From Vulgar Words to Lightening Bolts: Nietzsche on Style, Language and Experience

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READERS of Nietzsche are familiar with his position that the truth expressed in language is illusory. From this point of view, language fails to correspond to reality and the belief that it does so is part of the metaphysical chimera that we can know the nature of things. Moreover, Nietzsche states that the inflexibility of language means that it fails to adequately communicate diverse and changing experiences. But given Nietzsche's own commitment to writing I think it is worth paying close attention to another strand of Nietzsche's thought about language that is far more optimistic about what it can accomplish—his writings on style.

An examination of Nietzsche's stylistics has long been thought necessary for understanding his thought. In addition to his virtuosic use of many styles, Nietzsche wrote explicitly about style and this writing is my focus here. Placing his comments on style in the broader context of his philosophy of language shows that language's relationship to experience involves more than simply a failure to express or communicate it. Nietzsche's thoughts about style imply that there are various important connections between experience and language. Taking style seriously, I maintain, requires that language needs to be experienced in order to be understood. It also requires us to think about the relationship between language and our ethos, as well as apprehend a particular notion of the experience of writing. A consideration of these multiple connections

between style, language and experience helps us understand our use of language and, given the risks and failures of language, appreciate why Nietzsche dedicated himself to writing.

I

Nietzsche writes that language is a consequence of collective living, which instigates a need for communication. For individuals to live together there must be an agreement on what words mean and thus "a uniformly valid and binding designation is invented for things".[1] The use of linguistic norms comes to be perceived as the upholding of truth, rather than adherence to convention and humanity "forgets that the original perceptual metaphors are metaphors and takes them to be the things themselves" (*PT*, p. 86). According to this account, language has a metaphorical relationship to the world and its origins lie in the group, or what Nietzsche calls the "herd". So he writes in *Twilight of the Idols*: "Speech, it seems, was devised only for the average, medium, communicable. The speaker has already *vulgarized* himself by speaking".[2]

In "On Truth and Lies in a Non-moral Sense", Nietzsche writes that words project similarity and constancy onto diverse experiences. The assumption that the different experiences to which one word applies are in some respect the same means that words fail to respond to the diversity and flux of experience. Language effaces the distinctiveness of individual experiences, a process that is epitomized in the formation of concepts that apply to many different experiences (*PT*, p. 83). Ideas are embedded in the generalities of language and project unity and structure upon the world.[3] Even grammatical structures encourage particular ways of thinking by relating concepts to each other in certain ways.[4] Language's projection of similarity on singular experiences by means of the concept elides the diversity and unfamiliarity of experiences. This imposition of likeness on different experiences can mislead language users to conclude that the same word designates the same experience for different people. But the utility of language's structures does not mean that they are real, and Nietzsche writes of how, in the study of antiquity, we "are deceived by a similarity of words and concepts: but behind them there always lies concealed a sensation which *has to be* foreign".[5]

Yet I consider Nietzsche's thought about the relationship between words and experience to be more complex than simply the idea that words efface singular experiences. While in some passages of "On Truth and Lies in Non-moral Sense" he writes that experience is prior to language and independent of it (*PT*, pp. 90-91), other passages and later writings maintain that conscious experience is determined by the words we have for it. All that is consciously experienced is done so in terms of already circulating words and their implicit concepts (*PT*, p. 89). Conscious experience is shaped by the concepts inherent in words, that is, the generalities, unities and relationships implicit in them.[6] This idea that the meaning that language projects upon experience comes to fashion conscious experience has, it is widely known, been discussed by subsequent theorists influenced by Nietzsche, such as Barthes and Foucault. But it raises the question of how it is possible for unusual, changing and rarefied experiences to be expressed in language, given that the norms projected by language on experience form our conscious experience. Pursuing this question will lead us to lesser-known aspects of Nietzsche's thought about language.

II

Nietzsche conceives of style as countering the way in which the concepts inherent to words homogenize meaning and, by doing so, he provides an antidote to the writer's entanglement in uniformity. Style—the way in which something is said or written, its rhythm, tone, polysemy, tempo, phrasing, temporal order and so on—constitutes the meaning of what is expressed: "There is *art* in every good sentence—art that must be figured out if the sentence is to be understood! A misunderstanding about its tempo, for example: and the sentence itself is misunderstood" (*BGE*, p. 178). Thinking of style as an essential part of meaning rejects the idea that style is merely an elaboration overlaid on a stable meaning or content. A lack of a consideration of the style of a whole work, a meager focus on individual words and concepts, is a sign of decadence according to Nietzsche:

> For the present I merely dwell on the question of style.—*What is the sign of every* literary *decadence? That life no longer dwells in the whole. The*

> *word becomes sovereign and leaps out of the sentence, the sentence reaches*
> *out and obscures the meaning of the page, the page gains life at the expense*
> *of the whole.*[7]

Ignoring style is the cause not only of decadence in writing, but also of decadence in reading because attention to style is necessary for understanding the meaning of any piece of writing. Consequently, I want to consider the consequences of taking seriously the notion that style contributes to meaning, and examine how style enables language to challenge its own inclinations towards generality and uniformity.

Firstly, considering style as intrinsic to meaning requires us to view language as something to be experienced, rather than simply understood. In discussing the way in which Nietzsche's ideas are tied to his style, Bernd Magnus, Stanley Stewart and Jean-Pierre Mileur describe his writing as "resisting paraphrase". If a piece of writing resists paraphrase, then its meaning is generated by a particular use of language and not through correspondence with an external state of affairs that remains a constant source of meaning. A piece of writing that cannot be paraphrased gains its meaning by virtue of qualities within language itself. Tampering with style through altering tempo, rhythm and tension will change meaning. In this way writings are unique objects whereby any process of substitution changes the meaning to a greater or lesser degree. Magnus, Stewart and Mileur describe this as "tokening", suggesting that "most of his [Nietzsche's] published writings virtually embody the theses for which they argue, they represent incarnate their thought, they are instances of their own kind, tokens of their own type; they are self-referring simulacra".[8]

If the style, and thus the meaning, of writing cannot be captured by paraphrase, then a particular piece of language needs to experienced in order to be understood. Stanley Fish describes reading as an experience, as something that happens to oneself, noting the way in which a sentence's:

> *refusal to yield a declarative statement**—**has been transformed into an*
> *account of its experience (not being able to get a fact out of it). It is no*
> *longer an object, a thing-in-itself, but an* event, *something that* happens

> *to, and with the participation of the reader. And it is this event, this*
> *happening—all of it and not anything that could be said about it or any*
> *information one might take away from it—that is, I would argue, the*
>
> *meaning of the sentence.*[9]

Nietzsche himself comments on how texts are things to be experienced. Contemplating on his own success as a writer in *Ecce Homo* he writes: "What I am today, where I am today—at a height where I speak no longer with words but with lightning bolts.... Here every word is experienced".[10] Elsewhere he asks "whether anyone who has never lived through similar experiences could be brought closer to the *experience* of this book by means of prefaces" (*GS*, p. 32). The experience of style, it seems, takes language beyond vulgar uniformity and simplistic ideas about the relationship between words and experience.

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III

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The idea of stylistic language as self-referential language, as thought incarnate, might be thought to sit uneasily alongside some of Nietzsche's other comments on the relationship between style and experience, although I hope to establish that this is not the case. In outlining Nietzsche's criticisms of the correspondence theory of language I discussed his idea that there is a tendency in language users to assume that the same word designates a similar experience for different people, when this may not necessarily be so. As mentioned previously, it is this misleading inclination that Nietzsche is warning us to beware of when studying the ancients. For Nietzsche, different groups of people are tied to different *ethoi*, united by shared habits, conventions, languages, mores and, indeed, experiences. This means that language use is tied to particular, shared ways of life:

> *Words are sounds designating concepts; concepts, however, are more or less*
> *definite images designating frequently recurring and associated sensations,*
> *groups of sensations. To understand one another it is not sufficient to*
> *employ the same words; we have also to employ the same words to designate*
> *the same species of inner experiences, we must ultimately have our*
> *experiences* in common. *(BGE, p. 205)*[11]

This suggests that while a language mediates conscious experience it does not do so in the same way for all people that use it. It rightly notes

that the same language is often used by a variety of people, for example modern scholars reading ancient Greek, who may attribute different meanings to the same word. While "conscious thinking takes the form of words" (*GS*, p. 299), the question of style means that people who share the same language do not necessarily have the same experiences.

The way in which people use language—their style—is closely related to the particularities of their experience. To ignore the style of language is to misunderstand it and project the similarities and generalities inherent in one's language or thought onto another's. Bad translation exemplifies these errors (*GS*, p. 137). While it is possible to translate concepts associated with words between languages, the particular styles of different languages (and therefore the specificity of concepts) are not easily translated (*BGE*, p. 59). Those who have the greatest mastery of style in a society reflect the dominant practices of a people, for example, Christian preachers in nineteenth-century Germany (*BGE*, p. 180). Nietzsche tells realists who insist on the objectivity of language, on its correspondence with the real world, to "forget your descent, your past, your training" (*GS*, p. 121), that is, to forget themselves as part of a particular linguistic tradition with a distinct style.

Style is language shaping experiences in particular and peculiar ways, despite the concepts inherent in words that translate between circumstances. To focus on the significance of style is to acknowledge that languages not only generate generality and similarity, but also embody specificities of meaning, ethos and experience. In relating language back to specific experiences and contexts, style works against language's tendency towards generality and universality. This capacity for specificity has important consequences for our ideas about what constitutes good writing.

Nietzsche obviously considers his art of style as essential to the merit of his writing. Moreover, he relates this art of style to his own inward experiences, writing:

> *a general remark about my art of style. To communicate a state, an inward tension of pathos, by means of signs, including the tempo of these signs—that is the meaning of every style; and considering that the multiplicity of inward states is exceptionally large in my case, I have many stylistic*

> *possibilities—the most multifarious art of style that has ever been at the*
> *disposal of one man. Good is any style that really communicates an inward*
> *state, that makes no mistake about the signs, the tempo of the signs, the*
> *gestures—all the laws about long periods are concerned with the art of*
> *gestures. Here my instinct is infallible.* (*EH*, p. 265)

Nietzsche's faultless talent for style, he declares, is related to the breadth of his inner states because a diversity of inner experience is tied to a diversity of ways of using language. To be familiar with a diversity of styles is to be familiar with the different experiences they cultivate. Nietzsche's recognition of the way in which experiences are shaped by the peculiarities and particularities of different language use gives him stylistic breadth and rhetorical repertoire.

A writer such as Nietzsche deploys a variety of styles for strategic reasons. Magnus, Stewart and Mileur discuss the complexities of his use of the discourses of the gospel, and prophetic and pastoral traditions for writing *Zarathustra*.[12] Nietzsche presents unfamiliar ideas through highly refined and familiar forms, such as nineteenth-century German literature. Although such a use of styles tells us that Nietzsche understood these styles and their associated experiences, one should not make the error of wholly identifying him or his experiences with these styles (*HH*, pp. 94, 248). Rather, as I discuss in more detail below, his strategic deployment of style takes up a perspective on the normative experiences associated with the languages and styles surrounding him, and comments upon language and styles themselves.

IV

Styles we notice to be styles are often idiosyncratic or unusual (whether deliberately so or not), whereas familiar styles frequently go unnoticed. Nonetheless, while we tend to notice unusual styles as style, all language, according to Nietzsche, is stylized:

> *what is called 'rhetorical,' as a means of conscious art, had been active as*
> *a means of unconscious art in language and its development, indeed, that*
> the rhetorical is a further development, *guided by the clear light of*
> *the understanding, of* the artistic means which are already found in
> language*. There is obviously no unrhetorical 'naturalness' of language to*
> *which one could appeal.*[13]

Nietzsche emphasizes to us that what we take to be non-stylized language is simply a common or predominant style of an ethos that seems to naturally reflect reality, whereas conspicuous or idiosyncratic language use is likely to be related to uncommon *ethoi*, habits and experiences. To illustrate this point Nietzsche describes the effect of a writer who has different habits to those surrounding her (*DB*, p. 153). When a member of an audience notices peculiarity in the style of a speaker or writer, she is noticing, without necessarily being aware of it, that these words are tied to an experience and ethos that differs from her own. Conspicuous styles emphasize the difference between, and not the common consciousness of, the writer/speaker and the reader/listener. Detecting others' styles is to begin noticing their difference. As Eric Blondel writes, to "pinpoint *how* one speaks is to be able to say *who* is speaking".[14] Nietzsche considers the recognition of difference and distance between selves as extremely important (*HH*, p. 275). If one fails to notice another's style of language, one projects one's style, thought and experience onto it, rendering it the same. By doing so one unreflectively submits to the generalities inherent in words and concepts.

In thinking of style in this way, Nietzsche makes the audience's role central to questions of style. Contrary to Heidegger, for whom there is only one "grand style" that exemplifies the metaphysical essence of the will to power,[15] Nietzsche argues that evaluating and deciding whether a style is grand, overt, good, natural, classical and so on can only occur in the context of a relationship to an audience and its ethos: "Good style *in itself*—a piece of pure folly, mere 'idealism,' on a level with the 'beautiful in itself,' the 'good in itself,' the 'thing in itself'" (*EH*, p. 265). This means that, as Derrida rightly notes, that there can only be multiple styles because styles only emerge in contrast with each other.[16] If a speaker wishes to use a modest, inconspicuous style, she will employ the stylistic conventions that surround her (*GS*, p. 211). If a speaker does not trust these prevailing styles and norms around her, then she will develop a more complex style. In response, the audience trusts styles with which it is familiar and distrusts those that seem unusual or affected.

Accordingly, "the perfect and easy style is *permissible* only before a

perfect audience" (*DB*, p. 170); it is only perfect in virtue of the context it is presented in. Likewise, to speak in a natural style requires a correspondence between the speaker's style and the audience's ethos, which may require the conscious, artistic manipulation of style:

> *Therefore, in sum, purity and clarity everywhere; but all modified according to the characteristics of place, occasion, speakers, and listeners—the feeling for style ... The characteristic style is the proper domain of the art of the orator: here he practices a free* plastic *art; the language is his material; which has already been prepared. Here, he is an imitative artist; he speaks like an actor who plays a role unfamiliar to him or in an unfamiliar situation: here, the belief is basic that each manages his object best, ie., works most convincingly in his own manner. It is in this way that the listener perceives the naturalness, viz., the absolute appropriateness and uniformity, whereas with each derivation from the natural, he perceives the artificiality and becomes distrustful about the matter presented. The art of the orator is never to allow artificiality to become noticeable: hence the characteristic style which, however, is all the more a product of the highest art, just like the 'naturalness' of the good actor. The true orator speaks forth from the ethos of the persons or things represented by him.*[17]

Naturalness of speech is an effect of using the predominant style of the audience, one that has arisen from the ethos of the audience. Similarly, Nietzsche views classical style not as a particular style in itself, but as a certain relationship between the work of a writer, speaker or artist and its audience. Classical style relates to its audience by presenting the greatness of the audience's culture and the nobility of its ethos (*WP*, p. 446-47).

Merit is not attributed to a style based on whether it is a dominant style or not, for while Nietzsche rejects the prevailing German styles around him as impoverished in one way or another (*HH*, p. 332, 334), he approves of the dominant style of the Romans and the Greeks (*TI*, p. 105). This is because Nietzsche considers the ancient Greek ethos to be noble, which provides the Greek artist with the opportunity to reflect this nobility in his work and affirm the stylistic conventions of such an ethos (*HH*, p. 339). Whether a style is normative or not cannot alone be a measure of its worth and, in turn, an overtly metaphorical style is not, in itself, valuable simply because it is metaphorical rather than normative. By this account, a

style that is obviously metaphorical could be considered degenerate in the context of an ethos that Nietzsche thought to be noble. But in a decedent culture the adoption of an overtly metaphorical style can challenge the norms of language and engage with its creative origins.

Style is bound to convention and the art of good style does not lie so much in the freedom to write any way one chooses, or to write about anything one chooses, but rather depends on the writer or speaker's capacity to work within constraints (*WP*, p. 428, see also *HH*, pp. 102-4). While a relationship to a dominant style may be critical or affirmative, this relationship cannot be avoided. Consciously developing style is a process of selecting pre-existing words and linguistic forms and the "good prose writer employs only words that belong to common speech, but by no means all the words that belong to it—this is precisely how select or high style originates" (*HH*, pp. 239-40). When writing or speech loses its relationship to surrounding linguistic norms then it appears mad or nonsensical, and innovative writers must beware of forfeiting this relationship. Exceptions only have meaning in the context of the rule (*GS*, p. 131). For this reason writers must be careful when they change known styles: "Progress from one stylistic level to the next must proceed so slowly that not only the artists but the auditors and spectators too can participate in this process and know exactly what is going on" (*HH*, p. 89).

<div align="center">V</div>

There is a glaring omission in my discussion of style so far. Many of the above comments by Nietzsche about style relate to oratory, not written, style, raising the question of whether the workings of style are similar in both types of language use. In my view Nietzsche does think that there are important parallels between style in speech and writing, although he considers written style as different to and more complex than oratory style:

> *The art of writing demands above all* substitutes *for the modes of expression available only to the speaker: that is to say for gestures, emphases, tones of voice, glances. That is why written style is something quite different from oral style and something much more difficult.* (*HH*, p. 336)

Devices of communication available to the orator, such as physical movements and pitch and tone of voice, are not available to the writer. Nietzsche expresses concern about the need to translate the communicative techniques of speech into techniques of writing because the "age of speaking is past .... everyone who is a good European now has to learn *to write well and even better*" (*HH*, p. 332).

Some differences between written and spoken style lie beyond the repertoire of communicative and rhetorical techniques available to the stylist and result from the different experiences of reading and listening. In particular, the temporal experience of the audience will differ because an orator's audience listens to a speech just the once whereas a reader has the capacity to re-read a written text in her own time.[18] The reader's capacity to control her consumption of a text generates a different kind of experience. This is reflected in Nietzsche's concern with the activity of his readers, activity that a listener could not engage in. As Kathleen Merrow writes, Nietzsche's discussions of rhetoric, particularly *Ecce Homo*'s invocation of the Greek rhetorician Demosthenes with the phrase the "multifarious art of style" (*EH*, p. 265), emphasize the role of *pathos*, tempo and rhythm.[19] Style is linked to the communication of inward states and *pathos* considered "as an emotional state or condition". Nietzsche's discussion of the Greek orator Demosthenes describes "his ability to move his audience by stirring their emotions" as part of his oratory excellence.[20] The quality of *deinotês* (a mastery of all styles that is tied to excellent delivery) associated with Demonsthenes is connected to the idea of "persuasion as an uncanny sublime force, a force that carries with it a potential fear about the possible deceptiveness of appearances".[21] What is important here for our discussion of the different experiences of listening and reading is the emphasis on the way in which an audience is moved, persuaded or overwhelmed by an orator, that is, an emphasis on the passivity of the listener.

In contrast, Nietzsche does not think that he can simply overwhelm and sway all his audience through his writing (*GS*, p. 230). His discussions of the activity of reading explicitly ask for a certain type of reader, the slow "ruminating" reader.[22] The ruminating reader does not leap hastily to conclusions about writing but carefully deciphers a text because "to

read *well*" is "to read slowly, deeply, looking cautiously before and aft, with reservations, with doors left open, with delicate eyes and fingers" (*DB*, p. 5). Philology is one kind of careful reading because it follows "a simple desire to understand what the author is saying" (*HH*, p. 127). The importance of the reader's activity is one explanation for Nietzsche's preference for the incomplete presentation of ideas because in leaving gaps and silence for the reader to fill, he incites his reader to an active interpretation (*HH*, p. 92).

Such reading requires the reader's respect for the difference and unfamiliarity of a text. Nevertheless, Nietzsche also recognizes that all reading will involve the ethos and experience of the reader because books need to be reanimated by their living readers (*HH*, p. 242). Although a reader might productively seek the author's meaning, reading never fully recreates the author's original meaning. Nor is this the goal of reading, according to Nietzsche, because to understand a work is not only a matter of attempting to recreate what the work meant at the point at which it was written: "Does one have to understand a work in precisely the way in which the age that produced it understood it? But one takes more pleasure in a work, is more astonished by it, and learns more from it, if one does not understand it in that way" (*DB,* p. 205). Developing and exploring the possibilities of a text is a central task of reading and in this way readers can even improve a book (*HH*, p. 248). This kind of reading requires the reader to be contented with an "uncertainty of ... horizon" that leaves "the way to many thoughts" open (*HH*, p. 96).

This is not to say that the reader completely determines the meaning of a text, that the reader has no limits placed on her activity. One of the effects of language, employed and discussed by Nietzsche, is a writer's use of style to exclude readers. Nietzsche writes:

> *One does not only wish to be understood when one writes; one wishes just as surely* not *to be understood ... by just 'anybody'. All the nobler spirits and tastes select their audience when they wish to communicate; and choosing that, one at the same time erects barriers against 'the others'. All the more subtle laws of style have their origin at this point. (GS, p. 343)*

Nietzsche clearly states his preference for esoteric books written for particular types of readers and dislike of books written for the general

population (*HH*, p. 249 and *BGE*, p. 61). Yet he is not certain that he will encounter readers of the requisite disposition to engage with his works: "people will have trouble understanding us. We are looking for words; perhaps we are also looking for ears" (*GS*, pp. 285-86).[23] Naive readers ignore his styles and the meaning and experience they point towards and simply read his work as universal books that communicate the same thing to everybody.

If language that talks to and seems natural within an ethos requires that the artifice of the speaker or writer goes unnoticed, then clearly this is not Nietzsche's practice. Nietzsche's own obvious and multiplicitous styles embody his claim that if one distrusts the style surrounding oneself one will develop a complex style. His rejection of modernity and its dominant rhetorical styles for being degenerate leads him to use numerous complex and conspicuous styles in his criticism of the culture surrounding him and its language use. For example, he constantly places terms in inverted commas in order to indicate that he is not using them in their normative conceptual sense, but challenging and shifting their meaning. Blondel writes that Nietzsche's use of inverted comas points to two things: "that he is quoting reported words or passages, above all in order to mark a difference between his own discourse and a foreign discourse, between metalanguage and language" and "to show the gap that exists between language in general and his own language".[24] His textual styles highlight his presence as an author, emphasizing the connection between his writing and his particular experiences and perspectives. Both in his explicit discussion and complex use of styles (which, due to his tokenism, are often hard to distinguish), Nietzsche challenges the claim that language corresponds to a single unchanging reality, and denaturalizes the linguistic ethos that surrounded him.

VI

The good writer must re-interpret and re-invent language and its meaning through the use of style.Indeed, to a certain extent all selves do this, as the linguistic conventions surrounding them can only be interpreted in terms of their own *ethoi* and experiences. Nietzsche's idea of writing as a reinterpretation of language requires that a writer posses a capacity for

silence lest she simply reiterate a dominant normative language: "One should speak only when one may not stay silent; and then only of that which one has *overcome*—everything else is chatter" (*HH*, p. 209). One must be silent lest one "think like an orator", that is, have one's thought overly bound to the social conventions of an audience (*EH*, p. 340).

Nietzsche even writes of an art that is created without an audience in mind, a monologic art created in terms of the self rather than for an audience:

> The first distinction to be made regarding works of art.—*All thought, poetry, painting, compositions, even buildings and sculptures, belong either to monological art or to art before witnesses .... whether he looks at his work in progress (at 'himself') from the point of view of the witness, or whether he 'has forgotten the world,' which is the essential feature of all monological art. (GS, p. 324)*

Art before witnesses includes art or prayer made before the eyes of God (*DB*, p. 194), whereas monologic art is an experience of solitude in which men "do not compare themselves with others at all but spin out their life of monologue in a calm and cheerful mood, conversing and indeed laughing with themselves alone" (*HH*, p. 197). Inevitably, writing or speaking that is "lacking an ear" is a monologue, the "whispering of the solitary to himself" (*HH*, p. 296). Nietzsche identifies his own work as monologues (*HH*, p. 212), expecting no response from an audience to such a solitary art and language, but only a critical echo (*GS*, p. 203). So after placing the audience in such a central role in the art of style, Nietzsche imagines a kind of writing or speaking that has no audience to persuade or reflect, that only needs to persuade the speaker or writer herself.

I consider this idea of the monologue to be a useful means of understanding the importance of style as a creative and critical approach to linguistic norms. A monologue is not concerned with persuading an audience of a truth by calling upon the cultures of an audience and its normative truths. Such writing deploys style to take up a perspective upon the norms and concepts inhering in language itself. Moreover, the writer experiencing the whispering or echo of her own writing takes up a critical perspective on her own language use, on the experience and norms associated with that language. In *Ecce Homo* Nietzsche quotes

heavily from his own works in what could be described as an adoption of a perspective on the writing of his own ethos, or an interpretation of his own work. To re-invent language when one is a writer is not only to reinvent the language of others and its associated experiences, but also to take up a perspective on one's own language use—to take up a perspective on one's own experience and style and, in a sense, to overcome oneself (see *HH*, p. 248). This monologic practice continues Nietzsche's criticism of the idea that language corresponds to an unchanging reality, not only because it is a false view of language, but also because such a view of language limits our engagement with language's capacity for expression and its complex relationship to experience.

In addition to considering Nietzsche's account of meaning as based on concepts established by communal agreement, there is a need to also reflect on his discussion and use of style if we are to conceive of a positive practice of writing. This provides us with an understanding of an experience of writing that does not merely reiterate the surrounding norms of language that are so readily transformed into metaphysics. Style allows the unfamiliar, the diverse, the rare and the changing into language. It provides an interpretive perspective on the norms of language, through which language and culture can be reinvented. In the experience of reading and writing with style, "the words and word shrines of all being open up before you; here all being wishes to become word, all becoming wishes to learn from you how to speak".[25]

NOTES

1   Friedrich Nietzsche, *Philosophy and Truth: selections from Nietzsche's notebooks of the early 1870s*, trans. Daniel Breazeale (New Jersey: The Humanities Press, 1979), p. 81; hereafter abbreviated *PT*.

2   Friedrich Nietzsche, *Twilight of the Idols*, trans. R. J. Hollingdale (Middlesex: Penguin Books, 1968), p. 83; hereafter abbreviated *TI*.

3   Friedrich Nietzsche, *Human, All Too Human*, trans. R. J. Hollingdale (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), p. 306; hereafter abbreviated *HH*.

4   Friedrich Nietzsche, *Beyond Good and Evil*, trans. R. J. Hollingdale (London: Penguin Books, 1990), pp. 49-50; hereafter abbreviated *BGE*.

5   Friedrich Nietzsche, *Daybreak: Thought on the Prejudices of Morality*, trans. R. J. Hollingdale (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), p. 116; hereafter abbreviated *DB*.

6   See Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Gay Science*, trans. Walter Kaufmann (New York: Vintage Books 1974), p. 298-99; hereafter abbreviated *GS*.

7   Friedrich Nietzsche, "The Case of Wagner," in *The Birth of Tragedy and The Case of Wagner*, trans. Walter Kaufmann (New York: Vintage Books, 1967), p. 170; hereafter abbreviated *CW*.

8   Bernd Magnus, Stanley Stewart and Jean-Pierre Mileur, *Nietzsche's Case: Philosophy as/and Literature* (New York: Routledge, 1993), p. 16.

9   Stanley Fish, *Self-Consuming Artefacts* (Berkeley: University of California Press 1972), p. 386.

10   Friedrich Nietzsche, "Ecce Homo," in *Towards a Genealogy of Morals and Ecce Homo*, trans. Walter Kaufmann (New York: Vintage Books 1989), p. 281; hereafter abbreviated EH.

11   See also Friedrich Nietzsche, "Richard Wagner in Bayreuth," in *Untimely Meditations*, trans. R.J. Hollingdale (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 1983), p. 214-15, and Daybreak, p. 89.

12   Magnus, Stewart and Mileur, p. 184. See for example *HH*, p. 234.

13   Carole Blair, Sandra L. Gilman, David J. Parent, eds, *Friedrich Nietzsche on Rhetoric and Language*, ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989), p. 21, see also p. 23.

14   Eric Blondel, *Nietzsche, the Body and Culture*, trans. Seán Hand (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1984), p. 171.

15   Martin Heidegger, *Nietzsche: The Will to Power as Art*, trans. David Farrell Krell (San Fransisco: Harper and Row, pp. 120-121, 136). For Nietzsche's comments on grand style see also Blair, Gilman, Parent, p. 182, and *The Will to Power,* trans. R. J. Hollingdale and Walter Kaufmann, (New York: Vintage Books, 1968), pp. 443-44, hereafter referred to as WP followed by page number.

16   Jacques Derrida, *Spurs*, trans. Barbara Harlow (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1973), p. 139.

17   Blair, Gilman, and Parent, p. 35.

18   Modern audio and visual recording technology means that this contrast between reading and listening might be better described as a distinction between recorded and non-recorded language use, whereby listeners can control their consumption of spoken language as much as readers can control their consumption of a written text. However, given that this was largely not the case when Nietzsche was writing, I have adhered to a distinction between written and spoken language.

19   Kathleen Merrow, "'The Meaning of Every Style': Nietzsche, Demosthenes, Rhetoric," *Rhetorica*, (Autumn, Vol. 21, 2003), pp. 285-307 (p. 290).

20   "The Meaning of Every Style", p.289.

21   "The Meaning of Every Style", p.290.

22   Friedrich Nietzsche, "Towards a Genealogy of Morals," in *Towards a Genealogy of Morals and Ecce Homo*, trans. Walter Kaufmann (New York: Vintage Books 1989), pp. 22-23; hereafter abbreviated GM.

23   For discussion of Nietzsche's use of the metaphor of the ear see Blondel, pp. 100-08.

24   *Nietzsche, the Body and Culture*, pp. 148 and 151.

25   *EH* p. 301 quoting Friedrich Nietzsche, *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, trans. R. J. Hollingdale (London: Penguin Books 1969), p. 203.