

Plastische Kraft as rhetoric δύναμις in Nietzsche's philosophy¹

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Abstract: This is a hermeneutic study of the relevance of language in Nietzsche's philosophy and its legacy for the contemporary world. In order to achieve this, the paper begins by analyzing the plastic phenomenon in the philosopher's dialogues with part of German idealism in the context of *Die Geburt der Tragödie* (1872) and its developments in subsequent writings. Thereafter, two important understandings of language and rhetoric found in the texts produced for the lectures from 1872 to 1875 are analyzed: rhetoric conceived as δύναμις and language conceived as rhetoric. Both analyzes investigate the conceptual development of the expression *plastic force* (*plastische Kraft*) between the 1870s and 1880s and its effects on the thought cycles of *Die Unzeitgemäße Betrachtungen* (1873-1876), *Die fröhliche Wissenschaft* (1882/1887) and *Jenseits von Gut und Böse* (1886). The concluding interpretation identifies plastic force as a relational mechanism between these three phases and as an essential feature of Nietzschean philosophy.

Keywords: Nietzsche; language; δύναμις; art; plastic force.

Plastische kraft como δύναμις retórica na filosofia de Nietzsche

Resumo: Trata-se de um estudo hermenêutico da relevância da linguagem na filosofia de Nietzsche e do seu legado para o mundo contemporâneo. Para tanto, inicia-se pela análise do fenômeno plástico nos diálogos travados pelo filósofo com parte do idealismo alemão no contexto de *Die Geburt der Tragödie* (1872) e seus desdobramentos nos escritos subsequentes. Em seguida, passa-se à análise de duas compreensões importantes sobre linguagem e retórica, encontradas nos textos produzidos para as preleções de 1872 a 1875: a retórica concebida como δύναμις e a linguagem concebida como retórica. De ambas as análises investiga-se o desenvolvimento conceitual da expressão *força plástica* (*plastische*

¹ This research was supported by the Brazilian *Full Doctorate Abroad Program* from the Coordenação de Aperfeiçoamento de Pessoal de Nível Superior (CAPES).

Kraft) entre as décadas de 1870 e 1880 e seus efeitos nos ciclos de pensamentos correspondentes a *Die Unzeitgemäße Betrachtungen* (1873-1876), *Die fröhliche Wissenschaft* (1882/1887) e *Jenseits von Gut und Böse* (1886). A interpretação conclusiva identifica na força plástica um mecanismo relacional entre essas três fases e um traço essencial da filosofia nietzschiana.

Palavras-chave: Nietzsche; linguagem; δύναμις; arte; força plástica.

Plastische kraft como retórica δύναμις en la filosofía de Nietzsche

Resumen: Trata-se de un estudio hermenéutico da relevancia da linguagem na filosofia de Nietzsche e do su legado para el mundo contemporáneo. Para tanto, inicia-se pela análise do fenômeno plástico nos diálogos travados pelo filósofo com parte do idealismo alemán no contexto de *Die Geburt der Tragödie* (1872) e seus desdobramentos nos escritos posteriores. Em seguida, passa-se à análise de dos compreensões importantes sobre linguagem e retórica, encontradas nos textos produzidos para as preleções de 1872 a 1875: a retórica concebida como δύναμις e a linguagem concebida como retórica. De ambas as análises investiga-se o desenvolvimento conceitual da expressão força plástica (*plastische Kraft*) entre as décadas de 1870 e 1880 e seus efeitos nos ciclos de pensamentos correspondientes a *Die Unzeitgemäße Betrachtungen* (1873-1876), *Die fröhliche Wissenschaft* (1882/1887) e *Jenseits von Gut y Böse* (1886). Una interpretación concluyente identifica la fuerza plástica un mecanismo relacional entre esas tres fases y un trazo esencial de la filosofía nietzschiana.

Palabras clave: Nietzsche; lengua; δύναμις; arte; fuerza plástica.

INTRODUCTION

The contributions that this paper aims to present touch on the relevance of Nietzsche's writings produced in the mid-1870s for the development of more centrally known themes in his philosophy. The initial assumption is that there are many themes within this scope whose accurate analysis of their respective conceptual developments would reveal explanations for many apparent aporias identified by critics of this philosophy. As will be shown below, *plastic force* is one of these themes. Best known in the context of Nietzsche's reflections on history, a presentation of its conceptual development, meaning potentials and effects is a contribution of great importance for the academic investigations.



Especially from the point of view of *Nietzsche Studies*, the main contribution consists in identifying the origins of the term in writings and themes that have received less academic attention – such as language and rhetoric – and in the reinterpreted and pragmatic examination of writings of aesthetic content from the transition between the 1860s and 1870s. Subsidiary contributions consist of identifying the effects of the interpretation of plastic force in the light of this less examined database. Two discursive nuclei predominate in traditional specialized research on the theme of language in Friedrich Nietzsche's writings: one, in the realm of the anthropological consequences of the metaphorical potential of terms in function of the scopes to which they belong, based essentially on the unpublished text *Über Wahrheit und Lüge im außermoralischen Sinne* (1873/1896; henceforth, WL), and the other, in the opposite direction, on the critique of grammar from the very development of the philosopher's considerations on culture, already in his maturity.

Beyond their conceptual specificities per se, both nuclei vestigially support the argument that, as the cycles of thought differ in the history of the author's *œuvre*, language reveals itself as a theme inseparable from the respective issues of each of these phases. From this observation, it has not been impossible to raise questions about Nietzsche's attention to language between these two extremes of youth and maturity in his writings. Therefore, in the last fifteen years of the 21st century, part of the *Nietzsche-Forschung* which is focused on ethical reflections in the so-called *Freigeisterei*, from the transition between the 1870s and 1880s, revealed important aspects of language in this field, with emphasis on the problem of the art of living in the first edition of *Die fröhliche Wissenschaft* (1882; henceforth, FW).

Corroborating the findings of these studies, this paper has two essential purposes: firstly, it demonstrates that this attention remains throughout the 1880s, continuing the ethical focus of this 1882 book and, secondly, with an emphasis on its

second edition of 1887, but reorienting the theme towards the political context of *Jenseits von Gut und Böse* (1886; henceforth, JGB).

The first argumentative instance of the work hermeneutically reconnects the physiological process of ethical and anthropological synthesis in FW with the traditional problem of Language Theory from the early 1870s. However, it does not do so through the well-known WL, but through the core of his previous writings produced for the lectures from 1872 to 1875. The philosophical isthmus between such distinct nuclei of thought is art, that is, the respective aesthetic dimensions of language and forms of life in the philosophy of the free spirit. A fundamental issue in this research is the analysis of the conceptual development of the expression plastic force (*plastische Kraft*).

Two important understandings of language and rhetoric, found in the texts produced for the lectures from 1872 to 1875, are of great relevance to such an understanding: rhetoric conceived as *δύναμις* and language conceived as rhetoric. From the definition of *δύναμις* as the rhetorical skill of persuasion, we can understand the mechanism by which Nietzsche radicalizes Gustav Geber's concept of language as art in order to affirm a relationship of identity between language and rhetoric. Based on these aspects, it becomes possible to link such different cycles of thought in Nietzsche's philosophy, thereby broadening our understanding of each of them. Indeed, these elements form part of the argumentative system of this work. More than this *logical copulation* between the premises of this first block of arguments, the aesthetic dimension of language also occurs in this work as a point of cohesion with its second argumentative scope.

In the second part, the aesthetic character of language and its physiological aspects are allocated to the political field. Language and force are analyzed in order to demonstrate the approximations between the ethical wisdom of the *gaya scienza* and

the *philosophy of the future* in the second half of the 1880s. To this end, the dialogical comparison between JBG and the second edition of FW is methodologically important.

Notwithstanding the specific contributions of both logical demonstrations in the context of specialized Nietzschean research, the paper concludes by highlighting the relevance of Nietzsche's legacy for both centuries after him.

FROM THE AESTHETICS OF TRAGEDY TO *PLASTIC FORCE*

From the fall of 1869, in the context of writings that anticipate *Die Geburt der Tragödie* (1872; henceforth GT), began to emerge progressive reflections on the plastic phenomenon (*das Plastische*) as a theoretical object. Notably in dialogue with the aesthetic considerations of Goethe and Schiller, Nietzsche understands this phenomenon as „*eine ruhige Größe*“, a quiet grandeur, a representational tension aware of the notion of space and perspective. This ideal of beauty is governed by the laws of the so-called “high style” (*hoher Stil*): sober quantity of motifs, rigid symmetry and contrast, calm movements. In GT's discursive context, the importance of sublime music, whose slow movement could convert the speed of modern life and the naturalist aesthetic that contemporaneously presented itself to him, into pathetic grandeur. His question, more than an aesthetic reflection, was the future of German culture, as can be observed in the posthumous fragment 25[1] from the winter of 1872-1873²: „Und so ahnte ich eine allerfruchtbarste Zukunft unserer plastischen Aufgaben, einer so erhabenen Musik die entsprechende Erhabenheit der Stellungen und

² Found in Manuscript UI4B, the group of fragments number 21 contains notes on aesthetic themes, including the plastic phenomenon, and on Philosophy in the Greek Tragic Era. Although recorded as a fragment from the winter of 1872-1873, the short essay in NF, 1872-25[1] seems to contain ideas already considered in the summer that preceded it, as can be seen in sketches 2, 3 and 8 of group 21 about Aeschylus' *The Coephoras*. Cf. Nietzsche (1988, pp. 523-530). It is also worth noting the considerations of Guervós (2010, pp. 419): “La mayor parte de las notas corresponde a fragmentos del año 1871. Los que publican aquí los editores son los fragmentos de los años 1872 y 1873.”

Gruppierungen zu erfinden.“ (Nietzsche, 1988a, p. 567) Notably, the quoted excerpt was written in the context of the well-known controversy surrounding the publication of GT and attests to the fact that the proposal to analyze culture and think about its future based on the symbolic and artistic forms that constitute it remained at the end of 1872 – and more. And the sublime plastic ideal remains as an aesthetic benchmark. Nevertheless, if on the one hand this reference is too metaphysical, and part of this belongs to the controversy over the book, from this period onwards he seems to seek new thematic and methodological orientations to support this proposal.

It was in these circumstances that, from the winter of 1872, two lines of thought began to be defined: one practical, focused on the future of culture with its practices within its institutions, and the other theoretical, focused on *epistemes* concerning these respective practices. Thus, the practical one coincides with *Die Philosophie im tragischen Zeitalter der Griechen* (1873) and *Die Unzeitgemäßen Betrachtungen* – on the religious David Strauss (1873), on History and historicism (1874), on Schopenhauer and education (1874) and on Richard Wagner in Bayreuth (1876) – and the theoretical one, which, among other major themes, establishes *language* as the object of investigation, as is evident from the texts of the lectures on rhetoric – *Darstellung der antiken Rhetorik* (1872), *Abriß der Geschichte der Beredsamkeit* (1872), *Geschichte der Griechischen Beredsamkeit* (1872-1873) and the *Einleitung zur Rhetorik des Aristoteles* (1874-1875). The point of such a description is the assertion that from both analytical perspectives emerges the idea of *plastic force*.

The expression *plastic force* (*plastische Kraft*) occurs in writings that precede GT and follow the first books on Zarathustra in 1883. It is true that a concept of this expression is not yet denotable before 1872, since it appears in the context of Nietzsche's aforementioned considerations on the plastic phenomenon in the performing arts, especially in Greek *τραγωδία*. But, as his later writings make clear, it is precisely this aesthetic reflection from his studies of German idealism which, once

subjected to the radical methodological turn resulting from the GT polemic, will be fundamental to the conception and functions of language found in the well-known philosophical projects of the *Freigeisterei* (1876-1882) and the *Philosophie der Zukunft* (1886-1887), as will be shown below.

Seemingly in the sense of making his critique of German culture in the second half of the 19th century more objective and demonstrable, Nietzsche returned to philology and history, with their respective methods and themes. Thitherto he did not yet have a propaedeutics that could be compatible with the concerns that motivated GT, as a contemporary with Natural History and the birth of Anthropology and the other Social Sciences.

In such conditions he seems to have immersed himself in a kind of social psychology with a descriptive method *avant la lettre* in his *Untimely Meditations*. And it is in the second of these, *Vom Nutzen und Nachteil der Historie für das Leben* (1874, henceforth, HL), that the expression *plastische Kraft* begins to take shape as an independent idea. As can be seen directly from the title, this text discusses the pragmatics of history as a science at the service of practical life. A very clear critique of the idealistic traits of the most diverse expressions of historicism, the second untimely meditation reveals Nietzsche's concern with the influences of distant ages on others and its consequences for the development and composition of history. And since history is a human phenomenon, written by human beings for human beings, projects for the future of humanity presuppose a complex human capacity for perceiving current conditions and creatively projecting future conditions, without which the coordinated realization of individual and joint actions becomes impossible.

Hence, according to HL, human action in history simultaneously requires a contemplative attitude of time, of himself and of the other human beings who, subject to it, exist in it. Here Nietzsche seems to call for a unity of *βίος πρακτικός* and *βίος θεωρητικός*, constitutional and constituted by the mastery of oneself and others,

according to a dynamic of perception and creation; a kind of ability to “sculpt” and “model” life, a sculptural force, namely a *plastic force*. As follows, the effect of this (plastic) force should act directly on the fair measure of what it would be necessary to remember and to forget, so that both individuals and societies could realize a certain future project. In order to clarify this concept, it is important to look at the philosopher’s words:

Um diesen Grad und durch ihn dann die Grenze zu bestimmen, an der das Vergangene vergessen werden muss, wenn es nicht zum Todtengräber des Gegenwärtigen werden soll, müsste man genau wissen, wie gross die plastische Kraft eines Menschen, eines Volkes, einer Cultur ist, ich meine jene Kraft, aus sich heraus eigenartig zu wachsen, Vergangenes und Fremdes umzubilden und einzuverleiben, Wunden auszuheilen, Verlorenes zu ersetzen, zerbrochene Formen aus sich nachzuformen (Nietzsche, 1972a, p. 247).

From this excerpt it should be noted that such skill reveals the importance of values for History and raises considerations about the creative potential of human memory and historical memory. The fundamental process of this Ethics requires the development of the ability to look at oneself from a certain distance, an exercise in self-observation with a progressive broadening of perspective on oneself, integrated into one’s own space-time and the social groups to which one belongs. According to HL, this could imply a future projection of the self; and with it, the creation of the memory one could have of one’s own way of life and his culture as a whole. In fact, types of memory become criteria for the differences between two processes of distancing: on the one hand, memory could be comprehended as a human faculty for *recording* historical effects that should be isolated after forgetting so that the conditions for the occurrence of long-distance effects between epochs could be determined; and on the other hand, human memory could also be understood as the result of *creative learning*, creation of one’s own ethical dimension forces and creation of part of history. As a result, memory itself could be *recreated*.

In that fashion, the connections between the ages are no longer understood as simple effects that are examined and overwritten in order to become creatively selected objects along the lines of cultural transmission. The plastic force allows the dissociation of the human being from human time and his reinterpretation of the facts in time. Against the excess of history and the transformation of life into an antique store, it provides an artistic expansion of perception to such an extent, that the future may become repeatedly inserted into history and into the order of the effects of the human being's feelings on himself. As far as human memory is concerned, it could be conceived as an ability learned by grasping the conception of the past. Memory is no longer representative or merely descriptive; it is also to be creative.

LANGUAGE'S PLASTIC FORCE AS ART AND ΔΥΝΑΜΙΣ

The records of Nietzsche's investigations during the winter of 1872-1873 show that the difficulties of the encounter between philology and philosophy in the field of art brought him face to face with the classic philosophical problem of truth and its effects. Essentially, his main challenge seemed to be the objectification of practical problems in a scholarly environment that stubbornly kept alive all the elements of German idealism to which he was heir.

He had a problem communicating future problems with a gift from a recent tradition. The very idea of truth and the ways of communicating it were already locked within the solid limits of philological and philosophical languages. His way out, then, seemed to lie in re-examining these respective languages; he would need to analyze how both were historically constituted without relying on what was historically consolidated. Hence the critical re-examinations of philosophical and cultural practices in the texts of the first half of the 1870s.



As for the respective languages of these cultural and knowledge practices, the question would be to understand their rules of use, the pragmatics of their respective discourses. And this is how the first preparatory writings for the lectures on rhetoric appear from the transition to 1873. As research sources Guervós (2000, p. 16) points to typical works from the classical philology tradition (Westermann, Spengel Volkmann and Blass) and the philosophical-linguistic tradition, especially Gustav Gerber.

Right at the beginning of his *Darstellung der antiken Rhetorik*, Nietzsche points out that rhetoric originates from the cultural reality of a people who know the world through mythical reality, not through historical discourse. Under these conditions, “es will lieber überredet als belehrt sein und auch die Nothdurft des Menschen in der gerichtlichen Beredsamkeit soll zur freien Kunst entfaltet sein.” (Nietzsche, 1995, p. 415) This liberal understanding of rhetoric as an art proper to the republican political space, where the custom of tolerance towards different opinions is part of the citizen’s cultural and political constitution and whose people prefer to be persuaded rather than instructed, seems compatible with the classical Greek understanding of the relationship between rhetoric and persuasion (*πείθειν*).

Nietzsche (1995, p. 418) discusses the Platonic conception in the context of Socratic considerations on knowledge and quickly cites the relationship between (*πείθειν*) and multitude (*πλήθος*) in the *Πολιτικός* (304d). It’s understandable that the thematic privilege of this conception had greater weight with regard to the problem of truth, much more so than that of power because of the criticisms leveled at Socrates already in the context of GT. It is worth noting, however, that in another dialogue, namely *Γοργίας* (452d-e), Plato (1871, p. 15) understands rhetoric as the ability to persuade the crowd: *τῷ δυναμένῳ λέγειν καὶ πείθειν τὰ πλήθη*. In this excerpt, Gorgias stresses to the speaker’s action of political domination over his listeners.

This explanation is justified if we consider Aristotle's own conception, expressly quoted by Nietzsche. In his *Τέχνη ῥητορική* (I, 2), the philosopher from Stagira defines it as the ability to make the persuasive contemplate itself, where it is considered in relation to every particular, admitting everything that is possibly credible and convincing: Ἔστω δὴ ἡ ῥητορική δύναμις περὶ ἕκαστον τοῦ θεωρηῆσαι τὸ ἐνδεχόμενον πιθανόν. (Aristóteles, 2002, pp. 5-6) For the purposes of this paper, it is precisely relevant to highlight this political sense of mastering the rhetorical skill of persuading beyond the veracity of speeches.

Understood as a skill, *δύναμις* assumes in rhetoric the condition of overcoming the power of speech in silence and converting it into an act, but not just the action itself, but the mastery of discourse. And such a domain consists precisely in the fact that Aristotle recognized the power of this ability to intensify its effects due to its eminently formal essence. Nietzsche especially emphasized this aspect of Aristotelian rhetoric in his lecture: „Also weder ἐπιστήμη noch τέχνη, sondern δύναμις die aber zu einer τέχνη erhoben werden könne.“ (Nietzsche, 1995, p. 419) Applicable to all areas of knowledge, rhetoric can become an art (τέχνη), depending on the speaker, their objectives, discourse and conditions. It is malleable, moldable, like the raw material of a plastic art. Understood as dynamics, rhetoric thus has both political and aesthetic potential.

In the preface to the first edition of his work *Die Sprache als Kunst* (1871), Gustav Gerber sought to respond to the demand made by Böckh in 1808 regarding the need to develop a study on “the artistic use of language”, according to which, until then, nothing significant had been done. In a cautious dialog with ancient tradition, Gerber's work was critical of modern studies of language and rhetoric.

This critical discourse of contemporary modernity itself greatly pleased Nietzsche³, whose position on philology and culture was similar at the end of 1872. This was because not only was Gerber's notion of language as art, but his idea of art itself was similar to that of the author of GT. Gerber's conception of art is thus enunciated:

Wir sagen nur etwa dies, daß es für die Erkenntnis sowohl des Wesens wie der Formen der Sprache von, wie uns scheint, entscheidender Wichtigkeit ist, wenn wir ihren Begriff in die Sphäre des Sprachbildes „Kunst“ hineinsetzen, in dem Sinne, daß Kunst vor allem ein freies Können bezeichnet, wie τέχνη auf dem τίκτειν beruht, ars ein ἀρτύνειν ist, [...] (Gerber, 1885, p. V).

The first aspect that brings Gerber closer to the ancients is the fact that *use*, *essence* and *form* are thought of in an integrated way when seeking to know language. Next, by conceptualizing it within the scope of the linguistic image of “art”, he brings back the Aristotelian definition of rhetoric as δύναμις, as a skill that is neither τέχνη nor ἐπιστήμη, but which can become τέχνη. Moreover, in direct parallel, while δύναμις can produce in any area of knowledge because it is an essentially formal skill and, as such, emptied of its own content and meaning, Gerber understands art above all as a free skill.

Gerber goes on to clarify the respective derivations of the terms that give rise to the idea of art. As a derivative of τίκτειν, τέχνη falls within the semantic sphere

³ For the purposes of this paper, we have emphasized the relevance of the Geberian conception of language as art in the conceptual development of plastics in Nietzsche's philosophy. Nonetheless, it should be made clear that the attention given by Nietzsche to Friedrich Albert Lange's concept of *Begriffsdichtung* is also extremely important in the scope of the relationship between language and art. On another occasion, we analyzed the relationship between both conceptions: “Nietzsche not only understands the aesthetic meaning of the term *Begriffsdichtung* as art (*Kunst*), but also delves into the practical essence of the term: the aesthetic consists of making the understanding of a phenomenon become another one in the realm of speculation. That the notion of art is associated with the field of imagination and speculation is something that will still be felt in the writings about *The Birth of Tragedy* (1872). The metaphysics of the artist, however, progressively loses ground for Nietzsche as philology as a science imposes itself on him. That is when his courses on rhetoric appeared in the following years. As part of preparing his lectures on rhetoric, in the first half of the 1870s, Nietzsche was faced with different sources, including the work *Die Sprache als Kunst* (1871) by Gustav Gerber [...]”. (Vieira de Paiva e Asevedo, 2023, pp. 390-391)

of generating, causing, creating, placing, producing, being delivered, bringing to light, bringing into existence. It consists of making something exist in the world, being the cause of its origin or appearance, providing a spatial and temporal condition in the world, conferring nature, essentially creating. In turn, as a derivative of ἀρτύνειν, ars belongs to the sphere of organizing, planning, preparing, making ready. It consists of anticipating an event or thing, giving it order, essence, foundation, adornment. In view of this, the question arises: and what does language do with thoughts, people and things?

It should not be forgotten that Nietzsche's objectives with language lie in his critique of the rationalist truth established by the Socratic thought dominant in his time. From this perspective, language is thought of as an element of cultural transmission at its most instinctive levels. Emotions and subjective apprehensions perceived by human beings as impulses become transmitted from the traces captured by nerve impulses.

Such is the limitation of knowledge of the world and its respective enunciation through language that Nietzsche states that: „Statt der Dinge nimmt die Empfindung nur ein Merkmal auf. Das ist der erste Gesichtspunkt: die Sprache ist Rhetorik, denn sie will nur eine δόξα, keine ἐπιστήμη übertragen.“ (Nietzsche, 1995, p. 426). As such, things would not be apprehended by us in our heads, but our disposition in front of them and the speaker's action that allow notions about the world to be produced.

Under this line of thinking, we are not instructed about facts and things, but persuaded by speeches about them. In this sense, rhetoric and ethics meet in Nietzsche as *Lebenskunst*, as Patoussis (2014, p. 230) endorses: „Die nietzschesche Lebenskunst bindet die Theorie zurück an die Lebenspraxis nicht nur in ihren ethischen Handlungsgrundlagen, sondern auch in ihrer Sprachanwendung.“

Understood as rhetoric and as art, language's plastic force is its identity in *δύναμις*. Such a force that prepares, creates and gives existence to things and people in the world launches power as an effect, as an ability that is free in itself and liberates those who experience it.

GAYA SCIENZA AS THE PLASTIC HIGH STYLE OF CHARACTER

As a self-experiment, the process of detachment, that methodologically excludes the individual ethically in the world, is a process of complete solitude. The plastic force is an intensifying power that consists of constant expansion of capacities and individual adaptation. Such skills, however, are designed only separated from the social, since the creation of the sense of community forced us to translate our own thoughts for the gregarious understanding. The intensification of force developed in solitude and distance fear gradually gives independence to the individual. For the experience of the *gaya scienza* the exercise of self-production is an end in itself, so that is the creative force of the artist. In full production this force manifests itself separately and is expressed in varying degrees of taste.

As the style setting is a process aimed at itself, the work of art – ethically speaking, the character – can be fitted with various transfigurations. Here, plastic force applied to oneself means the highest possible degree of self-mastery, of power over oneself. In the tension with the variations of its complexity, it is up to the individual to order them as he proposes to himself a model of himself. A high ethical style implies a unique model, a unique taste.

Jeder vornehmere Geist und Geschmack wählt sich, wenn er sich mittheilen will, auch seine Zuhörer; indem er sie wählt, zieht er zugleich gegen „die Anderen“ seine Schranken. Alle feineren Gesetze eines Stils haben da ihren Ursprung: sie halten zugleich ferne, sie schaffen Distanz, sie verbieten „den Eingang“, das Verständniss, wie gesagt, — während sie Denen die Ohren aufmachen, die uns mit den Ohren verwandt sind. (Nietzsche, 1999, p. 340)



The impulse to communicate is much more a need to assert power than an invitation to gregarious equality. And, as such, a selective demand for communication. In this way it may be understood why the abovementioned aphorism FW 381 presents “the question of comprehensibility” as wanting and not wanting to be understood at the same time. As knowing glances in silence, a few which, between them, the same suspect, the relationship established by Nietzsche to his readers still keeps some distance. This may be to own inconsistency to know that it is endowed with suspicion as to what is perceived.

Understood the relationship between loneliness and distance in the FW, it would be important to situate this concept in the context of the plastic force. The artistic detachment is inherent in a unit of a wise, knight and poet of the medieval troubadours: includes human and ambivalent urge to create and destroy things. A deep understanding of the wise about the necessary things says willingly confront the certainty of illusion; the selfless delivery of poet’s feelings drives them to name things and give them meaning and aesthetic sense; the force of the rider evokes the claim of danger. The realization of the need for separation between the human world and the other phenomena and at the same time, the need to produce other distances in own experience between these worlds makes Nietzsche unify his *gai saber* in the figure of artist. This is poetically stated in the aphorism FW 59: „Wir Künstler! Wir Verhehler der Natürlichkeit! [...] Wir todtentstillen unermüdlichen Wanderer, auf Höhen, die wir nicht als Höhen sehen, sondern als unsere Ebenen, als unsere Sicherheiten!“ (Nietzsche, 1999, p. 246.)

These artists, among whom Nietzsche includes himself, unify wisdom, passion and vigor. This unity shows the *poetic passion* the common element that *balances* the intensity of compensatory vectors of art and honesty, shadow and light, remembrance and forgetfulness. Aware of the nature of the rules, the honest knowing investigates *everything that is true and necessary* in the world, seeking to become

physical, as an artist become creative, including himself. The *plastic force* physically determines the direction of these vectors, regulating them according to the needs of our passion for knowledge.

Focused on art problem, the second book of the FW seems to repeat rhythmically, as if in verse, the relation between action and charm as an inherent process of the relationship between art and nature, pain and overcoming. While lovers of “shapes, colors and words”, the Greeks, as artists, created the habit of “unnaturalness on the stage”. The opposition between art and nature – or between artificial and natural – is weighted by the artist in favor of human action on the natural.

In aphorism 80 (Nietzsche, 1999), Nietzsche talks about the simplicity of the Greek stage, which avoided the depth of the latter plans; on the use of masks, which avoided the facial expressions of the actors; as well as the control of the texts with beautiful lines, which avoided publicly withdraw from fear and compassion scenes:

Es ist uns ein Bedürfniss geworden, welches wir aus der Wirklichkeit nicht befriedigen können: Menschen in den schwersten Lagen gut und ausführlich reden zu hören: es entzückt uns jetzt, wenn der tragische Held da noch Worte, Gründe, beredte Gebärden und im Ganzen eine helle Geistigkeit findet, wo das Leben sich den Abgründen nähert, und der wirkliche Mensch meistens den Kopf und gewiss die schöne Sprache verliert.

Shapes, colors and words are *means of expression* in art, especially in Greek poetry. While media, relate directly to *the process itself* of creating and contemplation. Such processes away, are the *vis creativa* either the *vis contemplativa* individuals in the establishment of rules of conduct aimed at securing purposes for existence.

Artistically, there is then a unity between βίος θεωρητικός and βίος πρακτικός. The aesthetic takes thus the ethical assault, to set it artistically, until that, through *the great acquired health*, come to have a new force to assert itself. In this sense, the plastic force consists of the *highest point* of our *theoretical* and *practical* skills of interpretation and improvement of events. In this sense, plastic force is a δύναμις of self-persuasion. Thus, as Robling makes clear, subjectivity is convinced of the need to

affirm its newly created existence after experiencing a supra-historical methodical condition. The plastic force „steht quer zur Geschichte; als überhistorische Kraft gehört sie zum Leben und umfaßt die schöpferische Subjektivität in einem ästhetischen und — wie zu ergänzen ist — rhetorischen Sinn.“ (Robling, 1996, p. 88)

It should be emphasized that this kind of detachment makes provisional pain and enables one to realize that everything that comes to mind is the need of the destinations of the tragedies and the transience of everyday life in comedies in the face of random action. Only then is possible to understand the facts as *best possible* and thereby, *to love* them. Between autumn 1881 and January 1882 Nietzsche considers *amor fati* as a moral elevation doctrine that is being cultivated with the weight of rages in return, and at the same time, renaming them as *grace*.

This explains why, after the critical atmosphere of the third book, Nietzsche begins *Sanctus Januarius* announcing the *amor fati* as an artificial process: „Ich will immer mehr lernen, das Nothwendige an den Dingen als das Schöne sehen: – so werde ich Einer von Denen sein, welche die Dinge schön machen. Amor fati: das sei von nun an meine Liebe!“ (Nietzsche, 1999, p. 262) He then expresses interest in learning to see the beauty in things necessary, that is, acquire new feelings self-coercively, in a word, rhetorically.

What guarantees this process of self-persuasion is the idea that they were themselves who established their laws according to their own depths, as stated in the aphorism FW 335: „Wir aber wollen Die werden, die wir sind, — die Neuen, die Einmaligen, die Unvergleichbaren, die Sich-selber-Gesetzgebenden, die Sich-selber-Schaffenden!“ (Nietzsche, 1999, p. 270) Hence, “loving fate” is an aesthetic learning. It should also be considered that to learn to love happenings it is necessary to distinguish them, isolating them from the other as variable as if such were own life. Then, we must exercise patience and the willingness to face them and support them in their fullness.

After this exercise of patience, whose repetition leads us to the habit and their relation to our lives, we become convinced of their inevitability.

Finally, we rhetorically – or aesthetically – believe that they are necessary and “love” them. Interestingly, we come to love them in fact, as they were integrated and, from then on, began to consist of parts of our own lives. „Auch wer sich selber liebt, wird es auf diesem Wege gelernt haben: es giebt keinen anderen Weg. Auch die Liebe muss man lernen.” (Nietzsche, *idem*) Indeed, as stated in the aphorism FW 334, the necessity of learning love supports the rhetorically created affirmation of the necessity of facts. History itself and its meaning are recreated.

The aesthetic phenomenon may precede the lived reality. As well as scientific models precede the explanations of the phenomena, also religions, as dimensions of aesthetic creation of the gods are man’s encounter with the anticipation own self-sufficiency (*Selbstgenügsamkeit*) and self-redemption (*Selbsterlösung*).

Learning love destiny, the human being unifies *vis contemplativa* and *vis creativa*, realizes how body endowed with senses that make knowledge possible about life and becomes endowed with the ability (*δύναμις*) to interpret and resignify the events of existence, giving meaning to them.

LANGUAGE’S PLASTIC FORCE AND THE PHILOSOPHY OF THE FUTURE

Howbeit it appeared as a discursive motto in his Wagnerian youth, the theme of the future became for Nietzsche a significant part of the evident changes in his thinking around the mid-1880s. After the writings on Zarathustra, structures of thought are identified that reorient the ethical-atomic ideal of the philosophy of the free spirit (*Freigeisterei*) towards a more comprehensive diagrammatic, and therefore political and cultural, plane. Axiomatically, the plastic force occurs in this cycle of thought as a decisive mechanism, since it operates in a common scope between ethics,

culture and politics, so that it makes possible to outline the human condition in both its individual and social aspects.

According to the wisdom of *gaya scienza*, *amor fati* is the result of the plastic force in human being as an ethical phenomenon. Depth in feelings and thoughts and aesthetic superficiality: like the Greeks, the ideal of the artist of life who has transformed his own character into a work of art through experience and knowledge is one of full interpretative transfiguration of facts. Plastic force as Ethics and as a challenge for humanity. This problem of the human being's relationship with pain and his need for transcendence remained for Nietzsche even after the *Freigeisterei*, as can be seen in posthuman fragment 7[99] from 1883: „Die „höhere Vernunft“ in der Klage ist, daß der Mensch einen Schmerz immer noch vertieft: daß er nicht zu schnell ihn fahren läßt — um so höhere Kräfte zieht er dann heran, der plastische Bildner seiner selber!“ (Nietzsche, 1972b, p. 284) Notwithstanding this permanence of the ethical question, between 1883 and 1885 the problem of plastic force gradually returned to the subject of culture, but in a sense that was no longer anthropological. It was as if the description, diagnosis and overcoming of the values of the Western world had already been presented as a model from the point of view of individuals, albeit in reality everything signaled that these ideals were still far from being realized.

Thusly, especially after the appearance of Zarathustra, the question could be raised about the possibility of the ideal of the free spirit being realized and the hypothetical existence of a new humanity made up of individuals with a very high intensity of plastic force at a more distant time, if not in the days contemporary to Nietzsche himself, perhaps in the future.

The philosophy of the future (*Philosophie der Zukunft*) thus emerged as an attempt to gradually put into practice this ideal from the end of the previous decade by bringing together the most different cultures possible. According to this project, it was up to Europeans who were open to the new, that is, good Europeans (*guten*

Europäer) to create the conditions for overcoming (*Überwindung*) Western values (meaning, Europe).

Without being idealism, this new ideal nevertheless has a historical and immanent presupposition. The West itself was founded on the reference of a people with great plastic strength and every time humanity advanced in cultural plenitude, the values of this people reappeared in history as an aesthetic guide. These people, the ancient Greeks, the ancestors of Europeans and, in particular, of the whole of Western culture, should be summoned for re-examination in order to think about new possibilities for humanity.

The ancient Greek's plastic force and its special way of transfiguring pain into art would therefore be the ethical-aesthetic model. This can be seen in the fragment 8[15] from 1883:

„es ist das für Schmerz empfindlichste Volk, aber ihre plastische Kraft in der Benutzung des Schmerzes ist außerordentlich: dazu gehört auch eine Mäßigung in der Rache am Schmerz, im Wühlen im Schmerz: eine Nöthigung zur siegreichen Attitüde, als Kur. Folglich sind sie geneigt, unredlich zu sein gegen das Leiden: und so ist „ihr Gemüth“ weniger sichtbar geworden, um so mehr die überwindenden Affekte, die helle Geistigkeit und die Tapferkeit. Die Schmähsucht nöthigte, die Leidenschaften zu verbergen. [...] leibhafte Darstellung des höchsten Menschen Ziel der Philosophen (Nietzsche, 1988b, p. 336).

The fact that ancient Greek culture has ideals personified in its divinities and that this is aestheticized in plastic and conceptual images makes it understandable that in Nietzsche the Greeks are also images, conceptual personifications of the plastic force itself, through which it brings about the overcoming of individuals and cultures. That being the case, Dionysus is the deity who superlatively embodies the concept of plastic force. He is the Greek god who knows about human suffering and its aesthetic transfiguration as a mask, dream and drunkenness. Living between divine and human natures, between reality and dream, he is also the foreign god, who knows the

experience of difference and the expansion of the feeling of power through the meeting of cultures.

Much more than the theme of the future, the figure of Dionysus occurs in Nietzsche's work at different times, all of which have in common the relevance of the body and its plastic force. This constitutes its own cycles of thought in each of these phases. In the philosophy of the future, Nietzsche fixes this divinity as a concept according to the subtle and possible isthmus between artistic creation (*Schaffen*) and ethnological production (*Züchtung*).

Considering the historical proximity with which *Jenseis von Gut und Böse* (1886) and the fifth book of *Die fröhlichen Wissenschaft* (1887) were written, as well as the way in which the project is presented with Dionysus as a fundamental reference, one can understand *gaya scienza* as the description of the mechanism of action of plastic force as a rhetorical phenomenon. „Die Sprache ist eines der wichtigsten Werkzeuge – wenn nicht sogar das wichtigste, gemessen an Nietzsches eigener Sprachpraxis – im Selbstschaffungsprozess auf dem Weg zu Nietzsches Gedanken eines ‚ästhetischen Daseins‘ und eines ‚fröhlichen Wissenschaftlers‘.“ (Patoussis, 2014, p. 230) After all, it is with the same adventurous and creative trait of the *gai saber* troubadours that Nietzsche describes the very free spirits he relies on in his project for the future of the West.

Crossing this anthropological plane, Nietzsche goes deeper into recognizing the elements of power present in this concept, returning to its mechanism of expression in this philosophy, i.e. the idea of divinity as the holder of *dominion structures* (*Herrschafts-Gebilde*)⁴. Therefore, from 1886 onwards, the aesthetic is thought

⁴ This paper focus on plastic force as a linking mechanism between rhetorical, aesthetic, ethical and anthropological aspects in the cycles of thought analyzed. Undoubtedly there are also political phenomena arising from this same linking mechanism of rhetorical δύναμις and plastic force. However, in the political field, plastic force no longer gives style to an individual or a society. It is now differentiated within the very impulses of relationships between individuals and/or between cultures, in the constitution of *dominion structures*. “Beyond internal processes, this dominion

of as a condition for survival in conditions of nomadism and the imposition of a new condition of *nobility* (*Adel*). Dionysus is the god who overcomes origin by producing a benchmark of the conditions of his own domains, which have been acquired outside Olympus.

In the published work Nietzsche reveals his intention to leave as a legacy for future philosophers the task of producing ever more comprehensive rays of new dominion structures, in order to create with them new ideals of nobility in a new infinity (*neues Unendliches*). And Dionysus again as a reference: new cultural, ethical, aesthetic, political and, above all, epistemological infinities.

If we understand that the fundamental objective of the philosophy of the future consists of overcoming the Nietzschean conception of Europe, Dionysus results as the permanence of the power necessary for this ethnological task of the West. In this case, Dionysus is the personifying deity of the plastic force.

CONCLUSION

Less discussed than the *Dionysian impulse*, *amor fati* or *the philosophy of the future*, but with notable effects in each of these respective cycles of thought, withal, the plastic force operates essential functions at different moments in Nietzsche's philosophy. By examining in detail, the writings that precede their express occurrence in HL-1 and identifying in them the Nietzschean conceptions of art, language and rhetoric, it is possible to conclude that their principles and effects are notable not only in the three cycles mentioned, but throughout the entire *oeuvre*.

structure promotes inventions and constructions of bodies amid linguistic and socio-cultural relations. Extended-aesthetic bodies (*corpus extensum* and *productum corpus*), are produced in this sense, simultaneously natural and cultural." (Vieira de Paiva e Feitosa, 2021, p. 559)



In sooth, even in its most germinal beginnings, in the aesthetic considerations on the plastic phenomenon at the dawn of the 1870s, the power of art's shaping ability and its implications for culture were among GT's very motivations – as Nietzsche himself reiterates in the well-known text of the 1886 attempt at self-criticism. The fact that the preparation for the courses on rhetoric led to an encounter with Gerber's thought, as well as other readings, is something that made it possible to overcome the challenge of objectifying these previous reflections on action, the *ability* to give shape to a raw material.

This already has a direct methodological consequence for the whole of the philosopher's work: the foundation of arguments based on the observation of the practices that make up a culture. And such a conclusion in the context of this paper derives specifically from the conception of rhetoric as *δύναμις* in terms of its character of *ability, skill, capacity*. Since language is a practice inherent to the human way of life, its use makes all other practices evident. And by observing the practices and isolating the forms of life, they can be seen as "all too human" and objective. This can be seen not only in *Untimely Meditations* and *Philosophy in the Tragic Age of the Greeks*, texts that were relatively contemporary with the courses on rhetoric, but also in all the aphoristic books of the 1880s. The direct implication of this in the legacy of this philosophy is its anticipation of the pragmatic thinking that succeeds it in the History of Philosophy.

Another conclusion concerning *δύναμις* as a rhetorical phenomenon is its aesthetic dimension. As a narrative skill, it is what makes it possible for facts and their consequences to take on such and such meanings, to be recorded in such and such ways, for peoples to have such and such *histories*. With this, the radicalization of Geber's thinking becomes clear: if, according to the theorist, "language is art", for Nietzsche, "language is rhetoric" – and as such, a modelable, creative, aesthetic practice. But, as a general phenomenon, if history is plastic, the consequence of this

statement is liberating for individual human life: isolated human life itself is plastic!!! Or poetic, theatrical ... aesthetic! This extensive observation then makes it easy to see how *Freigeisterei* begins with a “chemistry of representations”, of experiences and opinions in the writings of *Human, All Too Human I and II* (1878-1880), progresses through the profound investigation of moral values in *Dawn* (1881) and transforms Ethics into an “art of living” in the first edition of *The Gay Science* (1882).

In addition to clarifying the meaning and relevance of art in Nietzsche’s philosophy, these initial conclusions arising from the dual implications between “*das Plastische*” and δύναμις make the adjective “*plastisch[e]*” in the expression *plastische Kraft* understandable. Effectively, it is this adjective that highlights the practical function of δύναμις, its essential condition of ability in this powerful force of re-signification and re-creation of life, memory and history.

Subsequently, is important to discuss what could be concluded about this ability and the noun *Kraft*. Unlike the description of a rhetorical function, in this case it is the description of an *instinct*. When communicating, human beings make themselves believable in the sense of having their needs met. In this way, *persuasion* is an impulse. And, as such, an instinct to preserve and dominate life. As will be progressively explored in Nietzsche’s work, this observation advances from Aesthetics, through Ethics and reaches Political Philosophy, insofar as human relationships and the most diverse possible *plastic forces* are admitted, which, respectively, are endowed with their most diverse degrees. This makes clear the foundations of the *eternal recurrence of the same* (*die ewige Wiederkehr des Gleichen*), the theory of the *will to power* (*der Wille zur Macht*) and the project of the *good Europeans* (*guten Europäers*), which permeate the writings from the mid-1880s onwards – the books on Zarathustra, JGB (1886), the second edition of FW (1887) and even *Die Genealogie der Moral* (1887).

One last conclusion requires consideration: the relationship between rhetorical δύναμις and the masks of Dionysus throughout Nietzsche's work. Understood as the very personification of plastic force, Dionysus is impulse, the *re*-signification of life, of history, of return, of creative power, but above all, of human power over oneself and the world.

All these conclusions demonstrate the fundamental contributions of this article and call for future work that takes them as premises, respectively. After all, research as a language is also essentially rhetorical.

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