzsche's conception of language's structure shift, i.e. it became based on the positing of 'being', or 'logic' – which was considered an *imperative instinct.* Far from implying that language is no longer rhetoric, however, this shift enforces this perspective. This is because for Nietzsche 'being' is a falsification, and every 'truth' is essentially a value-judgment/matter of taste, made by the body. We developed this conception with regards to argumentation by reading several passages from *The Gay Science.* We saw here that 'arguments' should be understood for Nietzsche as whatever entices a body to reach its value-judgment; conformity was an important factor in this, but also a person's general physiological composition. This meant that language or conscious reasons overall should be regarded as *secondary:* a body always reaches its conclusions *first;* afterwards, it may give consciousness the impression of 'reasons' for why its judgment is 'true'. The reason the body does this, I have suggested, is in order to impose its *own* judgment onto other people, i.e. the body desires consensus. I then discussed how this imposing might work within Nietzsche's framework, and my suggestion was that arguments can be convincing by playing into our logical instincts. Ultimately, however, it is still a matter of taste whether any given argument is accepted: whether our body's preference goes out to being logical, or to the content of whatever the argument's

conclusion may be. After discussing argumentation in this way, we moved on to *Beyond Good and Evil,* looking at the role of argumentation in philosophy. We saw that in this text, the vision of argumentation as rhetoric becomes especially prominent: philosophers are all advocates of their taste. I also indicated how different philosophers can deal with this fact: some are not aware of it and are thus self-deceptive. Others know what they are – but keep doing it regardless. They are *actors.* We then moved to two discussions. The first of these considered the question of argumentation in science. We saw that for Nietzsche, scientific argument does indeed become less rhetorical than in e.g. philosophy, because it is based on the value-judgements largely universal to mankind which constitute experience. Afterwards, we considered the issue of self-contradiction. The idea of 'being' being a falsification, and of language imposing *doxa* are contradictory. Two plausible approaches to addressing this problem that I suggested were by denying self-contradiction is necessarily problematic, and by arguing that self-contradiction is a form of honesty.

In conclusion: Nietzsche's early work on rhetorics was deeply influential for his later views on language, argumentation, and philosophy insofar as the latter is based on them. Namely, like in DaR, in GS and BGE, Nietzsche still regards language, insofar as we assume it to share knowledge, as *rhetoric,* i.e. as imposing opinions. However, we saw that this notion took a different shape. In DaR, language was rhetorics because it is was fundamentally tropical. Starting from GS, however, logic and truth became essentially value-judgments by the body. Language and argumentations are products *of,* and therefore secondary to said judgements. What became of language qua informer, then, was the imposing of these value-judgments. Argumentation in philosophy has the exact same function, imposing these judgments by playing into one's logical instincts. This is something, as I have shown, prominent in Nietzsche's meta-philosophy as seen in BGE.

5.2. Final remarks and suggestions for further study

Language, for Nietzsche, to the degree we think it communicates *epistēmē,* actually imposes *doxa.* Argumentation, to the degree we use it to convince people, is manipulative: it is pulling on logical strings to make people think like you. It is all, in other words, *rhetoric.*

It is understandable some may hear this and scoff. For not only does the thesis of language = rhetoric implicate *itself* in its judgment; it is also perhaps a counter-intuitive, almost absurd notion. That does *not,* however, mean it is not 'true'. The self-implication we addressed above; as far as the absurdity goes: the thesis has scientific backing (and science often verges on the absurd). Traditionally having been viewed by philosophers as a means for arriving at 'truth' (the Sophists honorably excluded) – some scientists today, using fascinating experiments, have radically challenged this classical notion. These scientists propose, echoing Nietzsche as I have described his views here, that the picture has been stood on its head. Not 'seeking' truth is what reason and argument do, no, they *construct* it (see Mercier & Sperber, 2018 for the pioneering work on this subject[16]; or see

[16] Interestingly, though they spar with many philosophers throughout the work, there is no mention of Nietzsche.

Sterelny, 2018 for a critical review). They have a primarily *social* function, then, according to these scientists. It is an idea that deserves serious consideration, and Nietzsche's thought could be a useful instrument for doing so.

If we accept argumentation is manipulative, now, a kind of 'hacking' of someone's thought; how should we deal with this fact? For starters, it would blur the line between what we think is demagogical, and what we see as convincing people through reasons. Whether a Trump is playing into someone's xenophobic instincts to gain their support; or whether a different politician gains it through arguments: if we accept what has here been set out, we cannot *fundamentally* distinguish between the two. They are analogous processes: only the specific instincts differ. This means that if we want to 'prove' that demagogy is (morally) bad, we cannot do so by relying on some inherent principle. We have rather to point to e.g. effects, or to the suitability of some instincts compared to others, with regards to a specific purpose. Ultimately, however, in arguing this way we get stuck in a circle. For to argue that argument takes priority over techniques traditionally regarded as demagogical or rhetorical, already presupposes argument is better than these techniques (after all, you could also *scare* your listeners into agreeing with you). It is therefore a difficult matter, which would require further inquiry to be addressed.

Philosophy is of course also implicated in this. If argumentation aims at manipulation through logic; should philosophers then stop arguing? Maybe not: perhaps the emphasis on these specific instincts, i.e. the logical, is what makes philosophy 'philosophy'. Distinguished from science, which, for Nietzsche, consists *merely* of these logical instincts; philosophy might walk the line between science and religion. That is, the first *only* produces logical arguments, based on experience; the second does not produce arguments at all, but is rather someone's personal value-judgment, defended by appealing to 'revelation'. Philosophy could be a mix: it is the defending of personal value-judgments through logical arguments. This does not justify philosophical practice *per se,* but it suggests that philosophy, insofar as it *is* philosophy, is inseparable from logical argumentation (Nietzsche seems to disagree with this, however, as, again, the philosopher of the future might say: "My opinion is *my* opinion: another person has not easily a right to it" (BGE 43). Then again, BGE 213 emphasizes the importance of dialectics for the philosopher; but this we could read in the sense of *Redlichkeit*).

And, of course, my account is non-exhaustive. I have neglected the subject of Will to Power, which I judged too complex for the scope of this thesis. Further study could thus investigate the relation of this concept to what I have done here. This would then presumably consist of reading argument, or more specifically logic as one of the many instruments through which a 'Will' strives to gain more power. Something 'in' us would then instinctively try to create the world in its own image, namely, by making other people adopt our worldview. Disagreement could be an objection to our value-judgments, hence we try to convince. That could explain why Nietzsche refers to philosophy as "this tyrannical impulse itself, the most spiritual Will to Power, the will to "creation of the world"" (BGE 9). Something else I have largely left out, is how the view of language and argumentation = rhetoric, is related to Nietzsche's own style of writing. This could therefore also be an interesting further step to take. The ambiguous *reductio ad absurdum* he pulls in

BGE 15 could for instance be an ironic wink or play with logic. It could also put his more polemical works into a new perspective, and we can investigate the degree to which he consciously uses rhetorical strategies as opposed to argument. For indeed, based on what we have said, whether such strategies are 'immoral' is much more ambiguous.

Of course, topics like the one I have treated with in this thesis always put one in a peculiar position. Should I even be arguing? Do I not inadvertently manipulate my reader? For this reason, I advise caution. It would appear we are never safe from rhetorics, not even in the most carefully reasoned philosophical treatise. On the contrary, insofar as we assume such texts to be unrhetorical, perhaps they are rather the *most so*. Fortunately for us, however, we should also not be *too* cautious. For we are lucky: language might be rhetorics – but why should we listen to the rhetor? We may be thankful, then, for *aporia!*

Reference list:

Abel, G. (2001). Bewusstsein – Sprache – Natur. Nietzsches Philosophie des Geistes. Nietzsche-Studien, 30, 1–43.

Behler, E. (1989). Selbstkritik der Philosophie in der dekonstruktiven Nietzschelektüre. In G. Abel & J. Salaquarda (Eds.), Krisis der Metaphysik. Wolfgang Müller-Lauter zum 65. Geburtstag (pp. 271–284). De Gruyter.

Behler, E. (1995). Nietzsche's study of Greek rhetoric. Research in Phenomenology, 25, 3–26. http://www.jstor.org/stable/24658661

Clark, M. (1991). The development of Nietzsche's later position on truth. In Nietzsche on truth and philosophy (pp. 95–126). Cambridge University Press.

Constâncio, J. (2011). Instinct and language in Nietzsche's Beyond Good and Evil. In J. Constâncio & M. J. M. Branco (Eds.), Nietzsche on instinct and language (pp. 157–180). Walter de Gruyter.

De Man, P. (1979). Allegories of reading: Figural language in Rousseau, Nietzsche, Rilke, and Proust. Yale University Press.

Emden, C. J. (2005). Nietzsche on language, consciousness, and the body (1st ed.). University of Illinois Press.

Kopperschmidt, J. (1994). Nietzsche, oder, "Die Sprache ist Rhetorik". Brill Fink.

Kim, S. (2022). Nietzsche on reason (Doctoral dissertation). ProQuest Dissertations & Theses.

Lacoue-Labarthe, P. (1979). Le sujet de la philosophie. Éditions Aubier.

Locke, J. (1924). An essay concerning human understanding (A. S. Pringle-Pattison, Ed. & abridg.). Oxford University Press.

Mader, M. (1999). Suffering contradiction: Kofman on Nietzsche's critique of logic. In P. Deutscher & K. Oliver (Eds.), Enigmas: Essays on Sarah Kofman (pp. 87–96). Cornell University Press. https://doi.org/10.7591/9781501723742-007

Mercier, H., & Sperber, D. (2018). The enigma of reason: A new theory of human understanding. Penguin Group.

Nehamas, A. (2017). Nietzsche on truth and the value of falsehood. Journal of Nietzsche Studies, 48(3), 319–346. https://doi.org/10.5325/jnietstud.48.3.0319

Nietzsche, F. (1997). Twilight of the idols (D. Large, Trans.). Hackett Publishing.

Nietzsche, F. (2001). The gay science: With a prelude in German rhymes and an appendix of songs (J. Nauckhoff, Trans.; B. Williams, Ed.). Cambridge University Press.

Nietzsche, F. (2003). De antichrist: Vloek over het christendom. De Arbeiderspers.

Nietzsche, F. (2009). Beyond good and evil. Project Gutenberg. https://www.gutenberg.org/ebooks/4363

Nietzsche, F. (2017). On the genealogy of morality and other writings (C. Diethe, Trans.; K. Ansell-Pearson, Ed.; 3rd ed.). Cambridge University Press.

Nietzsche, F. W. (1872). The birth of tragedy.

Nietzsche, F. W. (1873). On truth and lie in a nonmoral sense. https://www3.uwsp.edu/conted/Docments/LIFE/On%20Truth%20and%20Lies.pdf

Nietzsche, F., & Blair, C. (1983). Nietzsche's "Lecture notes on rhetoric": A translation. Philosophy & Rhetoric, 16(2), 94–129. http://www.jstor.org/stable/40237356

Schopenhauer, A. (2012). De wereld als wil en voorstelling (6e druk). Wereldbibliotheek.

Singer, P. (1972). Famine, affluence, and morality. Philosophy & Public Affairs, 1(3), 229–243. http://www.jstor.org/stable/2265052

Sterelny K. Why reason? Hugo Mercier's and Dan Sperber's *The Enigma of Reason: A New Theory of Human Understanding*. *Mind Lang*. 2018; 33: 502–512. **https://doi-org.ezproxy.leidenuniv.nl/10.1111/mila.12182**

White, A. (2000). The youngest virtue. In R. Schacht (Ed.), Nietzsche's postmoralism: Essays on Nietzsche's prelude to philosophy's future (pp. 63–78). Cambridge University Press.

Zavatta, B. (2018). The figurative patterns of reason: Nietzsche on tropes as embodied schemata. In M. Dries (Ed.), Nietzsche on consciousness and the embodied mind (pp. 195–214). De Gruyter. https://doi.org/10.1515/9783110246537-011

Etymonline. (n.d.). *Online etymology dictionary*. https://www.etymonline.com

Nietzsche Source. http://www.nietzschesource.org/