

1. Record Nr.	UNINA9910819346203321
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Titolo	Artful immorality - variants of cynicism : Machiavelli, Gracian, Diderot, Nietzsche // by D. S. Mayfield
Pubbl/distr/stampa	Berlin, [Germany] ; ; Boston, [Massachusetts] : , : De Gruyter, , 2015 ©2015
ISBN	3-11-043183-1 3-11-043159-9
Descrizione fisica	1 online resource (492 p.)
Collana	WeltLiteraturen/World Literatures. Schriftenreihe der Friedrich Schlegel Graduiertenschule fur literaturwissenschaftliche Studien, , 2198-9370 ; ; Band 8
Disciplina	183/.4
Soggetti	Cynicism
Lingua di pubblicazione	Inglese
Formato	Materiale a stampa
Livello bibliografico	Monografia
Note generali	Description based upon print version of record.
Nota di bibliografia	Includes bibliographical references and index.
Nota di contenuto	Front matter -- Acknowledgements -- Table of Contents -- 1. Artful Immorality: Imprimis -- 2. Ancient Cynicism -- 3.1. Elegant Expediency: Machiavelli's Il Principe (~1513) -- 3.2. Acute Concinnity: Gracián's Oráculo manual y arte de prudencia (1647) -- 3.3. A 'Diogenes Redivivus': Diderot's Le Neveu De Rameau (~1774 / 1805 / 1891) -- 3.4. Beyond Morality, Or Cynicism: Nietzsche's Nachgelassene Fragmente (1884–1889) -- 4. Morality's Contingency -- Scribal Abbreviations -- Bibliography -- Index
Sommario/riassunto	When a term is overused, it tends to fall out of fashion. Cynicism seems to be an exception. Its polytropic versatility apparently prevents any discontinuation of its application. Everyone knows that cynicism denotes that which is deemed deleterious at a given time; and every time will specify its toxicities – the apparent result being the term's non-specificity. This study describes the cynical stance and statement so as to render the term's use scholarly expedient. Close readings of textual sources commonly deemed cynical provide a legible starting point. A rhetorical analysis of aphorisms ascribed to the arch-Cynic Diogenes facilitates describing the design of cynical statements, as well as the characteristic features of the cynical stance. These patterns are identifiable in later texts generally labeled cynical – above all in

Machiavelli's Principe. With recourse to the Diogenical archetype, cynicism is likewise rendered describable in Gracián's Oráculo manual, Diderot's Le neveu de Rameau, and Nietzsche's Posthumous Fragments. This study's description of cynicism provides a phenomenon otherwise considered amorphous with distinct contours, renders transparent its workings, and tenders a dependable basis for further analyses.
