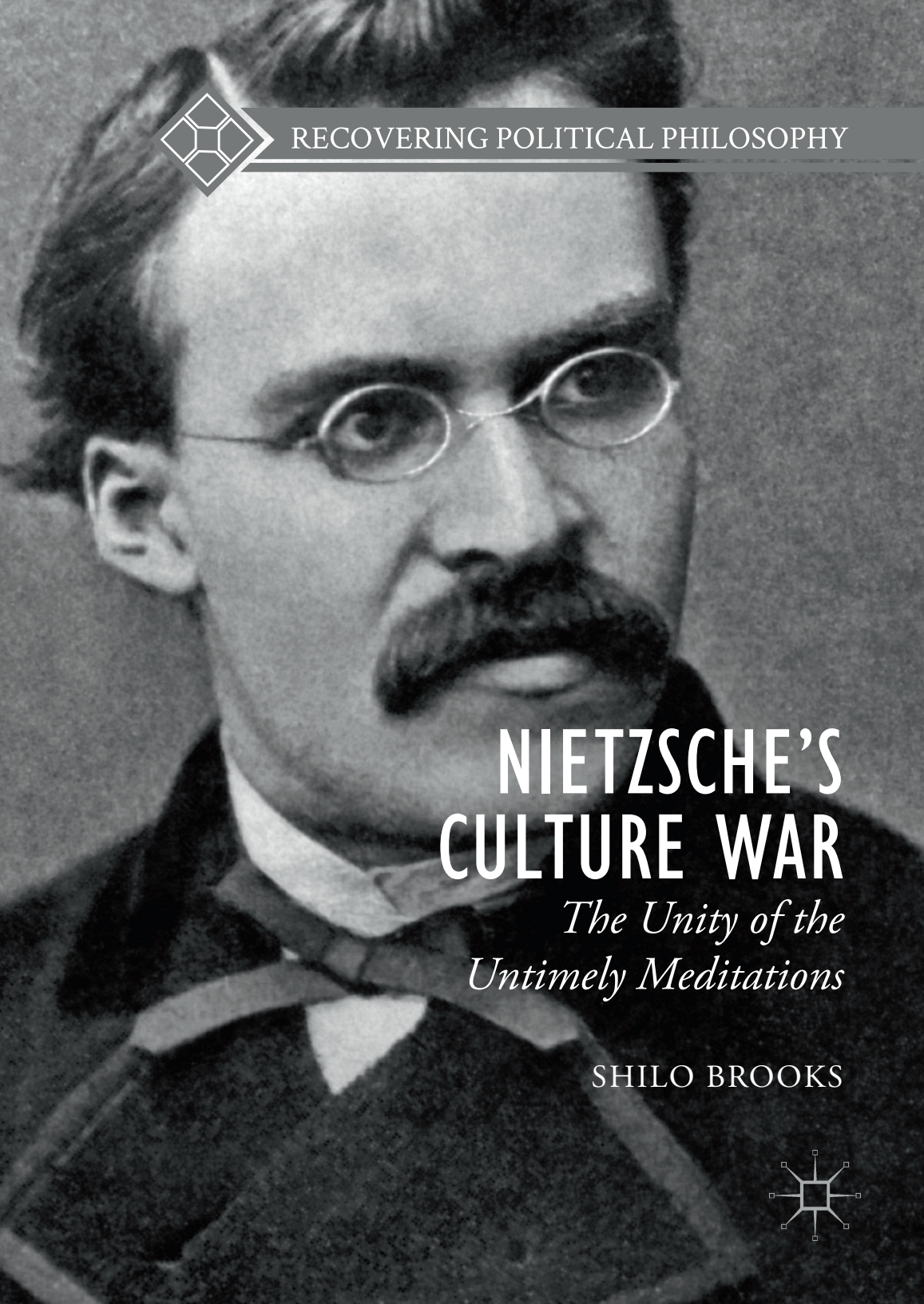

RECOVERING POLITICAL PHILOSOPHY

NIETZSCHE'S CULTURE WAR

The Unity of the Untimely Meditations

SHILO BROOKS

Recovering Political Philosophy

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Timothy W. Burns
Baylor University
Waco
TX, USA

Thomas L. Pangle
University of Texas at Austin
Austin
TX, USA

Postmodernism's challenge to the possibility of a rational foundation for and guidance of our political lives has provoked a searching re-examination of the works of past political philosophers. The re-examination seeks to recover the ancient or classical grounding for civic reason and to clarify the strengths and weaknesses of modern philosophic rationalism. This series responds to this ferment by making available outstanding new scholarship in the history of political philosophy, scholarship that is inspired by the rediscovery of the diverse rhetorical strategies employed by political philosophers. The series features interpretive studies attentive to historical context and language, and to the ways in which censorship and didactic concern impelled prudent thinkers, in widely diverse cultural conditions, to employ manifold strategies of writing, strategies that allowed them to aim at different audiences with various degrees of openness to unconventional thinking. Recovering Political Philosophy emphasizes the close reading of ancient, medieval, early modern and late modern works that illuminate the human condition by attempting to answer its deepest, enduring questions, and that have (in the modern periods) laid the foundations for contemporary political, social, and economic life. The editors encourage manuscripts from both established and emerging scholars who focus on the careful study of texts, either through analysis of a single work or through thematic study of a problem or question in a number of works.

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Shilo Brooks

Nietzsche's Culture War

The Unity of the Untimely Meditations

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Shilo Brooks
University of Colorado
Boulder, CO, USA

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For my educators and cultivators, with gratitude.

Series Editors' Preface

Palgrave's *Recovering Political Philosophy* series was founded with an eye to postmodernism's challenge to the possibility of a rational foundation for and guidance of our political lives. This invigorating challenge has provoked a searching reexamination of classic texts, not only of political philosophers, but of poets, artists, theologians, scientists, and other thinkers who may not be regarded conventionally as political theorists. The series publishes studies that endeavor to take up this reexamination and thereby help to recover the classical grounding for a civic reason, as well as studies that clarify the strengths and the weaknesses of modern philosophic rationalism. The interpretative studies in the series are particularly attentive to historical context and language, and to the ways in which both censorial persecution and didactic concerns have impelled prudent thinkers, in widely diverse cultural conditions, to employ manifold strategies of writing—strategies that allowed them to aim at different audiences with various degrees of openness to unconventional thinking. The series offers close readings of ancient, medieval, early modern and late modern works that illuminate the human condition by attempting to answer its deepest, enduring questions, and that have (in the modern periods) laid the foundations for contemporary political, social, and economic life.

We are pleased to make available, in Shilo Brooks' *Nietzsche's Culture War*, the first book-length study of Nietzsche's *Untimely Meditations.* Brooks examines Nietzsche's notes and letters, and the relevant portions of *Ecce Homo,* to uncover what Nietzsche's privately stated intention was

in this work. Guided by that intention, Brooks argues, one can see in the *Untimely Meditations*, in their earliest and so revealing forms, what Nietzsche would later call the last man (the "cultivated philistine") and the overman (the "redeeming human being"). Taken individually, the four published parts of the *Untimely Meditations* appear as essays of unbridled polemic (against David Strauss and Hegelian historical education) and fulsome praise (of Schopenhauer and Wagner). But seen as a whole, and in light of the *kulturkampf* into which Nietzsche had entered the lists, against Bismark, on behalf of a rebirth of Greek spiritual ideals, they appear quite different. The four essays now come to sight as integral parts of a two-part project. The first part—the two polemical essays—seeks to demonstrate and thereby help to demolish the philistinism threatening the soul of modern man. The second part—the accounts of Wagner and Schopenhauer—presents examples of the philosophic and the artistic characteristics of the new, redeeming human being. The essays on Wagner and Schopenhauer now appear as versions of the monumental history that are shown, in *The Use and Disadvantage of History for Life*, to be needed as a means toward a revitalized culture, under the protective, life-giving horizon created by Nietzsche's own art. By, thus, treating its four essays sequentially and in light of Nietzsche's intention, Brooks discloses the elegant unity and poetic, horizon-creating goal of the *Untimely Meditations.*

Waco, USA — Timothy W. Burns
Austin, USA — Thomas L. Pangle

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Contents

Note on Translations and Citations

English translations of Nietzsche's *Unzeitgemässe Betrachtungen* that appear in this volume refer to the translation by Richard T. Gray in *The Complete Works of Nietzsche,* published by Stanford University Press. I have used Gray's translation for the sake of literalness, and have emended it with my own in several instances. Gray's translation is titled *Unfashionable Observations.* Other recent translations include William Arrowsmith's *Unmodern Observations*, published by Yale University Press, and R. J. Hollingdale's *Untimely Meditations*, published by Cambridge University Press. I refer to the *Unzeitgemässe Betrachtungen* as the *Untimely Meditations* in this volume because it is the most widely recognized translation of the title, for better or worse.

Citations in this volume do not refer to the page numbers of any specific translation of the *Unzeitgemässe Betrachtungen*. I have chosen instead to refer readers to the numbered sections into which Nietzsche divided the four essays that comprise the book. A quotation that appears in the fourth section of *Schopenhauer as Educator*, for example, will be cited as *SE* 4. The volume can, therefore, be utilized by readers no matter which translation they consult, as well as by readers of the German text.

Abbreviations

The Untimely Meditations

DS	David Strauss the Confessor and the Writer
HL	The Use and Disadvantage of History for Life
SE	Schopenhauer as Educator
RW	Richard Wagner in Bayreuth

Other Writings

KSA	Sämliche Werke: Kritische Studienausgabe in 15 Bänden
BGE	Beyond Good and Evil
BT	The Birth of Tragedy
D	Dawn
EH	Ecce Homo
EI	Lectures on the Future of our Educational Institutions
GS	The Gay Science
GM	Toward a Genealogy of Morals
HA	Human, All Too Human
TI	Twilight of the Idols
TSZ	Thus Spoke Zarathustra
UPW	Unpublished Writings from the Period of the Untimely Meditations

CHAPTER 1

Introduction: Nietzsche Contra Bismarck—Culture War

The Unification of Germany and the Aftermath of the Franco-Prussian War: 1870–1871

On January 18, 1871, Otto von Bismarck stood in the Hall of Mirrors at the Palace of Versailles and consecrated his greatest triumph. A crowd of royal personages from all over Germany had gathered to celebrate the founding of a second German Reich that would unite the North German Federation with the South German Kingdoms under the Imperial Crown of Kaiser Wilhelm I. According to the diary of the Kaiser's son, the Emperor gave a short address to the assembly, at the conclusion of which

> Count Bismarck came forward, looking in the grimmest of humors, and read out in an expressionless business-like way and without any trace of warmth or feeling for the occasion, the address 'to the German people.' […] Then the Grand Duke of Baden came forward with unaffected, quiet dignity that is so peculiarly his and with uplifted hand cried in a loud voice: 'Long live His Imperial Majesty the Emperor William!' A thundering hurrah at least six times repeated shook the room, while the flags and standards waved over the head of the new Emperor of Germany and 'Heil Dir im Siegerkranz' rang out.[1]

Beneath the lavish ceilings of the Hall of Mirrors, the era of the modern nation state had officially dawned. The social reforms enacted in Germany during Bismarck's twenty-eight year Chancellorship transformed the

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government he created into a prototype of the modern state that would shape the domestic agendas of the leading countries of the West into their present forms. The Constitution of the German Empire (drafted by Bismarck himself) borrowed a bicameral legislature, universal male suffrage, and a vibrant party system from British and American models of governance, but Bismarck's most progressive legislative innovation was to combine these with the comprehensive social welfare package he pushed through Reichstag between 1883 and 1889, fifty years before the election of Franklin Roosevelt and almost thirty years before similar laws were passed in England. Bismarck's social security laws guaranteed working class Germans medical insurance, old age and disability pensions, accident insurance, and unemployment insurance.[2] With the passage of these laws, Bismarck succeeded in making the citizens of the new Reich more loyal to their government—and more dependent upon it for their worldly happiness—than any other people in the nineteenth century. By the time he left office in 1890, the German state played an unprecedented role in the daily lives of its citizens and one that almost every modern state in the West would assume over course of the next century. No longer was the state a mere guardian against foreign oppression and domestic injustice; it was also a guarantor against the malevolence of chance, the vicissitudes of nature, and the cruelty of human mortality. In these and other ways, the modern state crafted by Otto von Bismarck during his almost thirty years in power resembled a provident God.

While Bismarck was working to lay the political foundations for the first true welfare state in the winter of 1871, the man who would go on to alter the moral development of the West as profoundly as Bismarck altered its political development lay in bed recovering from an illness he contracted as a volunteer medical orderly on the front lines of the Franco-Prussian War.[3] A year before the official founding of the Second Reich, a twenty-six year-old Friedrich Nietzsche took leave from his newly awarded professorship in Switzerland to come to the aid of his fatherland. Although he was born a Prussian citizen in Saxony in 1844, the Swiss university at which he taught had made his employment conditional upon the renunciation of his Prussian citizenship in hopes of preventing him from joining the Prussian army in the event of a war.[4] In the summer of 1870, he spurned his commitment to the university and joined the Prussian army anyway, serving in a volunteer capacity at the Battle of Wörth and the Siege of Metz. Ironically, the man who would one day

become one of the modern state's fiercest critics remained legally stateless for the rest of his life.[5] Although Nietzsche would declare in 1874 that "anyone who has the *furor philosophicus* will have no time whatsoever for the *furor politicus*," he qualified this statement by adding in the same breath that even a philosopher "will not hesitate for a single moment to take up his position if his fatherland is threatened by a real danger."[6]

On January 28th 1871, ten days after the establishment of the Second Reich, the French government accepted the German terms of surrender and an official peace was signed the following month at Versailles. The Prussian victory at the battle of Sedan in September of 1870 had destroyed the Empire of Napoleon III and led to the capture of the Emperor himself, leaving the administrative arm of the French government in shambles. Though republican revolutionaries in Paris made a spirited attempt to continue the war after the disastrous events at Sedan, the French never fully recovered from the setbacks they incurred in their battle with German iron and blood.

The defeat of the French by the Germans had political reverberations all over Europe, and perhaps none were more immediately felt than the capture of Rome by the Kingdom of Italy on September 20th, 1870. In August of that same year, Napoleon III had recalled the French garrison he stationed in Rome in 1849 as a gesture to his Catholic supporters. The war with Germany had taken a severe toll on French troops, and reinforcements would be needed if the French hoped to maintain their ground against an overwhelming German advance. Making matters worse was the fact that French diplomats had reason to believe that Bismarck was using the presence of French troops in Rome as a pretext to persuade Italy to ally with the Germans. Although the Italians ultimately chose to remain a neutral party in Bismarck's war, they decided to attack Papal forces in Rome after the French had withdrawn their garrison, resulting in the end of the reign of Pope Pius IX and the unification of the Italian peninsula under a single King.[7]

No sooner had Pius IX ceded his temporal power, however, than he reaffirmed his supreme place in European politics by issuing one of the greatest extensions of papal spiritual power in the history of the Catholic Church. His "Declaration of Infallibility" became clerical law in July of 1870, and its chief function was to preserve the Papacy from the possibility of erring when declaring by definitive act certain teachings concerning faith and morals. Since roughly one-third of the new Prussian Protestant Reich was made up of Catholics, a cultural war

(*Kulturkampf)* soon erupted between Bismarck and the Pope that would go a long way toward determining the course of German politics—and the direction of the thoughts of the young Friedrich Nietzsche—for decades to come.

Culture War: 1871–1872

In the winter of 1871, the Catholic Centre Party of the Prussian lower house sent a message to the German Emperor asking for his support in restoring political power to the Pope in Rome. The Emperor responded by declaring in a speech from the throne that the German state would not intrude into Roman affairs, a sentiment that was swiftly reinforced by the rest of the Landtag.[8] Although Germany's decision not to defend the papacy was an ostensibly practical one, the fact that the moral teachings of the Catholic Church posed a serious threat to the liberal ideals upon which the new state had been founded was undoubtedly a crucial factor. The Reich's commitments to free speech, freedom of religion, freedom of the press, separation of church and state, freedom of scientific inquiry, secular education, and civil divorce were at odds with the Catholic vision of a moral life. A German vow to defend the Pope would have amounted to a moral indictment of the modern state by the torchbearer of modern statism itself. On the other hand, by taking a position hostile to the Pope, the new Reich had effectively and publically questioned the compatibility of Catholicism with liberalism. As Jonathan Steinburg has written in his lucid portrait of the period:

> In any country with a substantial Catholic population, [questions arose about] what sort of schools [were suitable], what sort of hospitals, what sort of poor relief, what marriage ceremony and divorce provisions, what charitable status for churches and convents, in short, the whole apparatus of daily life for the Catholic faithful became the subject of intense debate. The Roman Church and all its traditional pastoral and ecclesiastical activities challenged the growing power, competence, and intrusiveness of the modern state. The *Kulturkampf* represented the most serious challenge to Bismarck's authority during the rest of his career […]"[9]

Since the anti-Catholic liberal intellectuals in the German Landtag formed a vital part of Bismarck's political coalition, he decided to fire the first shot in the *Kulturkampf* by organizing a negative press campaign

in June of 1871 that attacked the Catholic Centre party as unpatriotic, and that marked the official beginning of the seven year war between German Nationalism and Catholicism. In notebook entries from the same summer, Bismarck's *Kulturminister*, Heinrich von Mühler, wrote that Bismarck's privately stated goals for the *Kulturkampf* were: "[a] battle with the ultramontane party, in particular in the Polish territories West of Prussia, Posen, and Upper Silesia; separation of church and state, [and] separation of church and school completely; transfer of school inspection to lay inspectors [instead of clergy]; [and] removal of religious instruction from the schools, not only from gymnasia but also from the primary school."[10] According to von Mühler, Bismarck knew the Kaiser would oppose his intentions, "but if you don't stir him up," Bismarck had said, "I shall lead [the Kaiser] nevertheless where I want."[11]

By January of 1872, the *Kulturkampf* had become what Bismarck's wars—whether political or otherwise—always became: a raw, personal, and seemingly unprincipled struggle for victory at all costs. Six months after the *Kulturkampf* began Heinrich von Mühler resigned as Bismarck's *Kulturminister*, citing among his reasons the fact that Bismarck's approach to the *Kulturkampf* could not be explained on the basis of sound political principles, but only according to:

> the entirely realistic—dare I say?—materialistic understanding which lies at the root of his entire political life. Bismarck despises all spiritual and moral levers in politics. Blood and iron—materialistic means of power—these are the factions with which he reckons. He would prefer to ban the church and religious ideas from public life and turn them into private matters. Separation of church and state, removal of the church from the school system and the school from religious instruction, these are very familiar views of his, as are the many steps he has taken and many public and private utterances in this direction, for which I have proof, make clear. He shows clearly a characteristic feature that, if not decisively anti-Christian, is at least anti-clerical and separationist and which borders on a middle ground between delusion and enmity. And on top of that comes his overly large ambition which tolerates no opposition and no longer even respects the personal convictions of the Kaiser.[12]

With von Mühler no longer moderating his ambition Bismarck joined forces with liberal lawyer Adalbert Falk who immediately made it a criminal offense for clergy to issue inflammatory political statements from the pulpit.[13] Embracing the full scope of his powers as *Kulturminister*, Falk

would go on to craft the infamous May Laws of 1873, which stipulated that future clergymen of all denominations must be German natives educated in German gymnasia and universities, and that any church-levied punishments for clergymen found guilty of wrongdoing would be subject to review by provincial governors and state courts. The controversy caused by the May Laws brought the *Kulturkampf* to a crescendo and drove large numbers of German Catholics to the polls. In 1874, the Catholic coalition managed to double the number of votes their party received in the previous election, making Bismarck's legislative intrigues much more difficult to engineer and forcing an unlikely alliance between the Iron Chancellor and his onetime foes.

Nietzsche Contra Bismarck: The Battle Over German Schools

Although the Reich gradually and begrudgingly made a place for Catholics in German social and political life, the cultural and spiritual frenzy that engulfed Germany in the early 1870s would continue to animate the pens of German intellectuals well into the twentieth century. The very fact that the *Kulturkampf* was in the air for so long in Germany meant that the character and identity of German culture could not be taken for granted in the age of liberalism, and indeed, that the cultural character and identity of the new Germany had yet to be determined. Who the German people would become under the influence of their new form of government and what their victory over France meant for the future of European culture were the questions that animated the political thought of the day. "Since the last war with France many things in Germany have changed or shifted," Nietzsche wrote in 1874, "and it is obvious that we have also brought home with us some new wishes with regard to German culture."[14]

Of paramount importance to the young Professor Nietzsche was the question of how the newly established German state would oversee its educational institutions, and it is at this point that much of his early philosophical writing intersects with Bismarck's political scheme for the *Kulturkampf*. In the early months of 1872, a battle was brewing in the Landtag over a new School Supervisory Law (*Schulaufsichtgesetz*) that would subject all of Germany's public and private educational institutions to the supervision of state administrators. According to the

law's political opponents, its passage threatened to lower the quality of German education by unjustly doing away with the sorts of innovative and independent school supervisors "who [had] the audacity to say to the state: 'you have no right to prescribe for me in what way I supervise the school.'"[15] Moreover, by eliminating clerical supervision in Protestant and Catholic schools alike, the new School Supervisory Law, it was argued, would "open the gates through which the turbulent waters of unbelief in time will flood from the de-Christianized State over the schools."[16]

Bismarck's policies had once again provoked a cultural and spiritual identity crisis in Germany, but this time his propositions had garnered the opposition not only of Catholics, but also of his conservative Protestant base. At stake was the fundamental question of whether the demands for citizenship in the new liberal state could be compatible with the demands for salvation in the Kingdom of Heaven. By opening a public inquiry into the kinds of citizens the Reich's schools ought to produce and simultaneously prohibiting the dissemination of certain moral and spiritual teachings, Bismarck hoped to diminish the political influence of the church over time and elevate the state to the level of supreme cultural institution. As Nietzsche described the situation in 1874: "the state wants people to worship in it the very same idols they previously worshipped in the church. With what degree of success? This is something we have yet to find out."[17]

During the same three month period in early 1872 that the School Supervisory Law was being hotly debated in the Landtag, this same Professor Nietzsche delivered a series of five public lectures at the University of Basel under the title *On the Future of Our Educational Institutions*.[18] He composed the lectures as a dialogue between an old philosopher, his mature pupil, and two young university students. The lectures were said to have been written for people who "are still not swept up in the dizzying haste of our rolling age and who still do not feel an idolatrous pleasure in being crushed by its wheels—that is, for few human beings!"[19] The lectures are reported to have been attended by crowds of around three hundred people, and among the more prominent listeners were cultural historian Jacob Burckhardt and, at the second lecture, Richard and Cosima Wagner.[20]

In his introductory remarks to the first lecture, Nietzsche was careful to specify that when he used the phrase "*our* educational institutions" he did not mean the specific institutions at Basel, "[but] rather I mean

German institutions […], i.e., the future of the German Volkschule, of the German Realschule, of the German Gymnasium, of the German university."[21] The timing of his lectures could not have been more telling. His assessment of the future of the German educational system amounted to an open confrontation with Bismarck and his School Supervisory Law, something all of Nietzsche's listeners would have realized since the debate over the law was front page news during the five week period the lectures were delivered. Although he was nothing more than an obscure classical philology professor with a single critically panned book to his name, Nietzsche had the political ambition—or gall—to engage in an indirect but public debate with the greatest statesman of his time on the question of how the future citizens of the Reich should be cultivated by their educational system. Three days after giving the first lecture to a packed auditorium in Basel, Nietzsche wrote a letter to his friend Erwin Rhode which he said was "wholly to be kept secret and urging to secrecy," and in which he revealed that he was preparing:

> a promemoria on the University of Strassburg, as an interpellation at the Reichsrat for Bismarck's hands: wherein I want to show how disgracefully one has neglected an immense moment to found a really German educational institution, for the regeneration of the German spirit and for the annihilation of the up till now, so-called "culture."[22]

In the wake of the Franco-Prussian war the Germans had annexed the Alsace region of northeastern France, and along with it they took control of the capital city of Strassburg and its flagship university. Their intention was to transform Strassburg into a so-called *Neue Stadt* that would serve as a German cultural center, and to refound Strassburg University as *Kaiser-Wilhelms-Universität*: a new institution that was to become the crown jewel of the German educational system. Much to Nietzsche's dismay, however, the Germans had not availed themselves of the opportunity to use the occasion of the new university's founding to establish a new direction for German pedagogy or to inaugurate publically a new era in German culture. Instead, the new university was erected along traditional pedagogical lines, and Nietzsche wanted to suggest to Bismarck that there was still enough time to capitalize on this potentially "immense moment" in German cultural history.

Although it is not clear whether Nietzsche ever actually sent his pro memoria to Bismarck (which would have arrived in the Chancellor's

hands just in time for the School Supervisory debate), his letter to Rohde demonstrates that the writing of his five lectures on education (and the culturally charged *Birth of Tragedy* and *Untimely Meditations*) were inspired by reflections on the political events of his day. Despite the fact that many scholars consider him to be an unpolitical or even anti-political thinker, the early Nietzsche appears to have been the type of politically active person who today would write the President—to say nothing of his willingness to deliver well-attended public lectures on popular political topics.[23] For a man who would later deem himself the most untimely thinker of his generation, Nietzsche's five lectures on the future of the German educational institutions, were a remarkably current affair. He concluded his letter to Rhode with the enthusiastic declaration that in matters of culture, one must "Battle with the knife! Or with cannons!" Instead of ending with his usual valediction, he signed the letter: "The mounted artillerist with the heaviest gun."[24] By taking aim at German educational institutions, Nietzsche had declared a culture war on Germany's transformation into a modern state and had publically condemned the spiritual implications of that transformation. At the heart of his inquiry lay a deep skepticism about whether German culture could achieve its full potential under the educational regimen prescribed by the Iron Chancellor and his government.

Nietzsche and the *Kulturstaat*

Nietzsche's intention in his lecture series was to present his listeners with a third alternative to the two cultural paths proposed by the dueling parties of the *Kulturkampf*. In opposition to Bismarck's modern statism and the Catholics' religious dogmatism, Nietzsche recommended a pedagogical revival of the study of philosophy whose purpose would be to fuse the spirit of the ancient Greeks to the soul of modern Germany, thereby reinvigorating Germany's once strong philosophical, musical, and literary traditions.[25] Using the philosophical protagonist of his dialectical lectures as his mouthpiece, Nietzsche argued that German gymnasiums and universities had the potential to do much more than simply indoctrinate students to the duties demanded of them by church and state. German educational institutions, he said, should assume the supreme task of serving the German people as "living monuments of significant cultural movements, [and] in some instances even 'the household effects of our ancestral fathers.'"[26] If German gymnasiums and

universities would use the philosophical and artistic achievements of the ancient Greeks as a blueprint for the development of a renewed German culture, "classical education" could act as a counterpoison to the sham universalism of modern education and provide a remedy for "that glittering phantom that now lets itself be called 'culture' [*Kultur*] and 'cultivation' [*Bildung*]."[27] As the old philosopher in Nietzsche's lecture series put it:

> Not before the noblest need of the true German spirit snatches after the hand of the Greek genius as after a firm support in the stream of barbarity, not before a consuming longing after the Greeks breaks forth out of this German spirit, not before the laboriously obtained distant view into the Greek homeland in which Schiller and Goethe restored themselves has become a place of pilgrimage of the best and most gifted human beings, will the ideal of classical education, without support, flutter to and fro in the air.[28]

On February 27, 1872, two weeks to the day after the School Supervisory Law passed in the Landtag and gave control of the German educational system to state administrators, Nietzsche delivered a lecture accusing the state of contriving to sabotage the German spirit by attempting to establish a so-called culture-state [*Kulturstaat*] whose aim was the misuse of culture for the sake of unduly venerating the Reich.[29] Once again putting his criticisms into the mouth of the old philosopher who starred in his lecture-dialogue, Nietzsche objected to the state's promotion of itself as the supreme goal of culture and the peak of human existence—a promotion whose roots he traced back to Prussia's appropriation of "the practical, usable heirloom of the Hegelian philosophy."[30] Far from endorsing the Hegelian-Bismarckian understanding of the modern state as the institutional arrangement toward which all of the humanity's spiritual energies should aim, Nietzsche asserted that the state was only a means to (and servant of) a higher spiritual goal: namely, the production of genuine culture and the geniuses who shape it. Precisely what he thought culture and genius were, and why he accorded them the highest place among human ends, are questions that the present volume aims to address.

The question of whether the preservation of the state is the highest aim of human life, or whether the state is merely a means for some higher human activity, animated much of Nietzsche's early thinking

about culture and politics.[31] In his lectures on the German education system, he made the sensational claim that one of the most dangerous and spiritually degrading features of nineteenth century political life was the modern state's presentation of itself as "a mystagogue of culture." This cultural mystagogue "advances its purposes, [and] compels each of its servants to appear before it with the torch of universal state education in their hands: in whose restless light they are supposed to recognize [the state] itself again as the highest goal, as the reward of all their educational exertions."[32] By prohibiting all forms of pedagogy that are not useful for state purposes, the modern state inculcates the false belief that modern political life is the highest expression of human existence and that modern citizenship (and not philosophy or art) is the highest form of cultural activity. Unlike the ancient Greek state, whose inhabitants Nietzsche called "the political human beings as such" because their political life consisted of wars waged to promote the "shining blossoms of the genius," the modern state and its political life hindered the development of rare human types like Wagner and Schopenhauer whose artistic and philosophical expressions constituted the essence of true culture.[33] "Precisely by the most powerful modern state, by Prussia," Nietzsche wrote, "[the] right to the highest leadership in education and school has been taken so seriously, that, with the boldness that is characteristic of this political system, the dubious principle adopted by it receives a significance [that can be] understood as universally threatening and dangerous for the true German spirit."[34]

Bismarck's *Kulturkampf* failed to foster the development of a genuine culture because it did not seek to cultivate the spiritual characteristics that made past generations of Germans so distinctive. Instead, it promoted bureaucratic politics and shallow citizenship at the expense of high spiritual characteristics because anything higher than the state threatened to challenge the Iron Chancellor's vision of a centrally administered German polity.[35] The *Kulturkampf* was not merely a war between the two conflicting cultures of Catholicism and Bismarckian politics as the popular press portrayed it, but rather it was a war waged by Bismarck on German culture itself, a war which Nietzsche called "a common war on all that is rare, strange, privileged, the higher man, the higher soul, the higher duty, the higher responsibility, and the abundance of creative power and masterfulness."[36] Stated succinctly in 1888 in his late book *Twilight of the Idols*:

> The Germans now are bored with the mind, the Germans now distrust the mind; politics swallows up all their ability to take really intellectual things seriously—'Deutschland, Deutschland über Alles,' I am afraid that was the end of German philosophy…'Are there any German philosophers? Are there any German poets? Are there any *good* German books?' people ask me when I am abroad. I blush, but with the bravery which is mine even in desperate situations, I answer: 'Yes, *Bismarck*!'[37]

Nietzsche's Culture War: The *Untimely Meditations*

That Nietzsche understood Bismarck's *Kulturkampf* to be a war for the soul of modern Germany is clear from the foregoing historical outline, but what remains unclear, and what we must turn to his writings to discover, are the problems he addresses and the solutions he proposes to this cultural crisis. Later and more well-known books like *Beyond Good and Evil* and *Twilight of the Idols* have given Nietzsche a reputation for being, as he put it, "the *destroyer* par excellence" of the intellectual traditions of the West.[38] Yet he claims in these same writings to be "the opposite of a no-saying spirit" and "an *evangelist* the like of which there has never been." "Only after me," Nietzsche once wrote, "are there hopes, tasks, and paths to prescribe to culture once again."[39] In the remaining chapters of this volume, my intention is to explore these hopes, tasks, and paths as they are presented in his second book, the *Untimely Meditations.* I aim thereby to clarify what the young Nietzsche thought should be done to "cultivate [*Bildung*]" the modern soul so that it could reach or exceed its potential, and stave off decline into the "cultivated philistinism" he believed was produced by modern culture, politics, and science.[40]

My account of Nietzsche's philosophic *Kulturkampf* centers on a reading of the *Untimely Meditations* because the book's four essays focus on the problem of modern culture in a more sustained manner than any of his other published writings. Beginning with *David Strauss: The Confessor and the Writer* in 1873, moving through *The Use and Disadvantage of History for Life* and *Schopenhauer as Educator* in 1874, and concluding with *Richard Wagner in Bayreuth* in 1876, the *Untimely Meditations* constitute Nietzsche's first attempt to diagnose and cure the cultural ills of the nineteenth century by analyzing trends in nineteenth century life and thought.[41] The first two essays on David Strauss and scientific history constitute, in a broad sense, the destructive half of the

book. Here Nietzsche presents causes for the decline of modern culture by critiquing two of its most salient pedagogical cornerstones: modern science and historicism, which he holds responsible for the unmaking of modern man.[42] In these essays, Nietzsche argues that an overconfidence in the enlightenment's ability to cultivate spiritual depth, and an underestimation of the effects of scientific history on young souls, have turned modern men into vain connoisseurs of past cultures and "cultivated philistines" who have neither the longing nor the capacity to create a genuine culture of their own. Modern man verges on the last man, and a new monumental history of man must be written in order to cultivate human nature anew.

The last two essays on Schopenhauer and Wagner constitute, broadly speaking, the book's constructive half. In these essays, Nietzsche sketches a picture of an exceedingly rare type of educator—a "new philosopher" perhaps—whose creative and horizon-forming interpretation of the world he thinks could help revive modern culture and save Germany—and humanity more broadly—from spiritual decay. Taken together, the essays on Schopenhauer and Wagner are monumental histories of the sort Nietzsche lauds in the second Untimely Meditation on the proper use of history. They outline a radical plan in which towering geniuses create new concepts of history, culture, and nature to revitalize the modern spirit. Artistic history, creative philosophy, and poetry are the cultural instruments by means of which a future goal for nature and human nature must be fashioned. In order for the geniuses who wield these instruments to have an effect on culture, however, Nietzsche thinks that modern human beings must first channel their frustrations with modern life into a painful search for self-knowledge that will acquaint them with their "genuine needs."[43] When they delve deeply enough into themselves, ordinary people discover that they are "defective" and "miscarried works of nature" in whose formation "nature did a bad job."[44] What our defective and lost modern souls need, Nietzsche argues, are true educators and cultivators who can liberate us from our spiritual narrowness and give our lives meaning through creation. In *Schopenhauer as Educator*, he calls these educators and cultivators "redeeming human beings," "true human beings," and the "most valuable exemplars" of humanity.[45] They are almost super human in character because their tremendous capacities not only fulfill, but vastly exceed what were once thought to be the limits of human nature. Nietzsche concludes that humanity "should work ceaselessly toward producing [these] great

individuals," and he claims that the "fundamental idea of culture" is to "*foster the production of philosophers, artists, and saints within and around us, and thereby to work toward the perfection of nature.*"[46]

According to Daniel Breazeale, "the four 'Untimely Meditations' are unquestionably among Nietzsche's most widely neglected works."[47] Part of the reason the book is neglected is that there are grounds for suspecting that it is only partially complete. Initially, Nietzsche envisioned writing a total of thirteen essays, yet he managed to publish only four.[48] His plan was to work on the essays throughout his thirties, and a notebook entry dated September of 1873 presents the following prospective chapter outline for the completed book:

1) The Cultivated Philistines.
2) The Historical Illness.
3) Much Reading and Writing.
4) Literary Musicians (how the genius's disciples deaden his effects).
5) German and Pseudo-German.
6) Military Culture.
7) *Universal* Education—Socialism etc.
8) Educational Theology.
9) Secondary Schools and Universities.
10) Philosophy and Culture.
11) Natural Science.
12) Poets, etc.
13) Classical Philology.[49]

Of the four *Untimely Meditations* Nietzsche published, all feature themes drawn directly from this early list. The primary subject of *David Strauss the Confessor and the Writer* is "the cultivated philistines." The essay also explicitly treats "German and Pseudo-German," "military culture," and "natural science." *The Use and Disadvantage of History for Life* describes "the historical illness" at length, and also addresses "much reading and writing," "universal education," "secondary schools and universities," and the objective historical science characteristic of "classical philology."[50] *Schopenhauer as Educator* focuses largely on "philosophy and culture," but also addresses the problem of "universal education" and the failure of Christian "educational theology." The most salient topics of *Richard Wagner in Bayreuth* are "literary musicians," "poets, etc.," and Nietzsche's hope that Wagner's establishment of Bayreuth

would mitigate the way in which "the genius's disciples deaden his effects." Despite the fact that the published *Untimely Meditations* contain only four of the thirteen planned essays, there is, therefore, a broad thematic sense in which the book could be said to be complete.[51] When Nietzsche's publisher wrote him in 1877 to request a fifth Meditation, Nietzsche responded with a note in which he asked: "shouldn't we consider the *Untimely Meditations* finished?"[52] He seems to have considered the project "finished" because he wanted to begin the book that would become *Human, All Too Human*, but the four completed Meditations are comprehensive enough in their treatment of the topics he initially hoped to address that they could be said to accomplish in a small space what he once thought would take much more.

But the *Untimely Meditations* are also "complete" in another, deeper sense, which this volume aims to demonstrate and clarify. Taken together, the book's four essays not only share common themes, but they also present a unified and coherent philosophic narrative that constitutes Nietzsche's first practical attempt to diagnose and cure the spiritual ailments of modernity. Furthermore, when viewed from the perspective of his later works, the critique of German culture featured in the *Untimely Meditations* and the plan Nietzsche sketches to revitalize it provide a holistic if early blueprint for his later attempt at a revaluation of all values. The chapters that follow argue that this blueprint does not come to sight unless the four essays in the book are read in the context of one another and placed in dialogue. Each piece must be considered as a response to its predecessor, a preparation for its sequel, and therefore as a part of a larger unified narrative.[53]

In the relatively small amount of scholarship that exists on the *Untimely Meditations*, very few scholars treat the book as a unified whole or tetralogy.[54] Most opt to examine single essays as discreet philosophic statements, or to discuss specific paragraphs in the essays in the context of much larger analyses of Nietzsche's later works. In 1976, however, Catherine Zuckert broached the question of the unity of the *Untimely Meditations* in an article that focused on the second and third essays.[55] Zuckert observed that "Nietzsche's philosophy begins in his *Untimely Considerations*," and her work demonstrated that all four of the essays "constitute arguments for the need for modern men to come to know themselves." In the ensuing forty years, interpretations of the *Untimely Meditations* as a collection have been sparse. My intention is to continue and expand the work Zuckert began forty years ago by arguing that

together, the four *Untimely Meditations* not only contain a sustained criticism of modernity, but also prescribe a specific course of treatment for what Nietzsche thought were its most crippling debilitations.

Given Nietzsche's own account of how important the *Untimely Meditations* are for understanding his thought, it is surprising they have not received the attention he said they deserve. Six months before his mental collapse at the age of forty-four, he wrote a public school teacher in Evansville, Indiana and urged him to read the essays with care.[56] The addressee of the letter was Karl Knortz, a German immigrant and cultural savant who had translated into German the works of American poets like Henry Wadsworth Longfellow and Walt Whitman. Struck by the vaunting language and verve of *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, which he had read in 1888, Knortz wrote Nietzsche to inquire about his intellectual development for a biographical sketch he was composing that would introduce the unknown philosopher to German and American audiences. Among the many valuable remarks found in Nietzsche's response to Knortz, one stands out for the emphasis it placed on his most neglected book. "The *Untimely Meditations*," Nietzsche wrote, "which is the work of youth in a certain sense, deserves the greatest attention for my development."[57] Scholars agree that the book, which Nietzsche began when he was only twenty-nine years old, is exceedingly important for understanding how the young Professor Friedrich Nietzsche became the towering philosopher known simply as "Nietzsche."[58] It is all the more surprising, therefore, that a book length interpretation of the *Untimely Meditations* has never been published in English.

This fact is even more odd when it is considered in light of the additional fact that Nietzsche's account of the fall and rise of the modern soul in the essays mirrors in crucial respects his account of the same theme in writings like *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* and *Beyond Good and Evil*. The *Untimely Meditations* are crucial for understanding the concerns from which Nietzsche's later works sprang, but the precise role they played in his development remains obscure at best. In order to get closer to Nietzsche's own understanding of how the *Untimely Meditations* shaped his development, the present volume takes his commentary on the essays in *Ecce Homo*, and in remarks he made in private letters, as its interpretive guide.[59] In his later years, for instance, Nietzsche concluded that *he* was the creative philosophic and artistic legislator he was describing in his early essays on Schopenhauer and Wagner. In a letter written in 1884, he declared that: "I myself have lived in exactly the manner I prescribed for myself"

in *Schopenhauer as Educator*.[60] In *Ecce Homo*, he stated that "in my essay on *Wagner in Bayreuth*, in all psychologically decisive places, I alone am discussed."[61]Although the essays on Schopenhauer and Wagner present what Nietzsche called "pointers to a higher concept of culture," he emphasized that they accomplish this task by presenting the natures of "Schopenhauer and Wagner *or*, in one word, Nietzsche."[62] The *Untimely Meditations* are not simply essays about modern culture, they are biographical reflections by and about a man who hoped one day—perhaps not unsuccessfully—to become modern culture.

Summary of Nietzsche's Culture War

The pages that follow are divided into four chapters which interpret in succession the four *Untimely Meditations*. For the sake of ease of reading, the chapters in this volume have been divided into subsections that match the numbered subsections into which Nietzsche divided each Meditation. The first chapter on *David Strauss the Confessor and the Writer* argues that Nietzsche's critical essay on David Strauss's book, *The Old and New Faith*, is his first sustained attempt at a critique of contemporary culture and modern science. It also argues that the essay presents an early version of the low human type called "the last man" in *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, but which is called "cultivated philistine" in the essay on Strauss. Looking back at the piece in *Ecce Homo*, Nietzsche said that it should not be read as a direct attack on Strauss because Strauss was used merely as a "magnifying glass […] to make visible a general but creeping and elusive crisis." This crisis was the intellectual and spiritual decline of German culture [*Kultur*], which Nietzsche typifies as the culture of "the modern as such."[63] He calls Strauss and his readers "cultivated philistines [*Bildungsphilster*]" because he thinks their confidence in the power of modern ideas to guide human affairs is misplaced and has robbed them of spiritual depth. Like the last men who Zarathustra accuses of having "something of which they are proud that they call culture [*Bildung*]" but which is in truth the opposite of culture, cultivated philistines are said to "fancy themselves to be cultured in an incomprehensible delusion that makes clear they do not know the difference between culture and its opposite."[64] The chapter concludes that Nietzsche took aim at Strauss because the Germans had begun to hail him a "genius," and books like his were shaping their values and tastes, turning Germany into an entire nation of cultivated philistines. Nietzsche leveled his harsh critique of Strauss (whose recent

book had gone through an astonishing six printings) to reduce and challenge his cultural influence. In *Schopenhauer as Educator* and *Richard Wagner in Bayreuth*, Nietzsche proposes a counter-conception of genius meant to erode the Germans' fascination with pseudo-geniuses like Strauss and present them with images of authentic creators of culture.

The second chapter of the book argues that Nietzsche's indictment of scientific and philosophic history in *The Use and Disadvantage of History for Life* is a continuation of the critique of modern culture and education he began in his essay on David Strauss. In fact, Strauss was a well-known scientific historian and a former student of Hegel. The chapter explains the reasons Nietzsche thinks history properly used can promote a culture that enhances life, and shows why he holds that there is an antithesis between knowledge and life which must be managed and prudently balanced by culture. Scientific and philosophic history neither understand nor respect this antithesis, and they have unknowingly made fashionable an endless pursuit of historical knowledge which has cultivated a generation of ironic epigones and cultivated philistines like David Strauss and his readers. These observations lead Nietzsche to declare that human beings are better off living beneath an "ahistorical" horizon of limited but rich history than under an unbounded horizon of scholarly and scientific knowledge. It is the responsibility of culture to create, cultivate, and curate this limited but rich horizon of history, and Nietzsche elaborates three modes of writing history (the monumental, critical, and antiquarian) which, when used properly, accomplish precisely this task.[65] Each of these modes can be used by culture to promote human life and activity, or they can be abused and overused by it, at which point they trigger spiritual sickness and degeneration. My analysis of the three modes of history attempts to clarify not only their relationship to one another, but also—and more importantly—their potential uses and abuses in Nietzsche's own historically sick time. I argue that when Nietzsche's descriptions of the three modes of history are read in the context of his critique of German historicism, the historical sickness he diagnoses in the German soul is shown to have been caused by an abuse and overuse of the antiquarian mode of history. I also argue that Nietzsche thinks the antiquarian degeneration of German culture (as evinced through its excessive historicism) can be cured by a generous application of monumental history, which promotes the active and productive virtues that he says the Germans lack. This monumental cure cannot be administered, however, until nineteenth

century antiquarian culture has been destroyed by the third mode of history, which Nietzsche calls the critical mode. To this end, I argue that *The Use and Disadvantage of History for Life* is itself a means to destruction, and therefore that the essay is a piece of critical history. Its purpose is to destroy Germany's sick and hyper-historicized antiquarian culture in order to pave the way for a new monumental culture that will cultivate a higher human nature than that attributed to the cultivated philistine in the essay on Strauss.

Once Nietzsche accomplishes the critical task of destroying German culture in the first two Untimely Meditations on David Strauss and German historicism, he sets about erecting German culture anew in the last two by composing monumental histories of Arthur Schopenhauer and Richard Wagner. These "histories" are meant to inspire the cultural creators and geniuses of the future. The third chapter of this volume argues that *Schopenhauer as Educator* presents an early version of Nietzsche's later conception of the "new philosopher," who plays a prominent role in *Beyond Good and Evil*. In *Ecce Homo*, Nietzsche says that when *Schopenhauer as Educator* is read in conjunction with its sequel on Wagner, "two images [*Bild*] of the harshest self-love, self-discipline [are presented] as pointers to a higher concept of culture, to restore the concept of culture."[66] He also says that *Schopenhauer as Educator* contains "my concept of the philosopher" which is "worlds removed" from a concept that would include someone like Kant.[67] The high type of philosophic creator he describes is called "the redeeming human being [*erlösenden Mensch*]" in the text of *Schopenhauer as Educator*. Just as the overman remedies the problem of the last man in *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, this chapter argues that the "redeeming human being" provides the remedy for the cultivated philistine and historical epigone described in the first two Untimely Meditations. Redeeming human beings are philosopher-artists who create self-generated accounts of the world that cultivate and redeem humanity. In this sense, they are creators of values and truths whose knowing is creating and whose creating is a legislation.[68] World cultivation and value creation were major parts of what it meant to be a philosopher for both the younger and older Nietzsche, and part of his intention in writing the *Untimely Meditations* was to sketch the political and cultural circumstances that would make these creators of meaning more likely to emerge in modern times. Just as Zarathustra was both the herald for the overman and a kind of overman, Nietzsche is both the herald for the redeeming human being and a kind of redeeming human being. This is why he said in *Ecce Homo* that

he was describing himself in *Schopenhauer as Educator*, and that the essay contains "my innermost history, my *becoming*."[69]

The fourth and final chapter of the book argues that in *Richard Wagner in Bayreuth*, Nietzsche elaborates the artistic characteristics of the "redeeming human being" whose philosophic characteristics were presented in its prequel on Schopenhauer. According to Nietzsche, Wagner used history as "malleable clay," and his relationship to history "closely resembles the relationship the Greeks had to myth, the relationship one has to things one shapes or poeticizes […]."[70] This allowed Wagner to "achieve in his representation [of history] a truth that the historian can never achieve." Wagner's operas are illustrations of the type of creative (and value-creating) monumental history whose myth-making foundations Nietzsche outlined in *The Use and Disadvantage of History for Life*. He creates history (and "truth") artistically through myth, and his operas cultivate because they serve as a vehicle for the transmission of new values and a new nature to the German people. In *Ecce Homo*, Nietzsche said that "the essay *Wagner in Bayreuth* is a vision of my future," presumably because he harbored the same value-creating and history-willing ambitions he once attributed to the maestro. The Wagner essay also presents Bayreuth as the model for a cultural city-state in which the genius's effects on the people are no longer deadened, but rather enhanced. In this sense, Bayreuth comes to sight as an idealized Platonic city for modern times in which a Nietzschean philosopher-artist shapes the human spirit through the creation and regulation of culture.

By the end of the *Untimely Meditations*, then, the true genius as represented by a combination of the natures of Schopenhauer and Wagner has replaced the pseudo-genius David Strauss as the culture creator of the future. The book ends with a remedy for the problem with which it began. Far from being disparate pieces, the *Untimely Meditations* thus admit of an elegant unity which is only revealed when they are treated sequentially instead of separately.

Notes

1. Frederick III (1927, 272).
2. Steinberg (2011, 417).
3. See *BT,* Attempt at Self Criticism 1: "Eventually, in that month of profoundest suspense when the peace treaty was being debated at Versailles, he too attained peace with himself and, slowly convalescing from an

illness contracted at the front […].” The preliminary peace between Prussia and France was signed at Versailles on February 26, 1871.

4. Brandes (1972, 81).
5. Hecker (1987, 1388–1391); His (1941, 159–186). Also see Blue (2007, 80) and KGB 1–2, 381.
6. *SE* 4 and 7. Even as late as the writing of *BGE* in 1886, Nietzsche still claimed to know hours when he permitted himself “some hearty fatherlandishness, a plop and relapse into old loves and narrownesses, […] hours of national agitations, patriotic palpitations, and various other sorts of archaizing sentimental inundations.” See *BGE* 241.
7. Steinberg (2011,316).
8. Ibid.
9. Ibid., 318–319.
10. Engelberg (1990, 106–107).
11. Ibid.
12. Schoeps (1972, 116–117). See also Steinburg (2011, 319–321).
13. Steinberg (2011, 321).
14. *SE* 6.
15. Engelberg (1990, 110). See also Steinberg, 322.
16. Steinberg (2011, 324).
17. *SE* 6.
18. Nietzsche’s lectures were delivered on Jan. 16, Feb. 6 and 27, and March 5 and 23 of 1872. The debate over the school supervisory law lasted from February to March of the same year. See Steinberg (2011, 323–4) and Grenke (2004, Translator’s Introduction).
19. *EI*, 19. All references to *EI* refer to the page numbers of the Grenke translation.
20. Grenke (2004, Translator’s Introduction, 1). See also *EI* 121.
21. *EI*, 14.
22. *EI*, 126–7. *Sämtliche Briefe* 3, 278–80. This letter is dated January 18, 1872. The school supervisory law was debated in the Landtag during the first two weeks of February 1872. The *Kulturkampf* as a whole had begun in the spring of 1871, at precisely the time Nietzsche was writing *The Birth of Tragedy* (which was published in 1872).
23. For fruitful discussions of Nietzsche as anti-political thinker, see Ansell-Pearson (1994); Appel (1999); Bergmann (1987); Conway (1997); Cominos (2008), Detwiler (1990, 4–5, 37–67); Hunt (1985); Kaufman (1974, 412–414); Nussbaum (1997); Shaw (2007); Strong (1975, 186–189); Thiele (1990); Warren (1991).
24. *EI*, 126–127. *KSB* 3, 278–280.
25. *EI,* 59–62
26. *EI*, 14. See also *EI,* 60.

27. *EI*, 63.
28. *EI*, 60.
29. *EI*, 74.
30. *EI*, 76.
31. *EI* 74–76; *SE* 4.
32. *EI*, 75. Cf. *BGE*, part 8.
33. See *BGE* 213. Also see Strong (1988, 157–171) for an account of the development of these political-aesthetic expressions in Nietzsche's thought as they relate to his studies of Schopenhauer, Wagner, Burkhardt, Bismarck, and Emerson.
34. *EI*, 74.
35. See *SE* 8 and the various social and political dangers that Nietzsche says threatened the development of Wagner's nature throughout *SE* and *RW*.
36. *BGE* 212.
37. *TI*, Germans, 1.
38. *EH*, Destiny, 1 and 2.
39. *EH*, Books, Idols 2.
40. See Jurist (2000, 58–68) for a detailed analysis of Nietzsche's usage of *Bildung*.
41. Nietzsche began wrestling with the problem of culture in *The Birth of Tragedy*, but it was only in *The Untimely Meditations* that he confronted modern culture in a modern context as a modern problem. To be sure, *The Birth of Tragedy* contains the seeds of the *Untimely Meditations*, but where the former work is concerned with "Hellenism and pessimism," the latter (with essays that treat Strauss, Hegel, Hartmann, Schopenhauer, and Wagner) is situated firmly in the nineteenth century.
42. Modern science and history often seem to collapse into a single discipline in Nietzsche's writing. See Richardson (2007, 99) who notes that Nietzsche's "critique of 'history' becomes a critique of all science, and his critique of 'memory' becomes a critique of all self-reflection."
43. *HL* 10.
44. *SE* 1, 5, 6.
45. *SE* 5–6.
46. Ibid., 5, Nietzsche's emphasis.
47. Breazeale (2012, 67). Also see Breazeale (1998, 3–4).
48. See Gray (1995, 400) for an account of the publication history of the four essays.
49. For an English translation of the plan, see *UPW* p. 99.
50. Nietzsche composed notes for the essay on "Classical Philology." These notes have been translated into English in Arrowsmith (1990).
51. Gray (1995, 400) notes that Nietzsche considered adding additional essays as late as 1885, but ultimately decided against doing so.

52. Schaberg (1995, 53).
53. See Franco (2011, xiii) who notes that "a school of interpretation, French and deconstructionist, has dedicated itself to showing the impossibility" of readings that attempt to argue that Nietzsche's books are coherent wholes. Franco argues, in opposition to this school of interpretation, that Nietzsche's writings can be read as integral wholes. He reads the middle period works in precisely this fashion.
54. Excellent studies of individual essays include Church (2016, 83–120); Jensen (2016); Emden (2006), Conant (2001); Berkowitz (1996, 25–43) Schacht (1995, 153–166) among others. Laurence Lampert's book, *Becoming Nietzsche* (2017), has not been released at the time of this writing, but it promises to be a valuable source of insight into the third and fourth Meditations. A few brief studies of the *Untimely Meditations* as a whole appear in handbooks or companions to Nietzsche's life and works. See for example Large (2012). Gray (1995) discusses the unity of the *Untimely Meditations* in his translator's afterword. Ansell-Pearson (2016) attempts to interpret the *Untimely Meditations* as a whole through the unifying theme of the sublime. Also see the introductory essays by Golder, Dannhauser, and Brown in the 1990 Arrowsmith translation of the four Meditations, which Arrowsmith titles *Unfashionable Considerations.*
55. See Zuckert's "Nature, History, and the Self: Friedrich Nietzsche's Untimely Considerations," *Nietzsche-Studien* 5 (1976, 55). Breazeale (1998) has also argued that the *Untimely Meditations* are broadly unified. Breazeale's article serves as an excellent introduction to the composition and publication history of the *Untimely Meditations*, and shows how important they are for understanding Nietzsche's later writings.
56. *Sämtliche Briefe*, Nietzsche to Knortz, June 21st, 1888.
57. Ibid.
58. For an account of the significance of the *Untimely Meditations*, see Breazeale (2012) and Large (2012). Large observes that Walter Kaufmann, the most promotenent post-war translator of Nietzsche's works, never translated the *Untimely Meditations* and suggested that they merit translating last of all Nietzsche's writings. For other accounts of the neglect of the *Untimely Meditations*, see Gray (1995), Young (2006), and Ansell-Pearson (2016).
59. Breazeale (1998, 3) observes that the *Untimely Meditations* "had a unique contribution to make to the *public reception and interpretation* of [Nietzsche's] mature philosophy."
60. *Sämtliche Briefe*, Nietzsche to Franz Overbeck, August 1884.
61. *EH,* Books, BT 4.
62. *EH*, Books, Untimelies 1 and 4.

63. *DS* 1.
64. *DS* 2.
65. My interpretation of these sections and the use I make of them to understand *SE* and *RW* stands in contrast to Brobjer (2004), who argues that Nietzsche "changed his views on history, and for the rest of his active life his views were rather different from the ones he had put forward in the second Untimely Meditation.
66. *EH*, Books, Untimelies 1.
67. *EH,* Books, Untimelies 3.
68. *BGE* 211.
69. *EH,* Books, Untimelies 3.
70. *RW* 3.

CHAPTER 2

David Strauss the Confessor and the Writer

Introduction: Why David Strauss?

By all appearances, *David Strauss the Confessor and the Writer* (*DS*) is an unprovoked and unhinged attack on one of the most influential theologians of the nineteenth century. Like many of Nietzsche's works, however, first appearances are in this case deceiving. Fifteen years after the essay was published, Nietzsche said in *Ecce Homo* that his purpose in writing it was not to attack the man featured in its title. Instead, his intention was "merely [to] avail myself of the person [David Strauss] as of a strong magnifying glass that allows one to make visible a general, but creeping and elusive crisis [*Notstand*]."[1] Just as Nietzsche had used Socrates to make visible the crisis of scientific rationalism in *The Birth of Tragedy*, so he uses Strauss in the first Untimely Meditation to make visible a crisis confronting German—and indeed modern—culture.[2] The character of this culture and its crisis are made explicit through a lengthy critique of Strauss's final book, *The Old and New Faith*. The book was a best seller among the cultured class in Germany in the early 1870s, and Nietzsche reports that he wrote his critical review of it so that he could "catch this cultured class in the act" of believing their pseudo-culture to be authentic.[3] In *Ecce Homo*, he observes with pride that his critique of *The Old and New Faith* achieved "extraordinary success" among German intellectuals.[4] It was the only work in his corpus that was widely read during his lifetime.[5]

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By placing Strauss and his book beneath a powerful magnifying glass, Nietzsche intentionally distorts both to make a broader point about the impoverished state of German culture. Over the course of twelve bombastic sections, he argues that the book (which was hailed by the German cultured class as a new intellectual Bible) was written by an "unintelligent fanatic" whose prattle about religion, science, art, and politics, amounts to the "beer hall gospel" of a "cultivated philistine" who was pretending to be a philosopher.[6] Nietzsche's critique of Strauss was untimely because it accused a man who was thought by many to be "the foremost German free spirit" of being a phony, and of publishing a book whose popularity stemmed from its false portrayal of an anemic culture as healthy and robust.[7] In the first sentences of *The Old and New Faith*, for example, Strauss had praised Bismarck's "great politico-military movement" and predicted that an enrichment of German culture would follow the recent expansion of German territory in the Franco-Prussian War.[8] The first sentences of Nietzsche's critique, by contrast, argue that warlike nations inevitably descend into barbarism because maintenance of a strong military requires "qualities that have nothing to do with culture."[9] Stated more bluntly in *Twilight of the Idols*: "power *makes stupid*."[10] The new German culture Strauss and his contemporaries venerated was for Nietzsche "without meaning, without substance, without aim: mere 'public opinion.'"[11]

Scholars searching for contextual motives for Nietzsche's harsh critique of Strauss have traced the origin of the essay to his early infatuation with Richard Wagner.[12] Wagner and Strauss were embroiled in a public quarrel prior to the publication of *The Old and New Faith*, and an entry from Nietzsche's notebooks reveals that it was indeed Wagner's encouragement—combined with the desperation Nietzsche felt on account of the struggling Bayreuth project—that instigated the attack.[13] Wagner's encouragement of Nietzsche to engage in a polemic with his public rival sheds valuable light on the reasons Nietzsche chose such an unlikely target for his second major publication. The question it does not fully answer, however, is why Nietzsche criticized Strauss in the *manner* he did—as a foolish "confessor" and incompetent "writer" whose flaws Nietzsche enlarged through a magnifying glass to call attention to a cultural crisis. This question is important because *DS* spawned three sequels and marks the starting point of a book Nietzsche said was critical for understanding his intellectual development. Seeing why Nietzsche wrote the first Untimely Meditation in the manner he did could help clarify his

purpose in writing the other three, to say nothing of the light it may shed on his claim that the essays are crucial for understanding the development of his mature philosophy.

Several passages in Nietzsche's early notebooks hint at why he thought the Germans' admiration of Strauss was symptomatic of a cultural crisis. In so doing, these passages also suggest a deeper motive for his negative portrayal of Strauss "the confessor and the writer." In the year leading up to the publication of his essay on Strauss, Nietzsche sketched plans for a new book titled *The Philosopher as Cultural Physician*.[14] Although this book was ultimately abandoned for the *Untimely Meditations*, many of the themes explored there found their way into the latter book in new forms.[15] One notebook entry examines "the relationship between the people and the genius," and concludes that "what must be shown is the way in which the entire life of a people reflects in an unclear and confused manner the image [*Bild*] offered by their highest geniuses."[16] Another entry speculates that "imitation [*Nachahmen*] is the means employed by all culture" to inculcate certain types of behavior. It argues that "types" or natures of human beings are created when "the greatest and most powerful specimens" among a people are imitated by the rest.[17]

These and other notebook entries from the early 1870s show Nietzsche developing a framework for the creation of culture in which geniuses project an image [*Bild*] of a spiritual ideal onto their people. This image serves to cultivate [*Bildung*] in an indirect way those who embrace and imitate it. The cultural framework Nietzsche explores here is at once a continuation and modification of the "cult of genius" theories articulated in earlier decades by Hegel, Heine, Schleiermacher, Menzel, and even David Strauss himself.[18] In *DS*, Nietzsche frequently and loudly laments the fact that the Germans have begun to venerate Strauss as a cultural genius who deserves to be mentioned alongside Goethe and Lessing, and he takes pains to show that Strauss is anything but the genius he is mistaken for. "Absolutely no spirit would speak in the manner [Strauss] does," he says, "least of all a true genius."[19] Near the end of the essay, he even says that "when I suppose that young men might be able to endure, indeed, might even treasure [Strauss's] book, then I must abandon in despair my hopes for their future."[20] Bubbling under the surface of the first Untimely Meditation is thus the question of what kind of decayed culture and base people would stoop so low as to christen David Strauss, whose "theatrics with the mask of genius inspire hatred and laughter," as a cultural paragon.[21]

Who Was David Strauss?

Before looking more closely at the text and the deeper meaning of Nietzsche's critique of Strauss as a pseudo-genius, it will be useful to say a brief word about who Strauss was and what his intention was in the book Nietzsche placed in his crosshairs, *The Old and New Faith*.[22] Born in 1808 in Ludwigsburg, Strauss was thirty-six years older than Nietzsche and much more well-known to the German public. In Karl Barth's review of the most important protestant thinkers of the past two centuries, Strauss is called "the most influential theologian of the nineteenth century in non-theological and non-church circles."[23] To feel the full audacity of Nietzsche's critique of Strauss, readers of the essay should keep in mind that Nietzsche wrote it when he was an unknown twenty-nine-year-old professor with one critically panned book (*The Birth of Tragedy*) to his name. Strauss, on the other hand, was a founding member of the young Hegelian movement and its famous Tübingen School who had acquired widespread fame (and infamy) in 1835 for writing what was perhaps the most controversial book of its time: *The Life of Jesus Critically Examined*.[24] The book followed the neo-Hegelian pattern of thought which viewed criticism of religion, politics, and metaphysics as the primary task of philosophy in the age of empirical science and enlightenment.[25] Over the course of almost a thousand pages, *The Life of Jesus* painstakingly examined the four Gospels and underscored their contradictions and inconsistencies. Strauss argued that his analysis of these sacred texts was more accurate than those of other theologians because he prohibited himself from departing from "the seriousness of science," and thus he could state without reservation that "all which was once sacred history for the Christian believer is, for the enlightened portion of our contemporaries, only fable."[26] Strauss concluded on the basis of his historical-scientific investigations that the accounts of Jesus's miraculous deeds in scripture were not historical at all, but rather myths invented after Jesus's death to give him the appearance of the Messiah alluded to in Jewish prophecy. Since Isaiah had spoken of the advent of the Messiah as a time when the eyes of the blind and the ears of the deaf would be opened, Strauss maintained that the biography of Jesus was consciously and unconsciously embellished into an unbroken chain of miracles meant to establish his place as the true redeemer of man. Jesus was not the son of God, but a cultural genius whose life was a work of art.[27] Strauss summarized his findings from *The Life of Jesus* thirty-seven years later in *The*

Old and New Faith. In the latter book, he maintains that "the numerous stories of miracles in the Bible and especially in the Gospels are founded not on fraud but on misconception, [because] natural occurrences are sometimes considered miracles by eye-witnesses or historians, and the reader at other times puts a miraculous interpretation upon circumstances which the narrator did not intend to relate as prodigies."[28]

The Life of Jesus Critically Examined was so controversial that it destroyed Strauss's theological reputation and cost him a chair in theology at the University of Zürich. The controversy also spurred young Hegelians like Bruno Bauer to attack him in print and to banish him from their ranks because they held that Christianity was a rational worldview compatible with Hegel's philosophic system.[29] When Nietzsche was a twenty-year-old theology student at the University of Bonn, he read an abridged version of Strauss's *Life of Jesus* and listed it among the causes for his loss of faith.[30] The second Untimely Meditation's examination of scientific history's hostility toward "illusions" that promote life may be a reflection on this episode. In the seventh section of that essay, Nietzsche takes scientific historians like Strauss to task for debunking religion and destroying its salutary benefits through excessive historical investigations like the one featured in *The Life of Jesus Critically Examined*. "A religion […] that is supposed to be transformed under the rule of pure justice into historical knowledge," Nietzsche says, "a religion that is supposed to be understood scientifically through and through, will be destroyed as soon as it reaches this goal."[31] The second Untimely Meditation is a proper sequel to the first because it deepens Nietzsche's critique of Strauss's thought and its inability to foster a myth-affirming, and hence life-promoting, culture.[32]

While *The Life of Jesus Critically Examined* was meant primarily for scholarly audiences, Strauss's *The Old and New Faith* (1872) was explicitly addressed to the German bourgeois who had begun to doubt the authority of Christianity in the age of Bismarck and Darwin. Published three decades after its predecessor, *The Old and New Faith* aims to present in plain language the startling social and religious implications of recent advances in historical and empirical science. The book had gone through six editions by the time Nietzsche wrote his critique of it, and it consists of four chapters titled "Are We Still Christians?," "Have We Still a Religion?," "What is Our Conception of the Universe?," and "How Do We Regulate Our Lives?" The first two chapters argue that the old Christian faith is so fantastical as to be unbelievable in modern times.

The last two attempt to replace the old faith with a "new faith" that modern science can guide humanity to greater heights. Two appendices featuring revaluations of classical works of German literature and music round out the volume and lend it the air of having been written by a cultural authority.

A cursory familiarity with the major themes of *The Old and New Faith* is required to properly grasp Nietzsche's philosophic intention in *David Strauss the Confessor and the Writer*. Although a comprehensive summary of the book is beyond the scope of this volume, a broad overview of its contents will be helpful for contextualizing the interpretation that follows.

Near the beginning of the book Strauss states that he wrote it to foster the "inward preparation" of the German people for putting their faith in modern science as a social and spiritual guide.[33] This inward preparation begins in the first chapter ("Are We Still Christians?") which restates the argument in *The Life of Jesus Critically Examined* that historical science has debunked the old faith as a fiction. In response to the question of whether he and his followers are still Christians, Strauss concludes that "if we would speak as honest, upright men, we must acknowledge that we are no longer [believers]."[34]

The explicit denial of Christianity in the first chapter is followed by a second chapter ("Have We Still a Religion?") in which Strauss unexpectedly argues that religion must continue to play a role in modern life because "the capacity for religion is a prerogative of human nature."[35] Instead of worshipping the old faith's anthropomorphized God, however, Strauss declares that "religion with us is no longer what it was with our fathers."[36] The proper object of man's religious veneration in the age of science is the "cosmological conception" of the universe which has been "painfully educed from continued scientific and historical research."[37] This new cosmological conception of the universe is different from the old conception because it features no notion of providence, makes no promise of eternal life, and demands no ceremonies.[38] Its "faith" is a faith in the power of reason and science, but it retains what Strauss calls the "essence" of religion because it satisfies the "sentiment of [man's] unconditional dependence" on external forces. These external forces are not divine, but rather the physical and biological laws that govern matter and motion.[39] In Nietzsche's critique of *The Old and New Faith*, he argues that Strauss's attempt to replace divine law with scientific law while retaining the notion of religion is the product of a man who lacks the intellectual fortitude to rid himself of his hope for

providence and confront the atheistic implications of the modern science he deifies.[40]

The third chapter of *The Old and New Faith* ("What is Our Conception of the Universe?") features an overview of the science and philosophy that underpin Strauss's faith in the goodness of the cosmological conception of the universe. Much of the chapter summarizes accounts of the origins of life found in the writings of authors like Kant, Darwin, and German naturalist Moritz Wagner. Darwin plays an especially prominent role. His theory of evolution poses a formidable challenge to the old faith's explanation of creation, and Strauss predicts that "everyone who knows what miracles imply" will one day praise Darwin as one of the "greatest benefactors of the human race."[41] The third chapter's overview of the scientific underpinnings of the new faith concludes by dispelling any illusory notion that a universe in which evolution occurs has a discernable purpose. Instead, Strauss says that the universe consists merely of "the more definite shape of matter infinitely agitated, which by differentiation and integration, developed itself into ever higher forms and functions and described an everlasting circle by evolution, dissolution, then fresh evolution."[42] Near the end of the chapter, Strauss confesses that the crux of his view of the universe amounts to a "pure unmitigated materialism" which draws its ultimate consequence at every moment.[43] The views he expresses here fit firmly within what Frederick Beiser has termed "the identity crisis" of philosophy in the nineteenth century.[44] After the death of Hegel and the rise of the empirical sciences in Germany, skepticism arose about the self-evident principles, a priori constructions, and dialectical methods that had guided philosophy since Kant. A "materialism controversy" erupted when empirical science—fueled in part by the rapid ascent of Darwin—demanded more tangible standards for what could be considered genuine knowledge.[45]

Following Strauss's sketch of the materialistic nature of the universe in the third chapter of *The Old and New Faith*, he turns in the fourth and final chapter ("How Do We Regulate Our Lives?") to the question of whether his cosmological conception of the universe can "serve as a basis on which to erect the structure of a truly human life."[46] His intention is to prove that the new faith can provide its adherents with the same moral orientation and sense of fulfillment that the old faith did. Nietzsche is critical of the "regulations" Strauss prescribes for life because they take the form of moral and cultural imperatives that he

thinks promote spiritual decline and intellectual softness.[47] He also argues that Strauss's new rules for living a good life are indistinguishable from those of the old faith whose authority Strauss hoped to discredit. "Ever remember," Strauss counsels, "that you are human, not merely a natural production; ever remember that all others are human also, and, with all individual differences, the same as you, having all the same needs and claims."[48] Nietzsche responds to Strauss's rules for life by suggesting that they transform human beings into gentle, cosmopolitan, and self-satisfied "cultivated philistines [*Bildungsphilisters*]" who lack spiritual profundity, personal character, and intellectual depth. Part of his task in later Untimely Meditations will be to issue new cultural rules for life that counter Strauss's, and thereby to pave the way for the emergence of a higher type of human being who lives for a higher cultural purpose than the cultivated philistine does.[49]

Strauss's Readers and Nietzsche's Readers

Since a reading of *DS* depends more heavily on an understanding of Nietzsche's context than other Untimely Meditations, it may be helpful to say a word about the social and political predicament that confronted German readers during the period of its composition in the early 1870s. The readers for whom Nietzsche wrote the essay would have had several important agreements and disagreements with the readers for whom Strauss wrote *The Old and New Faith*. Rapid changes in the political and religious character of the German state meant that readers of both books were profoundly aware of a new cultural dawn in Europe. The tremendous commercial success of *The Old and New Faith* showed that many Germans had already begun to perceive and embrace the fact that the scientific revolution of the late nineteenth century posed a fresh challenge to the traditional authority of the church.[50] "On every side," Strauss wrote, "people are at least stirring, speaking out, preparing for conflict."[51] Bismarck's modernization of German politics, his *Kulturkampf* with the Catholics, and his renovation of the German educational system created a social climate in which the tension between the new scientific progressivism and the old religious dogmatism could not be released by compromises. Nietzsche made a similar observation fifteen years later in *Beyond Good and Evil*, when he wrote that a fight was brewing in Europe against the "Christian-ecclesiastical pressure of millennia," which had created "a magnificent tension of the spirit the like of which has never

yet existed on earth."[52] Bismarck's challenge to the authority of religion was beginning to have a profound impact on Germany's spiritual future, and Strauss and Nietzsche both wrote their books for audiences on the vanguard of this change.

Throughout *The Old and New Faith*, Strauss refers to those who were enthusiastic about these changes using the first-person plural pronoun "we [*Wir*]." This "we" is understood to signify those progressive minded Germans (like Strauss himself) who had begun to perceive that a spiritual conflict was brewing in which the old ways of living and thinking were rapidly giving way to new ones.[53] "If I say we," Strauss remarks, "then I know that I am entitled to do so [because] the 'We' I mean no longer counts only by the thousands."[54] Strauss says that his "we" are "no longer satisfied" with the old church, and "regard a change, a modification, as an urgent necessity."[55] They come from all walks of life, including:

> members of the most various professions, and by no means exclusively consist of scholars or artists, but of military men and civil employees, of merchants and landed proprietors, nor is the female sex underrepresented among us […]. In recent years we have taken a vivid interest in the great national war, and the reconstruction of the German state, and each after his manner has participated in it, and we have been greatly exalted by the unexpected and glorious course which events have taken for our much tried nation. To the end of forming just conclusions in these things, we study history, which has now been made easy even to the unlearned by a number of attractively and popularly written works. At the same time we endeavor to enlarge our knowledge of the natural sciences, where there is no lack of sources of information; and lastly, in the writings of our great poets, in the performances of our great musicians, we find satisfying stimulus for the intellect and the heart, and for fancy in her deepest or most sportive moods. Thus *We* live and go our way in bliss.[56]

The introduction to *The Old and New Faith* invites this progressive "we" to reflect on the book's argument that the old faith is in decline, and to judge "on which side there exists more obscurities and insufficencies unavoidable in human speculation: the side of the ancient orthodoxy or on that of modern science."[57] Strauss insists that he is not inviting his audience to make this judgment so that they will be inspired to establish a new "humanitarian or rationalistic" church on the model of the old. On the contrary, his writings are meant to foster what he calls "a mutual understanding" among his readers concerning Germany's future

as an enlightened nation guided by science. He instructs his audience to spread this mutual scientific understanding by means of the enlightenment itself, specifically "the inspiriting power of free speech," and "above all" the press.[58]

Readers of Nietzsche's *Untimely Meditations* familiar with his later writings will have observed that he also addresses his books to an enlightened "we." In the *Gay Science*, this "we" consists of "we philosophers and 'free spirits' [who] feel, when we hear the news that 'the old God is dead,' as if a new dawn shone on us."[59] In *Beyond Good and Evil*, they are "we *whose task is wakefulness itself*," "we *good Europeans* and free, *very* free spirits," "we opposite men," "we scholars," "we [who] have a different faith," and "we [who] sail right *over* morality, we crush, we destroy perhaps the remains of our own morality by daring to make our voyage there—but what matter are *we!*"[60] The *Untimely Meditations* also address a Nietzschean "we," and they are perhaps the first of Nietzsche's published works to do so. *The Use and Disadvantage of History for Life* and *Schopenhauer as Educator*, for example, are both explicitly addressed to the young, and specifically to "we [who] have our task and our sphere of duties" and "we [who] know what culture is."[61] In response to Strauss's plan to gather together a progressive "we" to advocate for the new enlightenment, Nietzsche summons a young and ambitious "we" in the *Untimely Meditations* whose task is to counter Strauss's influence and pave the way for a new understanding of culture.[62] He makes a subtle overture to this "we" in the eighth section of *DS*. After describing his disgust for Strauss's audience, he asks his own audience "what kind of lantern one would need in order to search for human beings who would be capable of fervent self-immersion and pure devotion to genius?"[63] The *Untimely Meditations* themselves would seem to be that lantern. A more explicit overture appears in *Schopenhauer as Educator*, where Nietzsche says that the "task" of those like him who recognizes "the unreason characteristic of the nature of this age" is to "introduce Schopenhauer [i.e. a true philosopher and genius] to the free spirits and those who profoundly suffer from the age, to gather them together, and produce by means of them a current strong enough to overcome that ineptitude nature commonly evinces in its utilization of the philosopher."[64] Like *Beyond Good and Evil*, the *Untimely Meditations* are addressed to intellectual risk takers and free spirits who long to see philosophers—as Nietzsche understands them—become sovereign again. Whereas Strauss's intended audience consists of scholars and progressive spirits who are invigorated

by the possibility of Germany's scientific future, Nietzsche's consists of youths and free thinkers who are troubled by his argument that science and life are incompatible, but tantalized by his suggestions that philosophy and life are not.

Interpretation of *David Strauss the Confessor and the Writer*

The following interpretation adheres to Nietzsche's organization of *David Strauss the Confessor and the Writer*.[65] The first part of the interpretation examines sections 1–3, in which Nietzsche chides the German people for esteeming their culture far too highly after their victory in the Franco-Prussian War. He also describes the ascension of "cultivated philistines" to the seat of cultural power in Germany. To see more clearly the influence cultivated philistines have exerted on German life and culture, he places David Strauss—the "the philistine chieftain"—beneath a critical magnifying glass in the remaining sections of the essay.[66]

The second part of the interpretation examines sections 4–7 of the piece. In these sections, Nietzsche reviews and criticizes *The Old and New Faith* (which he calls "the handbook of German philistinism"), and uses the book as a platform for describing and disparaging the cultural ideal that Strauss represents and that his new faith venerates.[67] When *The Old and New Faith* is read carefully, Nietzsche argues that the book presents a "cynical confession" of Strauss's own spiritual weakness and the weakness of those who follow him.[68] A wide (and occasionally questionable) variety of intellectual and rhetorical tactics are employed to demonstrate that Strauss is an "unintelligent fanatic" who "[does] not stimulate, [does] not elevate, and who yet holds out the prospect of being [the] guiding light of our lives […] and dominating the future."[69] Nietzsche's purpose is to prove beyond doubt that Strauss is not a genius, and that he is neither capable of guiding German culture nor competent to create an ideal on the basis of which the Germans should live.

The third and final part of the interpretation briefly examines sections 8–12 of the essay. Here, Nietzsche concludes his critique of Strauss as a spiritual and philosophic "confessor" and puts Strauss the writer on trial. His assessment of Strauss's writing begins in section 8 with a critique of the German scholars and scientists who judge that

writing to exhibit elegance and "classical" style. This leads Nietzsche into a long but important digression in which he describes his frustration with academic scholars and scientists, and reveals his hope or plan for the emergence of a new kind of science that can "pave the way" for culture instead of obstructing it with scholarly clumsiness. For the purposes of this interpretation, Nietzsche's digression on science is more important than his critique of Strauss's writing because it prepares the way for both the second Untimely Meditation's criticisms of historical science, and the third's portrait of philosophy as a science that can be inspirational for culture.

Once the framework for the cultural science of the future has been laid, Nietzsche proceeds in sections 9–12 to detail why he thinks Strauss's writing is "extremely bad."[70] For many readers, his attack on Strauss's writing is likely to appear out of place and somewhat pretentious, especially in a piece devoted primarily to philosophic critique. In truth, however, Nietzsche's critique of Strauss's writing deepens his philosophic criticisms inasmuch as it argues that a person who cannot write properly has no potential to enhance the culture of a nation whose literary and philosophic traditions are among the richest in world history.

Section 1: The Problem of German Culture

Looking back on *David Strauss: The Confessor and the Writer* fifteen years after publishing it, Nietzsche called the essay an untimely attack on an over-proud German culture [*Bildung*] that had "no point, no substance, [and] no goal" because it was animated by public opinion.[71] In light of his tepid evaluation of public opinion's power to sustain genuine culture, it is fitting that the first words of the essay are "public opinion [*Die öffentliche Meinung*]."[72] When these first words are contrasted with the essay's last words—"speaking the truth [*die Wahrheit zu sagen*]"—a frame appears around the piece which depicts an ascent from the popular opinions that degrade culture to the truths that foster and promote it.[73]

By speaking the truth about contemporary German culture, Nietzsche's intention in his essay on Strauss was to lend a measure of sobriety to a people whose writers and rulers had flattered them into believing that their culture was great. "Public opinion in Germany," he begins, "appears almost to forbid one to speak of the deleterious and dangerous consequences of war, especially of a war that ends in victory; as a result, the populace at present is all the more willing to listen to those writers who know of no opinion that is more important than public opinion […]."

When Nietzsche published his essay a year after the last shot was fired in the Franco-Prussian War, the German people believed they were at the height of their cultural power. The piece is untimely because it begins with critique of the Germans' celebrated military victory and its cultural consequences. Unlike his contemporaries, Nietzsche thought military successes often precede a people's decline instead of their ascent. This insight is untimely, but it is not new. Thucydides (upon whom Nietzsche lavishes praise in *Twilight of the Idols*) made a similar observation in his *History of the Peloponnesian War*.[74] When the Athenians experienced a string of military victories in the early phases of the conflict, he observed that they became so intoxicated by the victory that they thought "nothing could withstand them, and that they could achieve what was possible and what was impracticable alike, with means ample or inadequate it mattered not." The cause of their confidence was their "extraordinary success, which made them confuse their strengths with their hopes." Like Thucydides and the Athenians, Nietzsche traces the Germans' newfound confidence to what he calls their "abuse of success," the cause of which is attributed in the second Untimely Meditation to their obsession with Hegelian philosophy's "idolatry of success."[75]

Nietzsche was troubled by the reversal of cultural and military values in late nineteenth-century Germany because it threatened to make obtuse a people who were once profound. "Of all the deleterious consequences of the recently fought war with France," he says, "the worst is perhaps one widely held, even universal error: the erroneous idea harbored by public opinion and all public opinionators that in this struggle German culture also came away victorious."[76] The erroneous belief that German culture is richer than French culture because the French were defeated in war is said by Nietzsche to be an "extremely pernicious delusion," yet he is careful to emphasize that a delusion's perniciousness does not stem from the fact that it is a lie. On the contrary, he remarks in passing that he does not object to a people being under the influence of certain kinds of delusions because some are "of the most salutary and blessed nature." In the second Untimely Meditation, he will argue that properly utilized delusions can strengthen a people's culture instead of eroding it.[77] The Germans' particular delusion about the health of their culture is dangerous because it hides the fact that cultural victories are won through mind instead of might.[78] The "extirpation of the German spirit," Nietzsche declares, has been perpetrated at the hands of the

German Reich. The Reich's imperial lust compromises the very culture that the German unification was established to preserve, and a powerful fighting force had become an end instead of a means for the state. In the late nineteenth century, the Germans sought greatness through politics, but Nietzsche observed that the political regimes of great peoples often change, their militaries fall, and their empires crumble.[79] A great culture, on the other hand, had the power to leave a lasting mark on humanity that the more transitory power of great politics simply could not match.[80]

The German people were in danger at the time Nietzsche wrote his first Untimely Meditation because they were falsely convinced that the "finest seeds of culture" had been sown by their army, and they believed these seeds were now "pushing up their green shoots or even standing in full flower" in the writings of authors like David Strauss. In Nietzsche's telling, writers like Strauss had exploited the wave of popular optimism about Germany's future, and they had conspired to "take control" of the modern human being's mind by appropriating his "'cultured moments [*Kulturmomente*]' [and] drugging him by means of the printed word." In the introduction to *The Old and New Faith*, Strauss encouraged his readers to further his ideas about a progressive German culture by means of the printing press, and he claimed that his book was written for those who peruse "popularly written works" of science in their leisure time.[81] To Nietzsche, the Germans appeared "drugged" because their writers had led them to the erroneous belief that a people's level of culture should be measured by the quantity of the knowledge they have acquired through research instead of the significance and utility of that knowledge for life. In contrast to his contemporaries, Nietzsche argued that it was not knowledge but "life [that] is supposed to bear witness to the character of cultivation [*Bildung*]." The first section of the first Untimely Meditation introduces the theme of the second Meditation because it argues that the pedagogical artistry required to use knowledge moderately for the proper cultivation of a soul is different from the scholarly determination required to collect and collate knowledge as lifeless information.

Nietzsche attributed the primary cause of the contemporary overvaluation of German culture [*Kultur*] and cultivation [*Bildung*] to the fact that the Germans had lost sight of "the pure concept of culture [Kultur]." Culture is not "vast knowledge and pedantic learning" as Strauss and others believed. Rather, it is what Nietzsche called

"the unity of artistic style [*Einheit des künstlerischen Stiles*] that manifests itself throughout all of the expressions of life of a people."[82] The paintings, poetry, pottery, and sculpture of peoples like the ancient Greeks, ancient Egyptians, and ancient Chinese exhibit a unity of artistic style and a shared conception of meaningful forms and *Geist* that makes each civilization's culture uniquely recognizable.[83] When we walk through a museum, we are instantly aware when we have entered a corridor exhibiting artworks and artifacts from one of these civilizations. Their origins are readily identifiable because of their distinctive artistic and thematic unity. In the *Birth of Tragedy*, Nietzsche shows that the early Greeks had one of the richest and purest cultures in human history because a unified tragic awareness and "pessimism of strength" pervaded their artistic expressions of life.[84] These Greeks shared common conceptions of the meaning of human existence, the ideals of beauty, and the limits of human knowledge, and they were reared in this conception through myth, drama, and art.

Cultures of modern peoples, by contrast, do not typically possess the cultural unity exhibited by ancient cultures. It is on account of this disunity that Nietzsche wonders whether modern "peoples" are peoples at all. The second Untimely Meditation makes clear that the defect of modern culture is that it identifies intellectual cultivation with the presentation of a vast and diverse worldview that exhausts human life through infinite choice instead of invigorating it through a deliberate and directed pedagogy. Nietzsche calls modern peoples "barbarians" compared to ancient ones because the most distinctive feature of modern culture is the "chaotic hodgepodge [*chaotischen Durcheinander*]" of artistic styles that results from the pursuit and collection of knowledge for its own sake. Our music, clothing, food, literature, drama, and other artistic institutions exhibit a "grotesque" jumbling of cultural sources that muddle our thinking instead of enriching it.[85] Nietzsche's critique of German culture is, therefore, a critique of what he calls the "modern as such." It remains untimely and highly controversial in our own time because it attacks multi-culturalism for failing at the cultural task of cultivating wild and coarse minds into minds that are beautiful and functional because of their order and discipline.

Section 2: The "Cultivated Philistine"

The Germans live under the illusion of being a cultivated people when they are actually cultural barbarians because they have allowed the type of human being David Strauss represents to ascend to the seat of cultural

power. "What *species* of human being must have risen to power in Germany," Nietzsche asks in section 2, "that they are able to forbid, or at least prevent the expression of [German culture's defects]? Let me call this power, this species of human being, by its name—they are *cultivated philistines* [*Bildungsphilister*]."[86] The "cultivated philistines" featured in the second section of *DS* are the closest approximation in Nietzsche's early writings to what his Zarathustra famously calls the "last man" in *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*.[87] These "philistines" represent the low ideal Nietzsche thinks Strauss encourages his readers to imitate in *The Old and New Faith.* Strauss himself serves as a model for this type of human being, and Nietzsche baptizes him the "typical" cultivated philistine and the "philistine chieftain." From section 2 onward, *DS* can therefore be read as Nietzsche instructed in *Ecce Homo*.[88] Strauss and his book represent ideals of philistinism, and Nietzsche places both under a magnifying glass in the remainder of the piece to expose the crisis of German culture.

Nietzsche begins his discussion of the "cultivated philistine" by noting that the word "philistine" has long been a slang term used by university students to mock their uncultivated peers. The difference between the old university philistine and the new cultivated philistine, however, is that the former's lack of cultivation merely harmed his reputation among his friends, whereas the latter's harms the culture of the German people as a whole. University philistines admit their philistinism with shame and blushing, and they work hard to avoid further mockery. The *cultivated* philistine, on the other hand, refuses to admit his lack of cultivation and "fancies himself to be a son of the muses and a cultured person [in] an incomprehensible delusion that makes evident he does not even know the difference between the philistine and its opposite." He is harmful to German culture because he exhibits a "total lack of self-knowledge" in which he mistakes himself for a person of high culture and inverts the meaning of the culturally noble and base.[89] Just as Zarathustra's last men "have something of which they are proud" called "culture" which is said to be worthy of the contempt of truly cultivated men, cultivated philistines are said to be proud of their apparently high state of culture even though it is really what Nietzsche calls a "phlegmatic insensitivity to culture."[90] Like last men, moreover, cultivated philistines are convinced that they embody a genuine culture because "everywhere [they] encounter cultured people of this same type." All institutions for education and art in modern Germany are said by Nietzsche to turn

people into cultivated philistines who harbor "the triumphant feeling of being worthy representative[s] of present-day German culture, making [their] demands and laying [their] claims as a consequence."

The stylistic contradictions cultivated philistines perpetrate on behalf of their degraded concept of culture defy the standards of true culture and appall its proponents. A true culture requires a unity of artistic style, but the hallmark of modern philistine culture is its disunity. In order to give the appearance of a genuinely unified culture, modern philistine culture is said by Nietzsche to manufacture the dubious claim that it consists in "diversity brought together in the harmony of a single style." According to Nietzsche, however, a diversity of styles or approaches to the cultivation of the human mind can never produce the kind of harmonious or vigorous mind which is the goal of an authentic culture.[91] Modern culture's multifarious approach to cultivation amounts in truth to an "exclusion and negation" of unity that resembles a sophisticated brand of barbarism. Cultivated philistines have "warped" their minds to convince themselves that they are cultured even though they have replaced genuine culture with a "system of non-culture" whose unity consists only in its consistent violation of true culture's standards. In *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, the cultural barbarism of the last man is said to stand in the way of the coming into being of the overman and all that this superior type represents. Similarly, in *David Strauss the Confessor and the Writer* Nietzsche calls the cultivated philistine "an impediment to all who are powerful and creative," "leg irons to all those pursuing higher aims," and a "parching desert to the German spirit seeking and thirsting for new life." Cultivated philistines not only inhibit the emergence of higher culture, they inhibit the emergence of higher man because they are content with current culture and the types of human beings it produces. They believe man has reached the pinnacle of his development in modern times, and they think it is impossible to attempt more.

The cultivated philistine's contentment with modernity originates in the spell of satisfaction that Hegel's philosophy of history cast over Germany in the early nineteenth century.[92] Nietzsche tells the story of Hegel's influence more fully in the second Untimely Meditation, in which he argues that there has been "no more dangerous turn in German cultivation in this century that did not become more dangerous" due to Hegel's influence.[93] The first Untimely Meditation introduces this theme by attributing the intellectual narrowness of cultivated philistinism

to Hegel's theory that "the rational is real," or that what is real in the world is the result of the rational development of history which has culminated in the creation of the modern German state.[94] Nietzsche is skeptical of Hegel's theory of history, but he says that all public doubts about it have been silenced by writers like David Strauss and Friedrich Vischer who came under its influence as university students.[95] German scholars from a wide variety of disciplines have reinforced general contentment with German state by transforming "all those fields of study from which disruptions of their contentedness might yet be expected—especially philosophy and classical philology—into historical disciplines."[96] The historicization of these disciplines means that the search for truth is no longer considered an unfinished and perhaps unfinishable quest. On the contrary, truth is assumed to be the reward of a historical process in which the thinkers of the past were unconscious participants in a narrative of progress that has finally culminated in the reality of the present.

The belief that the rational endpoint of historical progress manifested itself as real in contemporary Germany plunged the German people into a dangerous spiritual complacency that hastened their cultural and intellectual decline. After Hegel's declaration of the end of history, the philistine mind "fled from wild experimentation into the idyllic, and opposed to that unsettlingly creative drive of the artist a certain contentedness, a contentedness with [its] own narrowness, [its] own untroubledness, indeed, even with [its] own limited intelligence." Great spiritual discoveries were no longer thought possible in Hegel's aftermath, and the artistic and philosophic geniuses who were responsible for advancing the world spirit in the past were no longer needed in the age of epigones. The mantra of cultivated philistine culture in Germany thus became "we should seek no further," and authentic intellectual life came to a standstill. The formerly high ambitions of the German mind were reduced to "reflecting a little, doing a little research, waxing aesthetic." New literature, music, and philosophy were produced, but only under the provision that "whatever is rational, whatever is real—that is whatever is philistine—was to remain unassailed." Artists and intellectuals gained fame if their works were pleasing and easy to comprehend, and any artistic or intellectual endeavor that demanded actual effort or thought from the observer was considered too exhausting to engage in. Culture in Germany gradually became synonymous with various forms of entertainment and amusement instead of a premeditated and deliberate education or cultivation. The German concept of culture was

finally segregated from what Germans thought were the most "'serious things in life'—that is, profession and business, together with wife and child." Nietzsche's disturbing portrait of cultivated philistines as intellectual voluptuaries thus evokes Strauss's description of his audience in *The Old and New Faith* as "members of various professions" who read popular works of science and literature only when they are in "sportive moods."[97]

Section 3: David Strauss the Genius?

Nietzsche urges those interested in the spiritual decay of modern culture to listen carefully when thinkers like Strauss articulate their deepest held beliefs in writing. The degeneracy of the cultivated philistine as a cultural ideal becomes explicit when an embodiment of that ideal confesses his own spiritual weakness to his peers. "The more often and more cynically he admits [this weakness]," Nietzsche says, "the more clearly he betrays his sense of self-importance and superiority."[98] Since Strauss's confession in *The Old and New Faith* offers a convenient summary of the foundational principles of cultivated philistinism, Nietzsche devotes sections 4–7 of *DS* to a critical analysis of it. As he stated in *Ecce Homo*, his intention is to provide a picture of the "crisis" of modern culture by placing Strauss's thought beneath a critical magnifying glass.[99] This crisis consists of the fact that the cultivated philistine (who Strauss represents and writes for) has become the cynical ideal that modern culture cultivates. Thirteen years after writing his essay on Strauss, Nietzsche said in *Beyond Good and Evil* that "the long and serious study of the *average* man" and "cynic" constitutes a "necessary part of the life history of every philosopher."[100] His study of Strauss the "philistine chieftain" would seem to constitute the part of his own philosophic history in which he understood himself to be studying an average man and cynic.[101]

Before examining Strauss's confession, however, Nietzsche pauses in the third section of the essay to reflect on what Strauss's eagerness to transform his personal beliefs into cultural standards reveals about his vanity.[102] The fact that Strauss judges his personal beliefs worthy of publication indicates that he holds himself in extraordinarily high esteem. Not only does he think these beliefs are worthy of being disseminated in print, he also thinks they are worthy of his readers' emulation. Nietzsche admits that anyone who has reached his fortieth birthday has a certain right to compose an autobiography since even

an "insignificant person" can have interesting experiences. Confessing one's *beliefs*, however, is an incomparably vainer task because it presupposes that the confessor ascribes value not merely to what he knows, but even or especially to what he opines. Scholars and historians far superior to Strauss have not overstepped their bounds and "entertain[ed] us with their beliefs rather than with their scholarly knowledge," yet Strauss considers even what he has "'half dreamily thought up'" to be worthy of public consumption.

Strauss's admiration of his own beliefs is symptomatic of what Nietzsche thinks is his underlying intellectual narcissism. Nietzsche speculates that Strauss's examination of Jesus as a cultural genius in *The Life of Jesus Critically Examined* may have led him to envision himself as a modern Jesus in *The Old and New Faith*. For Nietzsche, Strauss speaks as though he were a holy man whose thoughts, beliefs, and utterances are valuable to posterity, yet "no intelligent spirit would speak [in Strauss's] manner, least of all a true genius." A true genius, for instance, would likely refrain from explicitly referring in his writings to "my genius," as Strauss sometimes does.[103] Later in the essay, Nietzsche complains that "Strauss the genius runs through the streets [impersonating] a 'classical author' dressed in the clothes of a scantily clad goddess," and he berates Strauss for being a pretender whose "theatrics with the mask of genius inspires in us hatred and laughter."[104] As discussed in the introduction to this interpretation, Nietzsche's *Untimely Meditations* reflect his early interest in cults of genius and his concerns with the role that geniuses play in inspiring and shaping culture. Part of his motivation for attacking Strauss was that the German people hailed him as a genius, and their collective "life" was beginning to reflect Strauss's "image" of cultivated philistinism.[105] In *Schopenhauer as Educator* and *Richard Wagner in Bayreuth*, Nietzsche will present portraits of men he believes are true geniuses, and who can serve as alternative sources of ideals for German culture.[106]

Precisely because Nietzsche dreads the effect that the popular imitation of Strauss's "image" could have on Germany, he takes pains to portray Strauss as a thinker whose books have "no effect" and who is "taken by no one to be a philosopher."[107] "Imitation," he wrote in his notebooks, "is a means employed by all culture, and by this means instinct is gradually produced. […] Thus arise types which strictly imitate the first, merely similar specimens, i.e., what are copied are the greatest most powerful specimens."[108] In the person of David Strauss,

modern Germany had found its most "powerful specimen" of genius in a pretender who thought so highly of his own beliefs that he aspired to incorporate them into a new religion.[109] Although Strauss maintains that "the time does not yet appear to me to be ripe [for a new religion]" and that "it has not even crossed my mind to seek to destroy any church," Nietzsche insists that Strauss's affected modesty is merely a rhetorical device employed by a "coquettish religion founder" who secretly longs for disciples. He judged *The Old and New Faith* to be a "catechism of modern ideas" which would ravage the German spirit with a religion of cultivated philistinism if left unchecked.

Sections 4–5: The Philistine's Conception of Heaven as Easygoing Enlightenment

Nietzsche begins his critical analysis of *The Old and New Faith* by urging his readers to "preserve a certain degree of caution" when confronted with Strauss's religious zeal for cultivated philistinism.[110] Since Strauss's *Life of Jesus Critically Examined* contained a careful study of the methods of Jesus, Nietzsche suspects Strauss of being skilled in the arts of "noble, intelligent fanatics" who know how to "stimulate, elevate, and even have a historically enduring influence." Strauss's study of Jesus, in other words, has made him a master fanatic capable of wooing others to his side. The difference between Strauss and Jesus is that Jesus was (by Strauss's own account) a true cultural genius, whereas Nietzsche says that Strauss is merely an imitator and "unintelligent fanatic" whose teachings "do not stimulate, do not elevate, and [nevertheless] hold out the prospect of […] dominating the future."[111] The only way to stop the spread of this kind of fanaticism is to interrogate it with what he calls "controlling reason" and expose it as baseless. In the remainder of *DS*, Nietzsche subjects Strauss's "new faith" to precisely this kind of rational scrutiny. Despite Nietzsche's frequent criticisms of science, then, his rational critique of Strauss reveals that he is not above using science to destroy the scientific culture and redeem art. In the first Untimely Meditation, science is turned against science to debunk "faith" in science and save Germany from further decline into scientism.[112]

Nietzsche's plan is to seek answers to three lines of inquiry in his rational examination of *The Old and New Faith*.[113] First, he wants to

know how believers in the new faith conceive of their heaven since a religion's depiction of heaven exposes the character of its adherents' souls and their deepest longings (sections 4–5). After arguing that the philistine's conception of heaven reflects the baseness of the philistine soul, Nietzsche turns to a second line of inquiry which investigates the nature of the courage the new faith purports to cultivate in its believers (sections 6–7). He concludes that Strauss's attempt to found a religion for people who are intellectually, strong, courageous, and coldly scientific is an utter failure. Far from making believers intellectually or spiritually strong, the new faith's metaphysics and ethics soften the harsh conclusions of modern science instead of confronting their terrifying implications for the significance of human life.[114] Once Nietzsche has argued that the new faith is a religion for cowards who are unable to stomach the tragic conclusions of science, he concludes the essay with a third line of inquiry which examines Strauss's bad writing and what his unfortunate deification as a literary genius portends for the future of German culture (sections 8–12). "Strauss the confessor will answer the first and second questions [on heaven and courage]," Nietzsche says, "and Strauss the writer the third."

Once the plan is outlined, Nietzsche commences his first line of inquiry into the new faith's conception of heaven. Strauss's enthusiasm for modern science and materialism would appear to rule out the existence of an afterlife, but Nietzsche argues that this does not mean the new faith lacks a conception of heaven. On the contrary, it merely means that *The Old and New Faith* is likely to contain a hidden account of a "heaven on earth."[115] Nietzsche locates the "single paradisiacal page" in the book (on which Strauss describes his ideal state of "bliss") in the conclusion to the fourth chapter. The page in question contains Strauss's description of his audience as "members of the most various professions," whose greatest pleasure consists in browsing "generally comprehensible study aids," "attractively and popularly written works," and "historical studies" in the fields of politics, natural science, and music.[116] This recreational search for enlightenment gives Strauss and his readers what he calls "satisfying stimuli for the intellect and the heart," on the basis of which they can "live and go our way in bliss." The Straussian conception of heaven or paradise consists therefore in the conception of culture as amusement that Nietzsche criticized in section 3.[117] The heights of human satisfaction are achieved through a recreational pursuit of an intellectual universality which appears to cultivate the

mind, but which Nietzsche thinks produces a culture of entertainment and intellectual decay.[118] He says that the only historical study Strauss's readers actually engage in is the reading of the morning newspaper with their coffee. They claim to participate in politics and to care about "the establishment of the German state," but this is merely a euphemism for their "daily visits to the beer hall." The study aids that supposedly help them understand nature are simply their leisurely "strolls through the zoo." In contrast to the old faith's conception of heaven, which cultivated moral seriousness and turned the mind to questions about the purpose of existence, the new faith's conception makes no intellectual or spiritual demands on its adherents and they expect nothing serious or profound from it in return.

The cultivated philistines' conflation of culture with entertainment has the additional adverse effect of teaching them to dismiss true geniuses as mere entertainers. Nietzsche says that this dismissiveness reaches its absurd culmination in the two appendices of *The Old and New Faith* entitled "On Our Great Poets" and "On Our Great Musicians." Here, Strauss insouciantly criticizes some of the greatest artists in German cultural history. These criticisms are said to confirm Strauss's status as "the purest specimen of the philistine type" because they present an uncultivated man masquerading as a cultural authority, and passing critical judgment on cultural exemplars. Goethe is called talentless and unoriginal because his plays fail to make use of the "drastic, thrilling devices" needed to entertain and stimulate jaded modern audiences.[119] Beethoven's quartets are called sugarcoated "confections," and many of his greatest symphonies are accused of sounding uninspired and formless. For Nietzsche, the composers and writers Strauss discusses in his appendices are "droll apparitions" of their true selves, who "seem to us, as long as he speaks of them, to be falsely identified." Strauss's criticisms of Germany's cultural titans are made all the more offensive because he portrays *himself* as "the darling of the muses" as he levels them. The fact that the German public raises no objections to "the most wretched philistinism making such a spectacle of itself" indicates how degraded German culture has become.

On the occasions when Strauss praises cultural geniuses instead of denigrating them, his acclaim only serves to cheapen what is high. He honors Lessing as an exemplar of intellectual "universality," but Nietzsche chastises him for affiliating Lessing's comprehensive mind with the cultural dilettantism characteristic of cultivated philistines.

Nietzsche observes that Lessing did not pursue knowledge for the sake of recreation like Strauss and his readers do, but rather because he felt a "compulsion" to defend the pursuit of truth in the face of the very philistinism Strauss represents. In fact, Nietzsche thinks Lessing died too early because he spent his life engaged in "incessant" polemics with men like Strauss who failed to understand him because they took him too lightly. "How can you [philistines] possibly even think of this Lessing," he says, "whence it was precisely your numbing effect, the struggle against your ridiculous clods and gods, the deplorable state of your theaters, your scholars, your theologians, that destroyed him before he could dare even once that eternal flight which was his purpose in life?" Not only does Strauss fail to measure up to the standards of genius, but he and his type have inhibited the emergence and development of true genius for hundreds of years. Nietzsche will attempt to solve this problem in the third and fourth Untimely Meditations by outlining a plan to foster the production of new geniuses through a new understanding of culture. He previews this plan near the end of the fourth section of his essay on Strauss when he says that Germany must find a new Lessing to continue the old Lessing's fight against philistines who "have done nothing to further the life's work of your geniuses." The new faith's notion that heaven means taking serious things lightly threatens to destroy the possibility of cultural greatness both past and future. This is why Nietzsche concludes that heaven for the cultivated philistine consists in "dwelling in the works of our great poets and composers like a maggot that lives by destroying, admires by consuming, and worships by digesting."[120]

Section 6: Strauss's Uncourageous Optimism

Once the inquiry into the new faith's conception of heaven is complete, Nietzsche turns his attention to a second inquiry which examines the spiritual courage the new faith inspires in its believers.[121] The majority of the inquiry appears in an analysis of Strauss's moral teaching in the seventh section of the essay. The sixth section prepares the way for the seventh by arguing that Strauss's view of the universe is rooted in a cosmological optimism whose foundations he never proves. This optimism underpins his moral teaching and is mistaken for courage by his readers because it makes the universe appear so hospitable to human beings that courage is no longer required for life. According to Nietzsche, Strauss's

sunny view of human existence is actually a by-product of his inability to cope with the sobering conclusions of Schopenhauerian pessimism on one hand, and modern science on the other. Much of the sixth section thus consists of a Nietzschean defense of Schopenhauer and the courage his philosophy inculcates in comparison to Strauss's soul-softening optimism. Nietzsche understands Strauss's optimistic critique of Schopenhauer to be another instance in which Strauss parades before his audience as though he were a genius and "triumphant hero," flaunting his superiority to past geniuses. If the Germans take Strauss's optimistic cosmological worldview as their new religious polestar, Nietzsche fears they will become a spiritually soft people whose culture does not prepare them to reflect on—or deal with—the vagaries of human life in a hostile world.

Nietzsche's critique of Strauss's optimism begins with the observation that Strauss frequently retreats from the sobering conclusions of modern science in a way that lends his apparently hard-nosed scientism a tinge of intellectual cowardice. When Strauss outlines his conception of the universe, for instance, he characterizes it in a scientific way as an indifferent "machine made of iron toothed cogs, heavy pistons, and rods." But to avoid frightening his readers with a picture of a universe that is ultimately indifferent to their happiness, he adds the puzzling remark that the universe also consists "not merely in the movement of these pitiless cogs, but it also gushes *soothing oil*." How the universe can be an indifferent and pitiless machine that is also soothing is not explained. Strauss merely takes a pessimistic conclusion of modern science (that the universe is indifferent to human life) and gives it an optimistic spin (that the universe is also somehow comforting to human beings). He never grounds this optimism in the science he venerates, and his softening of scientific conclusions betrays what Nietzsche thinks is his intellectual cowardice.[122] Strauss retreats from the findings of astronomy when determining the nature of his attitude toward the cosmos, and instead determines it arbitrarily or emotionally by playing a school girl's game of "he loves me—he loves me not." Despite his scientific proclivities he calls the universe a generous caregiver in whose arms we should "surrender ourselves in loving trust," yet he never reconciles this conclusion with his earlier claim that the universe is an indifferent machine.[123]

Nietzsche thinks the most telling sign of the groundlessness of Strauss's optimistic portrait of the universe is the fact that he "reacts religiously" when it is challenged or questioned. Strauss attacks Schopenhauer,

for example, for "slapping our idea [of a loving cosmos] in the face" with a pessimistic view of the world, yet his attack relies more on conviction and bluster than reason. His procedure for criticizing Schopenhauer is to punish himself by reading Schopenhauer's pessimistic books, and then anesthetizing the pain these books inflict by embracing a salutary but unscientific optimism. When Schopenhauer makes a pessimistic observation that Strauss finds difficult to refute, Nietzsche says that the champion of science "reacts religiously" by "reviling [Schopenhauer], accusing him of absurdities, blasphemies, and infamies, and even pronouncing that [Schopenhauer] is out of his mind." This procedure makes Strauss appear courageous to his readers because it involves standing up to Schopenhauer, who was well-known for his own name-calling and bluster. In reality, however, it reveals that Strauss's new faith is no more scientific than the old faith it aims to replace, and is equally rooted in a longing for the world to conform to irrational hopes.

The most egregious example of Strauss anesthetizing the pain caused by Schopenhauerian pessimism by means of a questionable argument appears in the fourth chapter of *The Old and New Faith*. Here, Strauss argues that Schopenhauer's claim that "things would be better off if the world did not exist" is unthinkable. His reasoning is that a philosophy like Schopenhauer's "that declares the world to be bad, also declares itself to be bad [because it exists in the world]. But if thought that declares the world to be bad is bad thought, then the world, in fact, is good."[124] Pessimistic philosophy, in other words, denies its right to exist when it denies the world because it denies the world in which it exists. Optimistic philosophy, on the other hand, is the only kind that can be true according to Strauss because it is the only kind whose affirmation of the world justifies the activity of philosophizing. Although Nietzsche never states why he thinks Strauss's position on philosophy is full of "the most untenable sophisms," his objection seems to stem from the fact that Strauss never considers that it might be possible to maintain philosophy's goodness without maintaining at the same time the unqualified goodness of the entire world. A world which allows for the possibility of philosophy could still be judged good, even if the insights philosophy provides into human existence are not always joyful. Indeed, such a position is not far from the one Nietzsche takes in his mature writings. The pessimistic thought that man may not be able to obtain a fulfilling happiness in this world is certainly painful, but it is not necessary to conclude on the basis of this

thought (as Strauss does) that for a philosophy to be true it must come to optimistic conclusions about the nature of human existence.

In the paragraphs that remain of section 6, Nietzsche uses Strauss's regard for Kant to challenge the new faith's confidence in the authority of reason and its optimism about the possibility of knowledge. Nietzsche had planned to write his dissertation on Kant's teleology in the late 1860s, and he suggests that Strauss would have benefitted from studying that teleology and its limits in the *Critique of Pure Reason*.[125] Strauss lavishes praise on Kant at every turn, but his new faith violates the fundamental tenants of Kantian philosophy because it presumes that absolute knowledge is possible as the "hard won achievement of persistent historical and natural scientific investigations." What Strauss fails to realize, Nietzsche says, is that his faith in the authority of scientific reason is undermined by Kant's insights into "the fundamental antinomies of idealism and the extreme relativity of all knowledge and reason." A careful study of Kant's *Critique* would have eroded Strauss's faith in science by showing him "how little reason can discern about the in-itself of things." Strauss's new faith fails to provide its adherents with intellectual courage because it fails to present them with an accurate picture of the limits of reason, thereby instilling a false confidence in the certainty of science. Nietzsche blames Strauss's faith in the power of reason on the influence of Hegel. Although Strauss had long since broken with the Hegelian school, he is said to have remained "absolutely dependent" upon Hegel's optimistic theory that knowledge is possible at the end of spirit's sojourn through history.[126] This critical assessment of Hegel's historical teleology—and its corruption in the hands of thinkers like Strauss—is the subject of the second Untimely Meditation, in which Hegel is cast as the most "dangerous" cultural thinker of the nineteenth century.[127]

Section 7: Strauss's Uncourageous Ethics

According to Nietzsche, the new faith fails to cultivate courage in its believers because its spiritual architect is an intellectual coward who has placed his doctrine on an indefensible intellectual foundation. In section 6 of the essay, Strauss's optimistic theory of the universe and his unquestioned faith in reason were shown to be symptoms of his intellectual timidity. The seventh section subjects Strauss's ethical doctrine to similar criticisms and comes to a similar conclusion. The primary problem with Strauss's ethical theory is that it is inconsistent with his conception

of the universe. That account praises Darwin as one of humanity's "greatest benefactors" for discovering that the stronger members of a species are privileged by natural selection. His ethical theory, by contrast, wholly rejects privileging the strong, and this leads Nietzsche to criticize Strauss for "frivolously jumping over" his earlier Darwinian principles.[128] Instead of embracing Darwinism as the foundation for a new morality, Strauss's ethics teach that strength and individual differences are irrelevant in ethical considerations because all men have "identical needs and claims."[129] The "essence of morality," Strauss says, is that "all men are the same as you and have the same needs and demands as you." Statements like this compel Nietzsche to conclude that Strauss's ethical teaching "is constructed independently of his answer to the question: how do we conceive of the world." In other words, Strauss's ethics downplay the importance of strengths and individual differences among members of the same species, but his cosmology and biology emphasize the importance of both.[130]

Strauss could have answered Nietzsche's charges of moral inconsistency with the argument that it is neither necessary nor prudent to expect the laws of natural selection to operate smoothly in a civil society where justice is demanded. Unfortunately, he never makes this argument, and Nietzsche insists that the burden of proof remains on him to explain why his ethical theory fails to harmonize or even reckon with the otherwise Darwinian foundations of the new faith. If human beings evolved by "constantly forgetting that other creatures possess the same rights, [and] by feeling [themselves] to be the stronger," then why should they pretend that there are no differences of physical or intellectual strength among them?[131] If Strauss wants his egalitarian ethics to remain consistent with his Darwinian cosmology, Nietzsche demands that he derive the phenomena of kindness, compassion, love, and self-denial from physiological and biological premises. A more courageous thinker could use Darwin's insights to develop what Nietzsche calls "a moral code for life" that privileges the strong, but Strauss shirks from making his doctrine consistent because he does not want to frighten his audience with an ethical theory that would challenge or upset their bourgeois bliss. Instead of courageously thinking through his doctrine to its conclusion, he "shuns every occasion on which he might be required to move from words to grim earnest."

The ethical doctrine of *The Old and New Faith* culminates in the moral maxim that the men of the future should strive to live in accord

with the "*idea* of the species" in order to bring themselves into "abiding concord with the destiny of mankind."[132] European man's future depends, in other words, on the practical realization of a high human ideal. This statement is significant because Strauss contradicts his earlier claim that individual differences among members of a species are ethically irrelevant. It seems such differences are relevant after all, so relevant in fact that the highest types of human beings are ideals for the rest of the species. More significant than this, however, is what Strauss's imperative to live in accord with the "idea of the species" indicates about the structural similarity between his and Nietzsche's approaches to cultivating or elevating man. In the fourth chapter of *The Old and New Faith*, Strauss says that nature has always aimed at "an unceasingly progressive improvement" and "continuous emergence" of increasingly developed beings, especially humans.[133] Nietzsche makes a similar remark in *Schopenhauer as Educator* when he says that the goal of the human species is to evolve to "that point at which it reaches its limit and begins the transition to a higher species."[134] Both writers agree, in other words, that "nature" (whatever this term means) has been working for millennia to push humanity beyond the boundaries of the merely human. Strauss says that nature endeavored "not merely to exalt but to transcend itself" when it developed the human being because it wanted to create "something more, something better" than animals.[135] Nietzsche takes a similar position in later Untimely Meditations when he argues that nature aims at the production of philosophers, artists, and saints because these high human types go beyond mere men and are "no longer animals."[136] Even more surprising than their agreement about the malleability of human nature is their agreement about the means by which that nature should be shaped. Just as Strauss declares that men can shape themselves by living in accordance with the idea of humanity, Nietzsche encourages readers of *Schopenhauer as Educator* to "get in touch" with, and "foster the production of" what he calls the "great ideal" of the human species (i.e., geniuses like Schopenhauer).[137] Fostering the production of this ideal requires "discovering what is hostile to its development and sweeping it aside."[138] Nietzsche and Strauss seem to agree, therefore, that human nature can be gradually transformed into something higher by living in accord with a higher standard. For Nietzsche's part, this is why culture plays such an important role in human life. A people's culture cultivates them by providing a unified ideal and style of life toward which they can aspire.

Nietzsche's agreement with Strauss ends with the notion that an ideal must be posited and adhered to in order to cultivate man's nature anew and transcend his animal origins. In fact, their greatest disagreement stems from their differences concerning the character, content, and source of precisely this ideal. In the fourth chapter of *The Old and New Faith*, Strauss argues that the source of this ideal lies in modern science, democracy, and cosmopolitanism. The decline of the old faith has shown that life-promoting myths and narrow religious worldviews are no longer tenable in the age of enlightenment. Reason and research are man's only trustworthy guides to his own development. The ideal of the species is the progressive, moderately educated, democratic man—the "cultivated philistine" of Nietzsche's nightmares. Nietzsche, on the other hand, goes to great lengths in the last three Untimely Meditations to show that the source of the human ideal lies not in reason, but in world historic geniuses and their creations. The inspiring works of philosophers like Schopenhauer and artists like Wagner can help us "find ourselves" by shaping the way we think about the world or creating artistic representations of the virtues we should imitate.[139] *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* could be read as Nietzsche's own attempt to compose such a work, and doing so may account for his claim in *Ecce Homo* that the Schopenhauer and Wagner featured in the *Untimely Meditations* are "in one word, Nietzsche."[140]

Disagreements about the source of the ideal of the future lead Nietzsche and Strauss to further disagreements about its content and the precise means by which it should be realized. Nietzsche calls Strauss's imperative to live in accord with the ideal of the human species "thoroughly useless and powerless" because it is too vague to provide meaningful guidance. "Under the concept of [Strauss's] human being," Nietzsche says, "one can yoke together the most diverse and manifold things, from the Patagonian savage to Master Strauss [himself], and no one will dare to say with equal justification: 'live like a Patagonian savage!' and 'live like Master Strauss!'" The geniuses he describes in the third and fourth Untimely Meditations are the "ideal expression of the human species" he refers to in passing here. He explicitly tells readers of *Schopenhauer as Educator* that they are not geniuses, but that their task is to take practical steps to help establish the social and political conditions in Germany that will make the emergence of these ideal humans (and their creation of cultural touchstones) more likely.[141] *Richard Wagner in Bayreuth* provides a blueprint for the kind of institution Nietzsche hoped would oversee this task. Although he gradually became disillusioned with

Bayreuth, he nevertheless understood that in order for ideals to influence culture there must be an institutional pathway to their dissemination and realization.[142] Strauss, by contrast, is said to have "never learned that a concept alone can never make human beings better and more moral."

The shortcomings of Strauss's ethics and the flimsy ideal they aim to erect over Germany reinforce Nietzsche's broader argument that the new faith does not make human beings courageous enough to live in a tragic world. The concluding pages of section 7 restate this argument and indict Strauss for claiming that the universe is a "laboratory of the reasonable and good" which is ordered in an "absolutely reasonable and purposive manner, and hence embodies a revelation of eternal goodness itself."[143] Nietzsche traces Strauss's judgment of the universe as "good" to his "Hegelian devotion to the real as the reasonable."[144] Strauss falsely assumes that a universe which is rational must also be benevolent, but Nietzsche observes that Strauss's rational universe is also the source of "all ruin, all unreason, and all evil" among mankind. *The Old and New Faith* seems to overlook the destructive side of the universe so that its audience of casual scientists are not made uncomfortable by rigorous science. They are told, for example, that the universe is worthy of "religious veneration" and of being addressed by the name "God," but Strauss's conception of the universe as a "God," a "he," and a "power" to which "we should surrender ourselves in loving trust" contradicts his previous claims that the new faith's scientific awareness prevents it from conceiving of God as a "personality."[145] The new faith initially promised to liberate its adherents from the expectation of obtaining benefits from a provident God, but Nietzsche argues that in fact Strauss "does not dare tell [his audience]: I have liberated you from a compassionate and merciful God, and the universe is nothing but a rigid mechanism."[146] Instead, Strauss's fear of the science he venerates compels him to resort to "a sorceress, namely to metaphysics," and to entangle himself in scientific-religious contradictions from which there is no rational escape. The new faith retains just enough of the old faith to keep readers in "good humor" by occupying a gray area between a religion that inspires hope, and a science that demands sobriety.

In defense of Strauss's failed attempts to fuse science with metaphysics it is worth noting in conclusion that Nietzsche seems to attempt a similar fusion in the later Untimely Meditations.[147] In *Schopenhauer as Educator*, he says that nature needs philosophers—the highest type of scientific men—for a "metaphysical purpose," namely to interpret nature "in its metaphysical

meaningfulness" so that human life acquires a "sense and significance" it lacks in the absence of the philosophic transfiguration of the world.[148] In *The Use and Disadvantage of History for Life*, moreover, he concludes that modern science's attempt to understand the world "objectively" does great harm to human beings because human life requires precisely the kinds of metaphysical illusions he had earlier accused David Strauss of being unable to free himself from. Perhaps what the young Nietzsche objects to most in the writings of Strauss is not the metaphysical marriage of science and religion.[149] It is the marriage of them which, as he says in section 8, never asks itself "what a preoccupation with science bodes for the culture at large."[150]

Sections 8–12: Strauss's Writing and a Prelude to the Science of the Future

Once Nietzsche has completed his theoretical inquiries into the new faith's conception of heaven and its capacity to inspire courage, he turns in the final part of *DS* to a literary critique of Strauss's writing. Since these literary criticisms are not as important for demonstrating the unity of the *Untimely Meditations* as their theoretical counterparts, my interpretation does not treat them in depth. In general, it can be said that Nietzsche's critique of Strauss's writing is meant to provide additional evidence for his claim that Strauss is not the genius of German culture his contemporaries have mistaken him for. Five tendentious sections make the case that *The Old and New Faith* is illogically organized, that "new faith" is a misnomer because Strauss's position "has less to do with faith than with modern science," and that Strauss often oversimplifies his writing in order to gloss over subjects he does not understand.[151] The essay concludes in the twelfth section with a list of nearly seventy stylistic and grammatical errors Nietzsche claims to have identified during his reading of Strauss's book.[152] The list demonstrates Strauss's failure to master the German language, which is in turn meant to evince both the mediocrity of his mind and his inability to act as the steward of a true culture. A short aphorism in *Human, All Too Human* entitled "Improving One's Thoughts" helps illuminate Nietzsche's intention in these five sections. It states that "to improve one's style means to improve one's thoughts and nothing else!"[153] Sharp writing is a product of sharp thinking, and the same is true of clumsy writing and clumsy thinking. Schopenhauer takes up this point in his essay *On Authorship and Style*, which states that "style is the physiognomy of the mind and hence more infallible than that of the body."[154] Nietzsche follows

Schopenhauer and criticizes Strauss's style to show that the poor quality of his mind is betrayed by the poor quality of his writing.[155]

For our purposes, the most significant part of Nietzsche's criticism of Strauss's writing occurs in section 8 of the essay when he vilifies scholars and scientists for praising Strauss as a "classical" writer.[156] Strauss insists that *The Old and New Faith* is intended primarily for a popular audience, but Nietzsche reports that the book has also achieved respect in German universities where it is hailed as a "Bible" for scholars (*Gelehrten*) and scientific (*wissenschaftlich*) minds. Never one to go easy on intellectuals, Nietzsche surmises that scholars are attracted to the book because there is a "compatibility that links the class of scholarly laborers to philistine culture."[157] Like the cultivated philistines described in the second section of the essay, scientists and university scholars are said to be "tasteless, thoughtless, and aesthetically crude." The source of their crudity lies in modern science's alarming disinterest in—and inability to answer—meaningful human questions. Nietzsche says that most scientists and scholars avoid confronting difficult questions about the purpose and nature of human existence and instead prefer mind-numbing pursuits like "counting the filaments of a flower."[158] Speaking from his experience as a professor of classical philology, he calls scholarship an "affliction" and universities "factories" that are full of "exhausted laborers" producing meaningless research. The first sign that *The Old and New Faith* is a badly written book is that German scholars—with their "numbed thought organs" and stilted writing styles—hail it as a new classic.

Scholars and scientists venerate Strauss because *The Old and New Faith* reproduces their view of the world and packages it for easy public consumption. The new faith's Testament relies heavily on modern science and scholarship, which in turn makes university researchers its prophets. Nietzsche is troubled by the way the Germans have entrusted to the scholarly class "supreme judgment over all questions of culture" because he thinks that very few Germans have stopped to reflect on the question of "what a preoccupation with science [*Wissenschaften*] bodes for the culture at large." Although an explicit answer to this question is never provided, an implicit answer is contained in Nietzsche's larger criticism of *The Old and New Faith.* A preoccupation with modern science bodes ill for the culture at large because modern science does not cultivate strong, deep, or unified minds. The spiritual shallowness of scholars, the intellectual timidity of cultivated philistines, and the shortcomings

of Strauss's ethics and cosmology all demonstrate science's inability to guide or give rise to a culture that fosters a strong unity of character or artistic style. Modern science can answer questions about the universe with impressive causal explanations, but Nietzsche judges these questions to be important only to people "already certain of eternal life." When it comes to answering questions about love, justice, and other matters of pressing concern to mortals, science's sterility makes it appear awkward and even inhuman.

Given Nietzsche's criticisms of science in section 8 of the essay, it is surprising to find a cultural defense of science in this same section. The modern natural science treated in the first Untimely Meditation, and the modern historical science treated in the second, are inadequate foundations for culture because they fail to cultivate or unify, yet the inadequacy of modern science does not mean that science as such is culturally impotent. On the contrary, Nietzsche thinks a properly constituted science could invigorate culture instead of ruining it. "What is science [*Wissenschaft*] supposed to be *at all*," he says, "if it has no time for culture? Please tell us at least where science is going, whence it is coming, and what its purpose if not to *pave the way* for culture?"[159] The character and activity of a science that paves the way for culture instead of obstructing culture is not elaborated in the first Untimely Meditation. Subsequent chapters of this book will argue that Nietzsche's intention in the final three essays is to sketch the broad outlines of precisely such a science. This new science—which appears in the form of a new kind of philosophy—takes its bearings from older philosophy, history, and art.[160] It does not directly create culture, but it provides the insights that shape the art, literature, and music that do. A notebook entry written the year before Nietzsche published the first Untimely Meditation describes the purpose and limits of a philosophic science that would promote culture instead of inhibiting it. The entry appears in the context of an analysis of the cultural power of the pre-Socratic philosophers, and it employs the same language used in the Strauss piece:

Result: philosophy cannot create a culture
but it can pave the way for one
or sustain one
or moderate one.

> *For us*: this is why the philosopher is the supreme tribunal for the schools: paves the way for genius: for we have no culture. […]
>
> Culture can always only issue from the centralizing significance of an art form or a work of art. Philosophy unwittingly will pave the way for the view of the world propagated by this work of art.[161]

The chapters that follow suggest that *Schopenhauer as Educator* and *Richard Wagner in Bayreuth* reconceptualize the meaning of philosophic science by reestablishing the relationship between philosophy, culture, and art in the manner Nietzsche alludes to here.[162] These two published essays make self-conscious or witting a power of philosophy which the aforementioned notebook entry states has been "unwitting" heretofore.[163] "The philosopher should *recognize what is needed*," Nietzsche says in another entry, "and the artist should *create it*."[164] Nietzsche's reconceptualization of philosophy will illustrate how a philosopher like Schopenhauer can unwittingly pave the way for an artist and culture creator like Wagner, who was heavily influenced by Schopenhauerian pessimism.[165] David *Strauss the Confessor and the Writer* lays the groundwork for this new conception of philosophy by arguing that modern science is not sensitive enough to the demands of human life to serve as a steward of true culture. True culture promotes life and even welcomes the delusions that science purports (but often fails) to dispel. It requires a unity of artistic style forged through a unity of artistic and philosophic genius, but German culture is not a true culture and David Strauss is not a true genius.

Notes

1. *EH*, Wise 7; Young (2010, 168).
2. *BT* 12–15. Nietzsche continued to employ this method in his later writings, using men like Wagner, Schopenhauer, and Jesus as expressions of decadence and nihilism. See *DS* 2 for Nietzsche's claim that German culture represents "the modern as such." See Taylor (1997, 5) for an analysis of Socrates's role in *The Birth of Tragedy*. Golder (1990, 5–6) argues that Nietzsche's attack on Strauss was intended as a critique of German culture more broadly.
3. *EH*, Wise 7. Nietzsche says that the book had gone through six editions by the time he published his essay on it.
4. *EH*, Books, Untimelies 1.

5. Schaburg (1996). Also see Gray (1995, 407), who observes that Nietzsche devotes by far the most space to *DS* in *Ecce Homo*, but *DS* is "largely ignored by Nietzsche scholars."
6. *DS* 3.
7. *EH*, Books, Untimelies 2.
8. Strauss (1997, 1).
9. *DS* 1.
10. *TI*, Germans 1 and 4.
11. Ibid.
12. Large (2012, 90), Gray (1995, 401–402), Golder (1990, 4–5), and Young (2010, 168).
13. Gray (1990, 402).
14. Breazeale (1990, xix).
15. Ibid., xviii–xxiii. Breazeale observes that some of these notes found their way into *Schopenhauer as Educator*.
16. Ibid., 3. In another note from this period, Nietzsche concluded that "the sum total of Greek culture" and "the whole of Greek history" could be understood as "the reflection of the image which shines forth from its greatest luminaries."
17. Ibid., 49–50.
18. For a history of the development of the "cult of genius" theories in the 1830s and Strauss's contribution to them, see Massey (1983, 114–141). Massey shows that the third edition of Strauss's *Life of Jesus* made a substantial contribution to the notion of the "cult of genius." In fact, Nietzsche's concern with the power and cultural potential of genius is highly derivative of Strauss's thought. In *DS*, Nietzsche turns the conception of genius featured in the third edition of Strauss's *Life of Jesus* against him in order to illustrate that Strauss is not the genius his own works venerate.
19. *DS* 3.
20. *DS* 7.
21. *EH*, Wise, 7; *DS* 10.
22. For a comprehensive treatment of Strauss's life and thought, see Harris (1973).
23. Barth (1959, 364–365).
24. See Massey (1983) for a thorough overview of *The Life of Jesus Critically Examined* and its place in German intellectual history.
25. For an overview of Strauss's philosophical context, see Beiser (2014, 22–27). Massey (1983, 19; 64; 104) has explicated Strauss's relationship to Hegel.
26. Strauss (1872, 776).

27. Massey (1983, 126–133) gives a thorough overview of Strauss's conception of Jesus as a genius in the third edition of *The Life of Jesus*. It is fruitful to compare her portrait of Strauss's ideal genius to Nietzsche's descriptions of the genius in *SE* and *RW*.
28. Strauss (1997, 41–42); Massey (1983, 14).
29. For an account of Bauer's response to Strauss, see Landry (2011, 4–5). Also see Massey (1983, 89-12).
30. Young (2010, 56–57).
31. *HL* 7.
32. See Taylor (1997, 74–75, 78) for an account of the life-promoting role of myth in Nietzsche's early thought. Also see Young (2010, 170) and Massey (1983, 13–17) for accounts of Strauss's attitude toward myth.
33. Strauss (1997, 9–10).
34. Ibid., 107.
35. Ibid., 108–115.
36. Ibid., 161.
37. Ibid., 10.
38. Ibid., 10, 124.
39. Ibid., 164.
40. *DS* 6–7.
41. Strauss (1997, 205). Darwin had a wide reception in Germany. See Kelly (1981) and Engels and Glick (2008).
42. Strauss (1997, 34). There are several important similarities (and differences) between Nietzsche's view of nature and Strauss's.
43. Ibid., vol. 2, 19.
44. Beiser (2014, 15–45, 53–89). The materialism controversy and the epistemological crisis it caused prompted Nietzsche to reexamine the possibility of knowledge—and indeed the meaning of "nature" itself—in *Schopenhauer as Educator*.
45. Strauss's account of the universe bears many similarities to that of philosopher Herman Lotze, although Lotze's teleological idealism held that the universe had a purpose, whereas Strauss's cosmological conception did not.
46. Strauss (1997, 12).
47. *DS* 2.
48. Strauss (1997, vol. 2, 52–54).
49. See *SE* 5–6. Yack (1986, 317) argues that "Nietzsche's indignation at the existence of the *Bildungsphilister* expresses something more than an aesthete's longing for great art and cultural genius. It expresses a longing to overcome what appears to be the pervasive dehumanization of man."
50. Strauss (1997, 5).
51. Ibid., 3.

52. *BGE*, Preface.
53. See Strauss (1997, 3–4).
54. Ibid., 3.
55. Ibid., 4.
56. Ibid., 119.
57. Ibid., 11.
58. Ibid., 7.
59. *GS* 343, and the title of *HA*.
60. *BGE*, Preface, 44, 203, 23, and the title of the sixth and seventh main parts.
61. *SE* 1, 5, 8; HL 10. Also consider Nietzsche's frequent appeals to the youth in *HL*.
62. It is tempting to infer that Nietzsche borrowed his plan to address his writings to a group of "free-spirits" or a "We" from David Strauss, especially since free spirits are not mentioned in *The Birth of Tragedy*. There is evidence, however, that Nietzsche flirted with the idea of gathering together a Nietzschean "we" at least a year before he read about Strauss's "we" in *The Old and New Faith*. In his lectures *On the Future of Our Educational Institutions* delivered in Basel in March of 1872, Nietzsche discusses and praises the *Burschenschaft* student associations that formed in the German universities in the wake of the Wars of Liberation. These associations took the form of secret societies whose aim was to revive the German spirit, and Nietzsche laments that these associations "did not find the leader they needed," and that "there was in all of them a lack of overshadowing genius in their midst." He says that this lack of leadership ultimately led the *Burschenschaft* societies to perish from a lack of purpose and organization (*EI*, 114–117). As I show in my interpretations of the second and third Untimely Meditations, the young Nietzsche seems to have fancied establishing himself as the intellectual leader of a group of ambitious youths with similar longings to those that found their expression the *Burschenschaft* societies. His lectures on the German educational institutions (written well before the essay on David Strauss) represent his first attempt to invite these youths to consider his philosophic ideas. Since Nietzsche's letters indicate that he did not read David Strauss's book until February of 1873 (nearly a year after the education lectures were delivered in the spring of 1872), he does not appear to have borrowed the idea of establishing himself as the leader of a "we" from Strauss. If anything, Nietzsche wanted his "we" to counteract Strauss's for fear of what Germany might become under the influence of Strauss and his followers. It is also worth noting that it was Richard Wagner who first persuaded Nietzsche to read Strauss, and that Wagner harbored his own

well-known ambitions to establish a cultural cult or "we" at Bayreuth. Although Wagner and Strauss's respective plans to gather their followers together must have influenced the young Nietzsche, he seems to have had his own project in mind long before he decided to discuss theirs in the first and fourth *Untimely Meditations.*

63. *DS* 8.
64. *SE* 7.
65. See the opening lines of *DS* 3, 4, and 8 for Nietzsche's account of the organization of the essay.
66. *DS* 7. Large (2012, 91) calls Strauss the "prize specimen of what [Nietzsche] means by the "Bildungsphilister."
67. *DS* 8.
68. *DS* 2–3.
69. Ibid.
70. *DS* 11.
71. *EH*, Books, Untimelies 1.
72. All quotations in this section appear in *DS* 1 unless otherwise noted.
73. *DS* 1, 12.
74. Thucydides (1998, 4.65.3). Also see TI, Ancients 2.
75. *DS* 1, 7; cf. HL 8.
76. Taylor (1997, 69) explains how the French have been culturally victorious over the Germans because the Germans have always drawn the model for their culture from the French.
77. *HL* 1–3; Taylor (1997, 73).
78. Taylor (1997, 68–69).
79. See *TI*, Germans 4.
80. Ibid. When the older Nietzsche predicted in *Ecce Homo* that "the notion of politics" would one day "completely dissolve into a spiritual war," he seems to have had in mind the sorts of spiritual or cultural conflicts he is concerned with in his essay on Strauss (see EH, Destiny 1). Also see Abbey (1998, 92–95).
81. Strauss (1997, 119, 7).
82. The meaning of the term "culture" in Nietzsche's writing is a subject of much scholarly debate. See Yack (1986, 338): "Without a shared conception of meaningful forms, culture becomes the knowledge of culture which, Nietzsche complains, replaces real culture in the modern world." Taylor (1997, 66–67): "In the broadest sense, *Kultur* for Nietzsche is similar to, if less inclusive than, 'civilization.' McGinn (1975, 78): "[culture is] either an aspect of or identical with a social unit's Geist, and as such, manifested itself in various forms of human activity." Also see Church (2015, 83–206).

83. See Taylor (1997, 70): "Here Nietzsche identifies *Kultur* with 'unity of style,' a condition exemplified by the presence of harmony, coherence, and proportion in the external manifestations of a people—in their architecture, customs, apparel, mores, art, and language. Nietzsche assumes that many premodern cultures were distinguished by this condition. Such unity, he implies, was the product of a people's capacity to develop and sustain a fairly limited et of artistic and cultural forms […]." Also see Leddy (1995, 554–556) for an account of how the term "unity of style" should be understood in the context of the cultivated philistine.
84. *BT*, Self-Criticism 4.
85. Yack (1986, 325) and Taylor (1997, 70) make similar observations.
86. All quotations in this section appear in *DS* 2 unless otherwise noted.
87. *TSZ*, Prologue 5. Yack (1986, 313–322) also argues that the outlines of the last man are visible in the first Untimely Meditation.
88. *EH*, Wise 7.
89. This statement reinforces Nietzsche's remark in part one that although delusions "can be of the most salutary and blessed nature" because they make a certain sort of cultivation possible, they can also be harmful to cultivation. To put the problem another way: not all delusions can be said to be life-promoting because delusions about one's culture (the latter of which is responsible for producing life-promoting delusions among a people) are life denying.
90. *TSZ*, Prologue 5. Yack (1986, 317) argues that "modern culture produces the *Bildungsphilister* as its crowning achievement."
91. See Nietzsche's remarks on the "alpine" man in *HL* 1. Also see *SE* 1 for Nietzsche's remarks on the cultivation of the mind.
92. For an elaboration of this point, see Yack (1986, 314–315; 340). I consider Nietzsche's relationship to Hegel more fully in my interpretation of *HL*.
93. *HL* 8.
94. Hegel (1991, 20; 379–380) and Young (2010, 169).
95. Vischer's aesthetics attempted to apply Hegel's dialectic to art. For an account of Vischer's significance and Strauss's relationship to him, see Yack (1986, 316) and Massey (1983, 64–68).
96. See my interpretation of *HL* for a brief account of the historical context of this movement. Also see Beiser (2014 and 2015).
97. Strauss (1997, 119).
98. *DS* 2.
99. *EH*, Wise 7.
100. *BGE* 26. In this aphorism, Nietzsche says that the study of "cynics" can provide shortcuts for philosophers who wish to acquaint themselves

with average men. In *DS* he calls Strauss's book a "cynical philistine confession."

101. Nietzsche calls Strauss the "philistine chieftain" in *DS* 6 and 7.
102. All quotations in this section appear in *DS* 3 unless otherwise noted.
103. *DS* 10.
104. Ibid.
105. Breazeale (1990, xix; xviii–xxiii; 3; 49–50).
106. See *SE* 4 where Nietzsche discusses how Rousseau, Goethe, and Schopenhauer have provided images for culture.
107. See the final sentences of *DS* 3. At first Nietzsche simply declares that Strauss's writings have no effect, but then he immediately prescribes a regimen for reading Strauss's latest book in order to insure that it has no effect. The regimen confirms Nietzsche's fear that Strauss's writings will have a catastrophic effect if they go unopposed.
108. Breazeale (1990, 49).
109. Consider Nietzsche's claim in *Ecce Homo* that: "there is nothing in me of a founder of religions—religions are for the rabble; I need to wash my hands after contact with religious people…I don't *want* any 'disciples': I think I am too malicious to believe in myself; I never address crowds…I have a terrible fear of being declared *holy* one day […]" (*EH*, Destiny 1).
110. All quotations in this section appear in *DS* 4–5.
111. Massey (1983, 115).
112. Nietzsche employs a similar approach in the second Untimely Meditation when he argues that the Germans must use history to save German culture from further decline into historicism. See *HL* 2–3, 8–9.
113. When reading Nietzsche's critique of *The Old and New Faith*, it is worth considering whether his attack on Strauss's new faith means that he understands himself to be a defender of the old ones (he indicates in section 9 that there are multiple old faiths).
114. See Golder (1990, 8–14) for an account similar to the one I present.
115. See Leddy (1995, 561) for a similar account of how Strauss understands heaven.
116. Strauss (1997, vol. 2, 119).
117. Yack (1986, 315) gives a similar interpretation of this passage.
118. See Leo Strauss (1988, 236; 1989, 5).
119. Many of David Strauss's harshest criticisms of German artists invoke those of literary critic Georg Gervinus, whose *Geschichte der Deutschen Dichtung* featured heavy reproaches of Goethe and Schiller. Nietzsche treats Gervinus as another exemplar of cultivated philistinism, and in *The Birth of Tragedy* he judges him musically and culturally incompetent. See *BT* 21–22.

120. *DS* 6.
121. All quotations in this section appear in *DS* 6 unless otherwise noted.
122. Taylor (1997, 75) explains Nietzsche's claim that science erects its own optimistic illusions on the ruins of myth.
123. Strauss (1997, 161–168).
124. Strauss (1997, 167).
125. The notes for the dissertation have been collected and translated under the title "On the Concept of the Organic in Kant." See Padderborn (2010, 86–110).
126. See Leo Strauss's remarks on Nietzsche's relationship to "decayed Hegelianism" (1989, 25). David Strauss is perhaps guilty of thinking that infinite future progress is possible.
127. *HL* 8. Nietzsche's remarks on Kant, Hegel, and the limits of reason are important for understanding not only the unity of the *Untimely Meditations*, but the unity of his philosophic project as a whole. Their significance stems from what they reveal about his early view of the possibility (or rather the impossibility) of knowledge. In all four Meditations, to say nothing of his unwritten dissertation, Nietzsche was exploring problems with the relativity of knowledge and the status of teleology that would animate much of his later thought. See Leo Strauss (1989, 25–26). Also consider the will to power hypothesis in *BGE* 36, the claim in *BGE* 9 that philosophy is "the most spiritual will to power, to the creation of the world," and the claim in *BGE* 6 that all philosophy is the "personal confession" of its author. The Meditation on history grapples with the intellectually paralyzing effects of the "extreme relativity of all knowledge" when it affirms the "true but deadly" doctrines of "sovereign becoming" and of the "fluidity of all concepts, types, and species" (*HL* 9). In many ways, Nietzsche's criticisms of Strauss and Hegel constitute his first exploration of what he would later call the "historical sense" (*BGE* 224). The Meditation on Schopenhauer adds to this narrative by hinting at the possibility of non-teleological conceptions of nature and philosophy that are strikingly consistent with statements made about these themes in books like *Beyond Good and Evil* (*SE* 5; *BGE* 6, 9, 36). The Meditation on Wagner even goes so far as to claim that "the most important question in all of philosophy is the extent to which things possess an unalterable nature and form" (*RW* 3). If Nietzsche found a partial solution to this question in the doctrine of the will to power, the *Untimely Meditations* may mark the most nascent stages of the development of that doctrine.
128. All quotations in this section appear in *DS* 7.
129. Strauss (1997, vol. 2, 51–55).
130. Young (2010, 170).

131. This is Nietzsche's paraphrasing of Strauss and Darwin.
132. Strauss (1997, vol. 2, 51–54).
133. Ibid., (1997, vol 2, 55).
134. *SE* 5.
135. Strauss (1997, vol. 2, 57).
136. *SE* 5.
137. *SE* 5.
138. Ibid.
139. *SE* 1.
140. *EH*, Books, Untimelies 1.
141. See Nietzsche's remarks on the ordinary person's relationship to the genius in *SE* 5: "we are not those human beings toward which all of nature presses onward for its own salvation."
142. Also see *SE* 5–6 where Nietzsche describes the "chain of fulfillable duties" that will lead to the production of the genius.
143. Strauss (1997, 161–168).
144. See *DS* 2 for Nietzsche's other Hegelian criticism of Strauss.
145. Strauss (1997, 161–168) and Young (2010, 170).
146. See Strauss (1997, 168) for Strauss's claim that he has "severed" himself from the old concept of God.
147. See Löwith (1964, 186): "Nietzsche's 'atheism' also underwent readjustment and finally proclaimed a new faith."
148. See *SE* 5.
149. The older Nietzsche would have objected more fervently to this marriage. See his "Attempt at Self-Criticism" in the *Birth of Tragedy*.
150. *DS* 8.
151. *DS* 9–10.
152. *DS* 12.
153. *HA*, Wanderer 131.
154. Schopenhauer, *On Authorship and Style*, sec. 282. Large (2012, 92) understands the significance of Nietzsche's criticisms of Strauss's writing in a similar way.
155. Nietzsche's critique of Strauss's writing is also meant to illustrate the decay of the German nation. Fichte observed in his 1808 Addresses to the German Nation that language has an "immeasurable influence on the whole human development" because it "unites within its domain the whole mass of men who speak it into one single and common understanding." When a people's language is alive and appreciated, Fichte said that a "spiritual culture influences life "which cultivates a unified national worldview. When a people's language is decaying, on the other hand, spiritual or intellectual culture fails to cultivate a common worldview and a "nation" exists only in name. Nietzsche thought

Strauss's writing style embodied the decay of the German nation because Strauss was praised as a classical writer even though his language lacked the beauty of a classic.

156. All quotations in the remainder of this section appear in *DS* 8 unless otherwise noted. Large (2012, 91) argues that section 8 is "the heart of [*DS*]" because it features Nietzsche's strongest objections to Strauss's attempt to turn science into a religion.
157. Taylor (1997, 68) identifies cultivated philistines, the scientific class, the commercial capitalist class, and the state as the four common enemies of true culture in Nietzsche.
158. See *BGE*, "We Scholars" for an expansion of the criticisms featured here. Also see Taylor (1997, 75): "As such, science can only ask and answer questions about empirical phenomena. Science does not even touch on life's most importance matters […] much less provide them with answers. Moreover, science cannot provide mankind with *goals* […]."
159. The second set of italics are mine. See *HL* 1: "History, conceived as a pure science and accorded sovereignty, would be for humanity a kind of conclusion to life and a settling of accounts."
160. Taylor (1997, 77) also identifies an artistic redemption of science in the early Nietzsche.
161. *UPW* 120, [23] 14. Cf. Nietzsche's remark on the pre-Socratic philosopher Empedocles in *SE* 3.
162. For additional support for this point, see the notebook entries in Breazeale (1992, 19). Golder (1990, 3–4) also connects Nietzsche project in *DS* to his work on pre-Socratic philosophy.
163. See Taylor (1997, 81–83) for a similar argument.
164. Breazeale (1992, 8).
165. It is even suggested that Wagner philosophizes through art in *RW* 9.

CHAPTER 3

The Use and Disadvantage of History for Life

Introduction: Nietzsche's Critique of Scientific and Philosophic History

In *Ecce Homo*, Nietzsche says that during his lifetime the first Untimely Meditation was the most successful of the four essays.[1] The second Meditation, however, is by far the most widely read today. Compared to *David Strauss the Confessor and the Writer*, scholarship on *The Use and Disadvantage of History for Life* (*HL*) is abundant.[2] It is all the more surprising, then, that most scholars continue to read it as a stand-alone piece instead of the second part of a tetralogy. The following chapter attempts to provide new insight into a well-studied work by considering it in light of its prequel and in anticipation of its two sequels.

Many recent interpretations of the second Untimely Meditation rightly focus on its rich critique of nineteenth-century German historicism.[3] The interpretation that follows takes a different approach by concentrating instead on those aspects of that critique that develop the broader critique of German culture begun in *David Strauss the Confessor and the Writer*. Of particular interest on this score is the contribution historical education makes to the cultivation of the human type Nietzsche dubbed the "cultivated philistine" in the essay on Strauss.[4] The cultivated philistine makes a second appearance in *HL*, this time in the context of a critique which claims that historical education's purpose (like David Strauss's) is to cultivate "the historically and aesthetically cultivated philistine, the quickly dated up-to-date babbler about the state,

S. Brooks, *Nietzsche's Culture War*, Recovering Political Philosophy,
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the church, and art."[5] One of the richest insights gleaned from reading the second Untimely Meditation in the context of the first is that the improper study of history is among the principal causes of the cultivated philistinism exemplified by David Strauss.[6] This connection between the two essays paves the way for the broader themes of the second Meditation, which elaborate the ways in which history's proper study can provide a partial remedy for cultivated philistinism. More than any other published work from Nietzsche's early period, *The Use and Disadvantage of History for Life*, therefore, presents a philosopher providing the services of a "cultural physician."[7]

Criticism of the cultivated philistine is not the only point of intersection between the first and second essays. David Strauss was a historian of theology whose most famous book, *The Life of Jesus Critically Examined*, is precisely the kind of scientific history Nietzsche criticizes in *HL* for being destructive to culture and life. As discussed in the introduction to the second chapter of this volume, Strauss argues in *The Life of Jesus Critically Examined* that the accounts of Jesus's miraculous deeds in the Gospels were not miraculous at all, but could be explained scientifically by way of natural occurrences and textual embellishments. In the seventh section of *HL*, Nietzsche implicitly references Strauss when he decries the manner in which scientific history is being used by contemporary scholars to rationalize and debunk what was once thought to be divine revelation. "A religion that is supposed to be understood scientifically through and through," he says, "will be destroyed as soon as it reaches this goal."[8] One of the primary causes Nietzsche cites for the erosion of religious belief in the nineteenth century is that "every historical audit always brings to light so much falsehood, coarseness, inhumanity, absurdity, and violence that the pious atmosphere of illusion, in which everything that wants to live is actually capable of life, vanishes."[9] He concludes his veiled reference to Strauss's work with the observation that Christianity has become blasé and uninspiring under the influence of recent "historicizing treatment" and "dissection."[10]

Be this as it may, David Strauss is not the only (or perhaps even the primary) scientific historian whose work Nietzsche is attacking in *HL*. Anthony Jensen and Frederick Beiser have shown that the scientific and philosophic history he criticizes emerged in part as a reaction to the rise of the empirical sciences in German universities in the mid-nineteenth century.[11] As natural science and mathematics began to develop and ascend to the seat of intellectual power in Germany, the discipline of

history lost its epistemological confidence and sense of purpose among intellectuals.[12] According to Beiser, the broader movement known as "historicism" is the counterpart of naturalism because it "grew out of an attempt to create a science of the human world on par with the sciences of the natural world."[13] Philosophic historicism appeared when philosophers of history like Fichte, Schelling, and Hegel seemed to enhance history's scientific credentials by proposing that it serve as the handmaiden of philosophy. In truth, however, these philosophers of history actually enfeebled the discipline of history because they made historiography's value dependent upon its utility for philosophic interpretation. The particulars of the past of concern to historians were deemed inconsequential unless they could be transformed by superior minds into matters of universal or metaphysical significance. Making matters worse for the discipline of history was the fact that the philosophy of history employed a priori and speculative methods of historical interpretation that failed to measure up to the rigorous epistemological standards made fashionable by the empirical sciences of the day.

To rescue the discipline of history from the threats of philosophic subservience on one hand, and epistemological obscurity on the other, historians like Barthold Georg Niebuhr, Leopold von Ranke, Henry Thomas Buckle, Johan Gustav Droysen, and Theodor Mommsen attempted to legitimate history as a science in its own right.[14] Although these thinkers disagreed about the precise form this legitimation should take, they were united in their view that the discipline of history could only become scientific by adopting standards of inquiry similar to those used in the empirical sciences.[15] If historians could make exacting use of original sources, investigate these sources for authenticity, and present historical facts free from subjective moral judgments, then the discipline of history could claim to relate the past scientifically, and therefore as it really happened.[16] Nietzsche rarely names the aforementioned thinkers in *HL*, nor does he bother to elaborate the nuances of their work or their philosophic disagreements.[17] In typical fashion, he lumps nineteenth-century historicists together under the banner of scientific history and attacks their normative claim that it would be good for history to become a scientific discipline. For him, scientific history in all its forms impedes human living and striving because it prohibits historiographers from capturing the sublime and aspirational aspects of the past that could inspire the men of the future to live, and not merely to learn.[18]

Although Nietzsche was a harsh critic of scientific history, his criticisms of it do not imply that he was a proponent of its rival or alternative, the philosophy of history.[19] On the contrary, he is as critical of philosophers of history like Hegel and Hartmann as he is of their scientific opposition. In section 8 of *HL*, Nietzsche accuses Hegel of ushering in "the most dangerous deviation or turn in German cultivation [*Bildung*] this century." Hegel's claim that human spiritual development had reached its apex in the mid-1800s meant that the modern culture Nietzsche despised was—for Hegel—the crowning achievement of a millennia-long world historical process. Nietzsche charged Hegel with impeding vigorous human life because his philosophy of history argued that contemporary humanity was "the true meaning and purpose of all previous historical events."[20] Grand intellectual, artistic, and political ambition were implicitly discouraged by Hegel's claim that history had already achieved its highest goal in the modern German state.[21] Hegelianism thus sapped young university students of their motivation to live great lives because it taught them that the great spiritual battles of humankind had already been fought, and that the struggles of past peoples had been undertaken for the sake of a free but complacent present. In Nietzsche's view, followers of Hegel could only aspire to become scholarly connoisseurs of past great thoughts who were incapable of thinking them, or historical disciples of past great deeds who were incapable of doing them. Hegel's philosophy was "the most dangerous deviation" in German culture in the nineteenth century because it turned contemporary human beings into the infertile offspring of bygone fertile cultures whose fecundity could be marveled at—but not imitated—from the vantage point of the end of history.

In *HL*, Nietzsche therefore comes to sight as a critic of both "*Historie*" understood as the scientific study of history by "*Historiker*" in academic departments, and "*Geschichte*" as it is used to describe the German tradition of "*Geschichtsphilosophie*."[22] This twofold criticism may explain why he uses these two German terms for history interchangeably throughout the essay.[23] Furthermore, Nietzsche's dual criticism has the practical effect of leaving his readers hungry for an alternative method of approaching history. This alternative would explicate the ways in which history and historiography could be practiced to enhance human "life" instead of paralyzing it with knowledge, as scientific and philosophic history have done.

Whatever this alternative approach to history may be, it would seem above all to demand a robust prerequisite account of what "life" is.

Unfortunately—but perhaps intentionally—no such account is contained in *HL*. The closest Nietzsche comes to defining "life" is in the essay's third section, when he says in the context of his discussion of critical history that "life" is "that dark, driving, insatiable power that lusts after itself."[24] Immediately following this remark he adds that when "life" passes judgment on history, it is "always merciless, always unjust because it has never flowed from the pure fountain of knowledge."[25] Although it is difficult to say what "life" ultimately means for the young Nietzsche, we know that it always wants itself to persist, that the source of its drive to persist is mysterious, that its desire for its own persistence is not limited by a respect for moral law, and—perhaps most importantly—that life does not privilege knowledge as a standard in the evaluation of life itself (as scientific and philosophic history do). In sum, life seems constantly but mysteriously to yearn to discharge itself on the world using whatever means are necessary to enhance itself and ensure its continuation. It is impious, ambitious, and perhaps even erotic in character insofar as it lusts for itself at any cost—even at the cost of turning on others, or, paradoxically, itself. Eight years after writing *HL*, Nietzsche provided the following definition of "life" in *The Gay Science*:

> Life—that is: continually shedding something that wants to die. Life—that is: being cruel and inexorable against everything about us that is growing old and weak—and not only about *us*. Life—that is, then: being without reverence for those who are dying, who are wretched, who are ancient? Constantly being a murder?—And yet old Moses said: "Thou shalt not kill."[26]

"Life," it would seem, is only as vigorous as it is disrespectful, deadly, and in some cases life-denying. This definition of life will be born out in *HL* when Nietzsche argues in its second and third sections that history written in the service of life is often anything but just or compassionate toward those who lived in the past. Ultimately, however, Nietzsche may use the term "life" ambiguously in *HL* because he sees that one must be alive in order to demand a definition of life, in which case the demander already has more profound access to what life is than a written definition could provide. Readers who insist that he provide a definition of life may not be alive in the most important Nietzschean sense, otherwise they would need no definition. A life which demands a definition of life betrays a life which has lost its sense for its own deepest purpose

and is, therefore, a life in decline. This is why Nietzsche reveals in the tenth and final section of *HL* that the essay is addressed, above all, to the youth.[27]

Interpretation of *The Use and Disadvantage of History for Life*

The interpretation that follows addresses why and how Nietzsche thinks that history properly used can promote a culture that enhances life. It begins with an analysis of the foreword and the first section of *HL*, in which he explains why he both thinks and feels that the study of history in the nineteenth century is a superfluous intellectual activity that has paralyzed the German spirit. The crux of his argument centers on his claim that an antithesis exists between knowledge and life, or between truth and illusion, which must be managed and prudently balanced by culture. Too much historical knowledge is harmful to human beings because it overwhelms them with an almost infinite number of ways of living and thinking, whose standards they cannot adjudicate. Scientific and philosophic history neither understand nor respect this antithesis between knowledge and life. As a result, they have unknowingly made fashionable an endless pursuit of historical knowledge which has cultivated a generation of ironic epigones and cultivated philistines who have no actions or achievements to show for their learnedness. These observations lead Nietzsche to declare that human beings must live beneath an "ahistorical" horizon in order to thrive. It is culture's responsibility to create, cultivate, and curate this ahistorical horizon.[28]

Once Nietzsche's position on the proper measure of history and knowledge has been clarified, the interpretation turns to an analysis of sections 2–3 of *HL* in which he describes history's proper use. In these sections, Nietzsche elaborates three modes of using and writing history that he calls the monumental, critical, and antiquarian modes.[29] All three of these modes can be used by culture to promote human life and activity, or they can be abused and overused by it to trigger spiritual sickness and degeneration. The majority of my interpretation of these sections focuses on Nietzsche's description of the three modes of history and his account of the various cultural conditions in which it is appropriate to utilize each. The analysis attempts to clarify not only the relationship of the three modes of history to one another, but also—and

more importantly—their potential uses and abuses in Nietzsche's own historically sick time. I argue that when Nietzsche's descriptions of the three modes of history are read in the context of his critique of German historicism in the nineteenth century, the historical sickness he diagnoses in his countrymen manifests itself as a distinctively antiquarian sickness. In Nietzsche's description of antiquarian history, he says that when it is misused or overindulged it promotes a scholarly study of history that is more concerned with the collection of historical knowledge than the promotion of life. This is precisely the ailment from which he says nineteenth-century German culture suffers in later sections of *HL*. I also argue that Nietzsche thinks the antiquarian degeneration of his culture can be cured by a generous application of monumental history, which promotes the active and productive virtues that he says his own time lacks. This monumental cure cannot be administered, however, until the present nineteenth-century antiquarian culture has been destroyed by the third mode of history, which Nietzsche calls the critical mode. To this end, I argue that *The Use and Disadvantage of History for Life* is itself an example of critical history. Its purpose is to destroy German antiquarian culture and pave the way for a new monumental culture that will cultivate a new human nature. In order to ground these claims firmly in the text, I examine statements Nietzsche makes in sections 4–9 of *HL* which indicate that the German historical sickness he diagnoses has arisen on account of the abuse of antiquarian history by historical science.

In the concluding pages of the interpretation, I analyze the enigmatic "parable" about ancient Greek culture that appears in the tenth and final section of *HL*. Nietzsche claims that when this parable is properly understood, it provides a blueprint for the cure to the historical sickness that has ravaged German culture and life. The parable begins by stating that the ancient Greeks once suffered from a historical sickness similar to that from which nineteenth-century Germans suffer. According to Nietzsche, the Greeks managed to cure this sickness by heeding the Delphic imperative to "know thyself," which in turn helped them erect a closed horizon of uniquely Greek culture that fulfilled their "genuine needs" and made them "the first cultured people."[30] It is not a coincidence that the subject of the cryptic final section of *HL* is the relationship of self-knowledge to culture. The subject of the first section of *HL*'s sequel, *Schopenhauer as Educator*, is also the relationship of self-knowledge to culture. My interpretation of the final section of *HL,* therefore, concludes that Nietzsche intended *Schopenhauer as Educator* to be a

handbook for understanding the meaning of the parable that appears at the end of *The Use and Disadvantage of History for Life*. Once Nietzsche accomplishes the critical task of destroying German culture in the first two Untimely Meditations on David Strauss and German historicism, he sets about erecting German culture anew in the last two by composing monumental histories of Arthur Schopenhauer and Richard Wagner that are meant to inspire and facilitate the emergence of the cultural geniuses of the future.

Foreword and Section 1: The Depiction of a Feeling as a Universal Law

The Use and Disadvantage of History for Life is the only Untimely Meditation that begins with a foreword. It is the only Untimely Meditation, in other words, whose content Nietzsche was compelled to prepare his readers to read. Preparation is required because the essay's most salient teaching appears preposterous to educated modern minds. That teaching is that educated modern minds are sick and degenerated because they are historically educated.[31] The observations presented in *HL* are "untimely," Nietzsche says, "because I attempt to understand something in which our age justifiably takes pride—namely, its historical cultivation [*historische Bildung*]—as a detriment, an infirmity, a deficiency of the age, and furthermore because I am even of the opinion that all of us suffer from a debilitating historical fever and that we at the very least need to recognize that we suffer from it."[32] It is one thing to suggest that David Strauss and his "cultivated philistines" are sick and degenerated souls. It is quite another, however, to claim that "*all of us*" suffer from a similar illness.[33] Such a sensational charge demands an explanation—a foreword—even before it has been fully voiced. In our time, to say nothing of Nietzsche's, education in the humanities and social sciences is primarily historical or backward-looking in character. Nietzsche's indictment of "historical education" amounts to an indictment of the pedagogical traditions of the modern West. The second Untimely Meditation is the most widely read of the four because its argument still sounds untimely to contemporary ears.

Even more shocking than Nietzsche's criticism of historical education is his rejection of the widely accepted notion that knowledge is good for its own sake, or that enlightenment is salutary. He begins the essay by

putting this rejection in the mouth of another thinker, namely Goethe, who asserted in a letter to Schiller that he "hate[d] everything that merely instructs me without increasing or immediately stimulating my own activity."[34] According to Goethe, the pursuit of knowledge is worthy of contempt unless it results in activity or fruit. It is highly significant that *HL* opens with a quotation in which Goethe is reported to underscore the importance of activity in contrast to instruction. The quotation is significant because Nietzsche declares in *Schopenhauer as Educator* that the human type Goethe embodies is "not the active human being."[35] On the contrary, the Goethean human type is said in *SE* to be "the contemplative human being in the grand style," who desires to gather as much knowledge as possible "for the sake of a noble delicacy so that he can preserve himself and take pleasure in the diversity of things."[36] *HL* begins with a quotation that questions the value of knowledge which is uttered by a thinker Nietzsche dubs in *SE* the man of knowledge *par excellence*. Apparently, even Goethe is willing to reject knowledge for its own sake, despite his inclination to do otherwise.

By quoting Goethe in the first sentence of the foreword to *HL*, Nietzsche diminishes the intensity of the protests that are likely to be inspired by his later claims that knowledge for its own sake is undesirable because there is an "antithesis between life and wisdom."[37] This is how the foreword prepares readers for the arguments to come. Interestingly, Nietzsche also says in *SE* that men like Goethe desire so ardently to accumulate knowledge for its own sake that they are in danger of "degenerating into philistines."[38] His critique of Goethe on this score is almost identical to his critique of David Strauss and the "cultivated philistines" in the first Meditation.[39] The third Meditation (*SE*) connects the subject of the first (*DS*) to the subject of the second (*HL*) because it uses the Goethean human type to link more firmly the excessive hunger for knowledge to the phenomenon of cultivated philistinism.

Nietzsche's purpose in the foreword to *HL* is thus to warn that the pursuit of knowledge which "inhibits activity" is a "costly intellectual superfluity and luxury" that modern men take for granted at their own peril. Taking knowledge's goodness for granted is perilous because knowledge diverts us from tending to what Nietzsche calls "the most basic necessities" of human life. These basic necessities are not elaborated in the foreword, but the most important basic necessity would seem to be the "ahistorical atmosphere" or enclosed "horizon" of knowledge he describes in the first section of the essay.[40]

An enclosed horizon of historical knowledge is a basic necessity because it places limits on the pursuit of knowledge which prevent that pursuit from overwhelming our minds to the detriment of our actions. A human being who lives outside this enclosed horizon is in danger of becoming spiritually weak. His mind is so overrun with the knowledge of past peoples and their ways that he becomes disoriented and unable to determine his own way, or the right way. This disorientation leads in turn to an intellectual paralysis that causes a practical paralysis. Nietzsche prescribes a remedy for this paralysis when he asserts in the first section of the essay that "this is a universal law: every living thing can become healthy, strong, and fruitful only within a defined horizon."[41] Nothing is more necessary than a universal law. Taking knowledge's goodness for granted diverts us from the most basic necessities of human life because it obscures the universal or necessary law which states that limits must be placed on the collection of knowledge if health and action (and not paralysis and inaction) are to result from it.

Nietzsche never provides a rational proof that this universal law is universal. In fact, he seems explicitly to abandon the power of rational proofs on the very first page of the foreword. He says in the second paragraph that his intention in *HL* is to "depict a feeling [*Empfindung*]" about history which has "often tormented me," and to take revenge on this feeling by making it public. He adds that he hopes his expression of this "feeling" will compel sympathizers to admit that they feel it too. To his opponents, he admits that his feeling about the dangers of history will appear "wholly perverse, unnatural, repulsive, and downright illicit." He says that he hopes his courage to go public with "the natural description of my feeling" will provoke them to prove him wrong. He sees that his feelings about history may offend their feelings about it, which will compel them to enter into the argument on the grounds that their feelings are hurt. Feelings are the hinge upon which the arguments in the essay turn, and reason is merely a tool deployed to serve as a handmaiden in a war of feelings.

The centrality of feelings in the foreword is borne out in the first section of the essay. Consider the famous opening lines of the section, in which Nietzsche instructs his readers to "observe the herd as it grazes past you, […] leaps about, eats sleeps, digests, and leaps some more […]." His first move is not to reason with readers about the disadvantage of history, but to persuade them to imagine what it must feel like to be an oblivious animal, "tethered by the short leash of its pleasures

and displeasures to the stake of the moment, […] neither melancholy nor bored."[42] He observes further that "it is hard on a human being" to observe the oblivious happiness of animals—hard, that is, on their feelings—because human beings feel themselves superior to animals, "yet look enviously upon their happiness."[43] Human beings are historical beings with memories who cannot sustain living in the moment the same way that forgetful animals can. Attempting to feel what animals feel is "hard" on us because it awakens us to the fact that the sustainability of our happiness is limited by our memories, which often inflict spiritual torment by reminding us of painful parts of ourselves or our pasts. In moments of intense happiness or laughter, we often say that we feel so much joy that we are forgetting ourselves. Happiness is often ahistorical. "This is why the sight of a grazing herd," Nietzsche says, "or even closer to [us], of a child, which, not yet having a past to disown, plays in blissful blindness between the fences of the past and the future, moves [human beings] as though it were a vision of a lost paradise."[44] From the first lines of *HL* to the last, Nietzsche's argument relies on moving the reader to emotional introspection about history, and not on logical proofs.

Consider also the emotional impact of Nietzsche's description in the first section of *HL* of what we feel in those fleeting moments of our lives when we forget ourselves and manage to live ahistorically, without consciousness of our past or future. On these rare occasions of single-minded joy and rapture, we resemble "a man seized and carried away by a passion for a woman."[45] In the throes of passion a man in love is blind to a woman's flaws—blind to what is true about her—and is instead compelled to pursue her single-mindedly, as though she were the perfect woman or the only woman who had ever existed. Similarly, a person who lives in what Nietzsche calls "the misty region of the ahistorical" does not see the futility or even the potential ugliness of his actions and ambitions in the larger context of world history. On the contrary, he only sees the immediate beauty and potential greatness of his deeds. Just as a man in the throes of passion loves a woman blindly, Nietzsche says that "everyone who acts loves his action infinitely more than it deserves to be loved."[46] To understand why the excessive consumption of history is harmful to life and action, we must therefore feel erotically what it might be like to live ahistorically, with limited access to the historical "truth."

Nietzsche is so masterful at manipulating his readers' feelings in the service of the ahistorical that it is sometimes difficult to guard against

the impulse to banish altogether the study of history from modern culture and education. Doing so would be a mistake, and he frequently reminds readers that he is not advocating for the elimination of the study of history, but rather for a new manner of studying it that enhances culture and life instead of impoverishing them.[47] "To be sure, we need history," he says in his foreword, "but our need is different from that of the pampered idler in the garden of knowledge." The cultivated philistines featured in the first Untimely Meditation are these pampered idlers. As Nietzsche portrayed them there, these idlers are unable to see why "vast knowledge and pedantic learning are neither a requisite means to, nor a symptom of, culture."[48] Those, on the other hand, who are not pampered idlers can see clearly that a "vast amount" of historical knowledge paralyzes action and culture, but they also see that a moderate amount of history rightly used is highly desirable. A moderate amount of history is needed because it is a universal law that every human being can become healthy and fruitful only within a defined horizon. A defined horizon consists, by definition, of a perceptible historical context—albeit narrow—which helps us understand ourselves in relation to others:

> It is true: only when the human being, by thinking, reflecting, comparing, analyzing, and synthesizing, limits that ahistorical element, only when a bright, flashing, iridescent light is generated within that enveloping cloud of mist—that is, only by means of the power to utilize the past for life and to reshape past events into history once more—does the human being become a human being; but in an excess of history the human being ceases once again […].[49]

History studied properly and moderately can serve as an inspirational framework to "reshape past events into history once more."[50] The proper measure and manner of the study of history is determined not by its wide and ready availability in books and libraries, but rather by the unique needs, "inmost nature," and "shaping power" of those who turn to it for guidance. A people who are not confident enough in their own cultural identity to confront past cultures without being intimidated or paralyzed by them should stay away from history, lest they become overrun by it. Such peoples do not possess the "shaping power" required to use history to sculpt life. A people, on the other hand, who can "appropriate and incorporate" alien influences while maintaining their already strong cultural identity can further strengthen that identity by transforming

history into their own blood.[51] Nietzsche advises the German people to trade the historical for the ahistorical in *HL* because he argued in its prequel on David Strauss that "in Germany, the pure concept of culture has been lost."[52] In the first section of *DS*, and again in the fourth section of *HL*, he defines a culture as "the unity of artistic style that manifests itself throughout all the expressions of life of a people."[53] It stands to reason that an enclosed or ahistorical horizon would foster precisely this unity of style by virtue of the fact that it is enclosed. The unity that results from this enclosure leads to the emergence of a genuine culture.

At the same time that Nietzsche advises his readers to embrace the ahistorical, he also warns them not to dwell for too long on the role that the ahistorical has played in human history. Those who fixate on what he calls the "ahistorical atmosphere in which every great historical event is born" run the risk of becoming "*suprahistorical* [*überhistorischen*]" human beings. Suprahistorical human beings stand above or outside of history because they see clearly the ahistorical forces at work in history's development. Their study of history has shown them that what is called "history" is, in fact, a chronological succession of ahistorical horizons forced upon humanity by great minds.[54] In this context, Nietzsche quotes or appears to quote Niebuhr—one of the historical scientists whose work *HL* implicitly criticizes.[55] In the words of Nietzsche's Niebuhr, a study of history reveals that the greatest intellects and actors of the human race have used their passions and the "intensity of their consciousness" to shape history and events. World history for the suprahistorical person thus comes to sight as a gruesome circus of single-mindedness in which great men have blindly led the blind to the slaughter bench.

Insofar as suprahistorical human beings see the ahistorical at work across and throughout history, they also see that "past and present are the same," and that "in all their diversity, [the past and present] are identical in type, and as the omnipresence of imperishable types they make up a stationary formation of unalterable worth and eternally identical meaning." Nietzsche calls suprahistorical men wise because they have gained access to something permanent through something changing, i.e., to truth through history. Yet he also calls them "nauseous," and says that they have never agreed about whether the substance of their doctrine (which includes a supra-consciousness of the ahistorical) should inspire "happiness or resignation." On one hand, they are immune to the historical diseases that plague their age because they are not enticed by

history's supposed power or divinity. On the other hand, their awareness of the illusory grounds of the ahistorical also makes them immune to the life-giving effects of history properly pursued. To put it another way: the suprahistorical person's awareness of "the blindness and injustice dwelling in the soul of those who act" is just as paralyzing as the overexposure to the extraordinary diversity of history that plagues historical human beings. The ahistorical is as toxic as the historical if it is imbibed immoderately. For this medical reason, Nietzsche says that he will "leave the historical human being to their nausea and their wisdom," and that he will "gladly concede that suprahistorical human beings possess more wisdom than we do; as long as we are certain of possessing more life." Life is again superior to truth, despite or because of the fact that it obscures it.

The proposition Nietzsche invites his readers to consider in *HL* is not, therefore, that the study of history is harmful simply. Rather, it is (with Nietzsche's emphasis) that "*the ahistorical and historical are equally necessary for the health of an individual, a people, and a culture*."[56] In modern culture, the historical and the ahistorical are not in equilibrium. This disproportion is alarming because Nietzsche judges the capacity to live ahistorically to be more "originary [*ursprünglichere*]" than the capacity to live historically.[57] His reason for thinking the ahistorical is more originary than the historical seems to be that the human mind desires to establish a "foundation [*Fundament*]" on the basis of which it can make lasting sense of the world. Foundations are associated with permanence, and the narrowness of the ahistorical would seem to offer permanence, or at least the illusion of permanence. A historicized understanding of the world, on the other hand, is constantly shifting. A human being who understood the world from an entirely historical point of view would "no longer believe in his own being, would no longer believe in himself, would see everything flow apart into turbulent particles, and would lose himself in this stream of becoming."[58] The historicized human mind is disoriented because it possesses no permanent or enduring notions, and hence no foundational principles on the basis of which action, culture, and perhaps even understanding are possible.[59]

The foreword to *HL* concludes as the essay as a whole concludes: with a nod to the ancient Greeks. "It is only to the extent that I am a student of more ancient times," Nietzsche says, "above all, of ancient Greece, that I, as a child of our time, have had such unfashionable experiences." In the final paragraphs of the final section of *HL*, he clarifies slightly his claim in the foreword that his study of ancient Greece prompted his

unfashionable evaluation of the use of history in the present. He says in these final paragraphs that there were "centuries in which the Greeks found themselves threatened by a danger similar to the one we face today, the danger, namely, of perishing in a flood of things alien and past, of perishing to 'history.'"[60] The similarity between the Greek danger and the German danger leads him to recommend at the end of *HL* that the Germans adopt the same remedy the Greeks adopted to cure themselves of their historical malady. This remedy is stated cryptically. The Greeks were able to cure themselves of their historical malady because they listened to the Apollonian imperative "know thyself," which subsequently compelled them to organize the "chaos" within their culture and concentrate on their "genuine needs."[61] In this way, the Greeks finally "took possession of themselves again" after having been possessed for too long by history.[62]

The Greek cure for the historical sickness is difficult to make sense of without examining the rest of *HL*. More than this, however, this cure is difficult to make sense of without examining Nietzsche's account of the meaning of self-knowledge in the first section of *Schopenhauer as Educator*. The theme of self-knowledge connects *HL* to *SE* because it is the subject of the final paragraphs of *HL* and the first section of *SE*.[63] Whatever the Greeks' cure for the historical sickness may have been, Nietzsche's claim at the end of *HL* that they cured themselves by fulfilling their "genuine needs" echoes his remark in the foreword that the Germans still lack "the most basic necessities." What the Germans lacked the Greeks possessed.

Since Nietzsche's study of Greek history helped him diagnose the problem of history and prescribe its remedy, one could say that he uses history to solve the problem of history. This is perhaps why he says explicitly in the eighth section of *HL* that "history must solve the problem of history."[64] History is Nietzsche's guide to the problem of history, even in an essay which advocates for an ahistorical worldview on the grounds that the historical worldview is disorienting. He accepts history's fundamental philosophic importance at the same time that he acknowledges and highlights the deep and even deadly problems with doing so. This is what separates him from the historical scientists he criticizes in later sections of *HL*. Furthermore, it is why he concludes the foreword by acknowledging that he himself is a scientist of history—a classical philologist—who has "no idea what the significance of classical philology would be in our age, if not to have an unfashionable effect

[…] hopefully for the benefit of a future time." Nietzsche is a historical scientist whose science is moral because it pursues the historical truth in order to benefit man, even at the cost of the benefit of science.

Section 2: Monumental History as the Cure for the Historical Sickness

Nietzsche concludes section 1 of *HL* with four theses whose confirmation he says will banish "all doubts" about the antithesis between life and wisdom.[65] The first thesis states that "a historical phenomenon, when purely and completely understood and reduced to an intellectual phenomenon, is dead for anyone who understands it." Knowing the truth about the past robs it of its power to inspire the future because truth exposes the delusion, injustice, passion, and "the whole darkened earthly horizon" that gives the past its mythical allure. Giants of history are transformed into dwarves when their deeds are illuminated by the light of reason.[66]

The second thesis states the implication of the first, namely that "history, conceived as pure science and accorded sovereignty, would be for humanity a kind of conclusion to life and settling of accounts." When a culture privileges a historiography or historical philosophy whose aim is truth-telling, it empowers a force hostile to life because life thrives on falsification and limited historical understanding. History properly written and studied is, therefore, not principally concerned with uncovering historical truth, but with providing nourishment for the soul.

The third thesis draws the consequence of the second: "historical cultivation [*Bildung*] is beneficial and holds out promise for the future only when it follows in the wake of a powerful new torrent of life, for example, an evolving culture." If a culture employs history as a means of cultivating the human soul, then it must use history in a manner that will foster life and culture instead of destroying them. This insight leads Nietzsche to his fourth and final thesis, which is that history must always be "governed and guided" by a superior power—namely life—instead of assuming leadership of life and attempting to determine what is good for it. History does not know what is good for life but life knows what is good for history. In fact, history's subservience to life is beneficial for history because any science (like modern historical science) whose insights destroy human life will simultaneously destroy itself when it attacks the very life upon which it depends for its continuation. The remaining sections of *HL* are

devoted to demonstrating the sensibility of these four theses. Sections 2–3 of the essay explicate the third thesis by providing an account of the three ways that history properly used can serve life. Sections 4–9 explicate the first, second, and fourth theses by depicting the various ways that history's improper and immoderate use can harm life.

In sections 2–3, Nietzsche outlines three ways history can be used to invigorate living people. First, in section 2, he argues that it can be used as inspiration and motivation for those who act and strive. Second, in section 3, he argues that it can serve as an invigorating point of pride and a spiritual polestar for those who preserve and venerate it. And third, also in section 3, he argues that history can serve as an obstacle which those who suffer from the past must destroy for the sake of beginning life and history anew. Since these are the only means by which history can affect life, life for Nietzsche would seem to consist of striving, preserving, and destroying. He calls the three kinds of history to which these uses correspond the monumental, antiquarian, and critical modes of writing and reading history.

A culture determines which of these three modes it needs by analyzing the conditions of life of its people. Some peoples need monumental history, others antiquarian, and others critical depending on their spiritual circumstances. The appropriate mode should be prescribed to a people based on what Nietzsche calls their "capacities and needs."[67] The choice of mode is important because a mistaken prescription can damage life through overdose or deprivation. "Each of these three types of history is valid only in one soil and in one climate," Nietzsche says, and "in any other it develops into the most devastating weed." A given mode of history is life-enhancing in circumstances that demand it, but deadly in circumstances that do not. Furthermore, the advantages fostered by one mode may counter the disadvantages caused by another. Critical history, for example, may serve as a caustic antidote to the extreme historical piety generated by a culture that is overly antiquarian or pious to a fault. In this sense, Nietzsche's three types of history are not scientific or philosophic "methods" of history because their objectives are neither to portray the past as it truly was, nor to use history as a vehicle for obtaining universal truth. Instead, their objectives are to work up and reforge the past into something beneficial and good for those who consume it. History properly used is ahistorical.

Nietzsche introduces monumental history with the claim that "*above all*, history belongs to the active and powerful [*Die Geschichte gehört*

vor Allem dem Thätigen und Mächtigen].[68] The significance of the phrase "above all" [*vor Allem*] cannot be overstated. History belongs first and foremost to those who act and strive, and not to those who think or philosophize. Monumental history exemplifies the use of history for life more fully than antiquarian or critical history because it fosters great actions, which for Nietzsche are almost synonymous with life. Antiquarian history preserves the memory of the great actions performed by monumental men and peoples, whereas critical history destroys that memory in preparation for new great actions performed by new monumental men. Monumental history is, therefore, primary in Nietzsche's historical scheme. His preference for it is indicated by the fact that he treats it first, and that it is the only form of history treated alone in its own section. The other two forms are treated together, and at much less length, in section 3.[69] His reason for privileging monumental history is that it is the form most able to counter or even cure the historical malady from which the Germans of the late nineteenth century suffer. To see more clearly why Nietzsche favored monumental history, it is first necessary to examine its role and relationship to its counterparts.

Monumental history places great historical examples before the eyes of those who are ambitious but spiritually starved. It speaks to individuals, peoples, and cultures who want to become giants instead of standing on the shoulders of giants. In Nietzsche's telling, monumental history teaches that "the greatness that once existed was at least possible at one time, and that it therefore will probably be possible once again." Times that are bereft of great men need monumental histories to provide "exemplars, teachers, and comforters" who teach the living what great deeds are, and tempt them with the hope that greatness is still possible in the present. Nietzsche says Polybius understood monumental history because he saw that histories of great political times were the best teachers of future statesmen. Authors like Xenophon, Thucydides, Plutarch, and Livy would also seem to qualify as monumental historians, and more recently Jacob Burkhardt, Theodore Roosevelt, and Winston Churchill.[70]

The works composed by monumental historians give readers the "inspiration to emulate and to improve" upon the past. Since monumental history aims to capture what is noble and great about bygone men and events, it often paints with broad strokes, dispenses with particulars, and overlooks the shortcomings of its subjects. Accordingly, Nietzsche says that monumental history has "no need for that absolute veracity" that is the hallmark of scientific history. It often presents past men and

events in a more exemplary light than they deserve because it is more concerned with grand historical effects than minute historical causes. "As long as the soul of historiography lies in all the great *stimuli* that a powerful person derives from it," Nietzsche says, "as long as the past must be described as worthy of imitation, as capable of imitation and possible a second time; it is in danger of becoming somewhat distorted, of being reinterpreted more favorably, and hence of approaching pure fiction." Monumental historians thus do violence to the past by misrepresenting it for the sake of life.[71] When their works are studied closely, readers are compelled to fancy themselves as the next link in a chain of great individuals whose past deeds and struggles paved the way for their own future greatness. For students of monumental history, the great people of the past are "still alive, bright, and great." In this sense, it is only nominally historical. What is past and dead is still alive and present in the souls of those who use monumental history for life.

The reward that tempts those who turn to monumental history to enhance life is the promise of being eternally remembered as great teachers of great men, just like the monumental men who preceded them. Monumental history begets monumental history. To acquire this greatness the most ambitious monumental men seek to augment the happiness of "a people or of all of humanity." They are shameless lovers of mankind.[72] This love compels them to attempt to perform monumental deeds in order to "extend the concept of the 'human being,'" and to "give it a more beautiful substance." They think that what is human must be overcome or enhanced.[73] Monumental history is in this way a proud and self-conscious teacher of the noble.[74] Those who use it to enhance human life are not attached to their own particular lives because they see that the happiness of mankind sometimes demands that great men die. They love mankind more than themselves, and they think that what lesser or philosophic men call "self-sacrifice" is actually a good, desirable, and self-affirming thing. Death for them is not simply or perhaps even primarily sacrificial. Souls less full than theirs greedily clutch to being alive or to a narrow-minded psychology which privileges being alive as the highest human good. Monumental souls, on the other hand, "treat [life] with Olympian laughter." Apparently not all men fear death, and the highest types of erotic men self-consciously lust after death even more than they lust after life because "the most beautiful life is led by those who do not hold existence in high regard." Life is an "insatiable

power that lusts after itself," but this lusting does not necessarily require it to lust after its own continuation.[75]

Nietzsche places tremendous confidence in monumental history's potential to enhance cultures that have need of it. In fact, he says that if monumental history could affect the souls of just a hundred human beings in a suffering and degraded culture like the one in nineteenth-century Germany, then those hundred souls could revive the entire sick culture. Along these lines, he draws an analogy to the cultural revival that took place in Renaissance Italy:

> Suppose someone believed that no more than one hundred productive human beings, educated and working in the same [monumental] spirit, would be needed to put an end to the cultivatedness that has just now become fashionable in Germany; would he not be strengthened by the recognition that the culture of the Renaissance was borne on the shoulders of just such a band of one hundred men?

Nietzsche does not reveal in section 2 of *HL* who the mysterious "someone" is who might believe that a hundred monumental men could end the decline of German culture. In section 6 of the essay, however, following a gruesome description of the most debilitating symptoms of the German historical disease, he exhorts his readers to:

> immerse yourselves in the histories of great men […] and escape the paralyzing education spell cast on the present age, satisfy your souls by reading Plutarch and dare to believe in yourselves by believing in his heroes. With a hundred such unmodernly educated human beings […], the entire noisy sham cultivation of this great age could now be silenced once and for all.[76]

Apparently, Nietzsche himself is the mysterious "someone" mentioned in the remark about the "hundred productive human beings" in section 2. A hundred readers of a monumental historian like Plutarch could change the course of contemporary German culture. Monumental history, with all its nobility and love, is the form of history he prescribes for his own historically sick time. Monumental men—similar perhaps to those described in the third and fourth Untimely Meditations—can rescue Germany from the cultural decline described in the first and second Untimely Meditations. The essays on Schopenhauer and Wagner present Nietzsche playing the part of monumental historiographer, writing

monumental histories (and, therefore, partly fictional or incomplete histories) of monumental figures.[77] Like the thinkers and artists of the Renaissance, Schopenhauer and Wagner (or their monumental likenesses) may harbor the power to make German culture into a true culture, whose hallmark was said in the first Meditation to be a unity of artistic style that manifests itself throughout all the expressions of life of a people.[78]

Section 3, Part I: Antiquarian History and Degenerated Antiquarian History

Although the question of which form of history Nietzsche prescribes for his own sick culture has been addressed in a provisional way, the more crucial question remains of *why* he prescribes it. If one form of history can counter the defects of another, then knowing which form of history characterizes German culture would reveal the form that monumental history counters or compliments. Nietzsche hints at an answer to this question in the very structure of the essay. After describing monumental history in section 2, he describes the antiquarian and critical modes of history in the third section. These descriptions are followed in sections 4–9 by an account of the particular historical defects of the times in which he lives. He leaves it to the reader to put the "Nietzschean" view of history together because he never explicitly links the three forms of history presented in sections 2–3 with the critique of his own times featured in sections 4–9.

It would be remiss to proceed to an examination of Nietzsche's treatment of the antiquarian and critical modes of history without briefly stating the ways monumental history can be harmful to life when abused.[79] All three modes of history can have detrimental effects on life if they are not "called forth by hunger" or "regulated by the degree of need" a people has for them.[80] Monumental history becomes harmful when weak and inactive natures exploit it to hinder the actions of powerful and active ones. The strategy of the weak and inactive is to parade the greatness of the past before the ambitious men of the present, not in order to inflame ambition but rather to intimidate the ambitious into believing that people in the present can never measure up to the giants of old. In sum, the inactive take revenge on the active for acting by turning the active men of the past against the active men of the present. Nietzsche

gives the example of art historians who fawn over the great art of the past in the presence of young and ambitious artists. When taken to extremes, this fawning stunts artistic development instead of fostering it. Astonishing works by artists like Raphael, Rembrandt, and Michelangelo are held up as exemplars which no living artist can match. The "unartistic and insufficiently artistic natures" who abuse monumental history in this manner are driven by jealousy to undermine the great art of the future before it has a chance to emerge. Their retaliation often consists in the establishment of what Nietzsche calls a "canon of monumental art," to which no new art is admitted. In this way, monumental history's misuse appears antiquarian in character. Healthy monumental history's focus on creativity and inspiration are perversely transformed into a focus on the preservation of a great antiquity at the expense of new creations. "Aesthetic do-nothings" take spiteful pride in teaching their charges that the cannon of great art "is the only true and real art." The contents of this "canon" quickly become synonymous with "good taste," and whatever is not part of it is deemed in poor taste. In short, when monumental history is abused by those without monumental souls, greatness turns on greatness and the past murders the future instead of inspiring it.

Antiquarian history differs from monumental in that it enhances life by using the past to sustain the present instead of using it as inspiration for the creation of something new in the future.[81] As Nietzsche puts it, antiquarian history "understands only how to *preserve life*, not how to create it." Antiquarian historians are backward-looking instead of forwarding looking. They look back with "loyalty and love" at the conditions in which a people or culture originally came into being, and this loyalty and love makes past conditions appear worthy of preservation and continuation in the present. For antiquarian human beings and cultures, the old ways are the best ways. The goal of antiquarian history and culture is therefore the perpetuation of the social, political, cultural, and even artistic circumstances in which a people were originally reared. Whereas monumental history used the past to inspire the creation of a new future, antiquarian history uses it to demonstrate that no new creations are needed. The present and future should be as similar to the past as possible because the past was good, and history should be used to promote the continuation of old institutions instead of inspiring the ambitious creation of new ones.

Antiquarian history can be beneficial to a wide variety of cultures, but there are two cultural circumstances in which it is especially useful

for life. The first circumstance concerns cultures that were great in the past but suffer from decline in the present. It serves life in declining cultures because it encloses them in an antiquarian horizon in which their bygone greatness appears not to be bygone. Antiquarian history used in this mode preserves what once was in order to sustain what now is by substituting a salutary illusion of present greatness for the truth of present decline. This is why Nietzsche says that an antiquarian human being often looks at the history of his city and tells himself that "it was possible to live here," and that it will "in the future be possible to live here, for we are tough and cannot be broken overnight." He adds that Goethe must have felt antiquarian history's power to strengthen a declining culture when, in his essay *On German Architecture*, he relates the experience of seeing for the first time Erwin von Steinbach's "monument [*dem Denkmale*]" the Strasbourg Cathedral. Goethe said that seeing the cathedral helped him realize that "this is German architecture! Our architecture! The Italians cannot boast one of their own, much less the French."[82] He momentarily forgot the declining architectural taste of his own time through an antiquarian interaction with an example of bygone architectural greatness. Goethe encouraged his fellow Germans to "approach [the cathedral] and experience the profoundest feeling of truth and beauty of proportion, sprung from a strong, rough-hewn German soul."[83] Nietzsche interprets these lines to mean that Goethe felt the power of older and stronger German culture in an antiquarian instant in which the 500-year-old "historical veil of clouds" that separated his time from Steinbach's was briefly lifted.

Not only is antiquarian history useful to great cultures in decay, it is also useful to unremarkable cultures that were never great and may never become great on account of their unfortunate political or geographic circumstances. It is useful to these cultures because it gives them cause to venerate their past, which is only venerable because it is ancient. The fact that a minor culture's past is old, in other words, makes it worthy of antiquarian reverence even if it is not grand. Nietzsche says that Barthold Niebuhr—an intellectual founder of scientific history—felt this aspect of antiquarian history's power when he admitted that he was once able to live "contentedly, without missing art, in moor and meadow, among free peasants who had a history." Niebuhr, in other words, was able to live happily among peasants not because they had a great or profound culture, but because their simple ways and traditions were old. Apparently, scientific historians are especially vulnerable to being bewitched by

antiquarian history's power to make a meager past a venerable one. Their characteristically scientific inability to discriminate between worthy and unworthy subjects of historical investigation may be traceable to their antiquarian penchant for making unremarkable things into remarkable ones.[84]

Nietzsche's assertion that antiquarian and monumental history differ in function because one preserves and the other creates begs the question of precisely what antiquarian history preserves. The simplest answer to this question is that it preserves what has already been created, and thus it would seem to preserve the great deeds of past monumental figures or monumental times. When Nietzsche observed that Goethe stood before Steinbach's "monument [*dem Denkmale]*" at Strasbourg and felt the "gifts and virtues" of antiquarian history, he shrewdly implied that antiquarian history preserves the fruit of monumental men. Likewise, when he said that Niebuhr was able to live contentedly among peasants who had no great art but had an ancient yet unremarkable history, he implied that antiquarian history presents the past in a monumental light even when it was not monumental in truth. Antiquarian history is the counterpart and compliment to monumental history because it either preserves life by hallowing the memory of monumental times, or forges former times that were not monumental into monumental memories. It is not interested in inspiring new deeds or creating new times because innovation would disrupt the cultural and institutional perpetuation that antiquarian history judges to be the highest good for the conditions of life it serves.

Like its monumental counterpart, antiquarian history also enhances life at the expense of presenting history accurately or truthfully.[85] It is, therefore, "not the condition in which the human being would be most capable of reducing the past to pure knowledge." Historical falsehood for life is preferable to truth for the sake of knowing what actually happened, and in this way antiquarian history is ahistorical. It is guilty of perpetrating falsehood because it presents the past in such a way that ancient events appear more praiseworthy and profound than they actually were. Men of the present who are under its influence feel their ancient roots more than they actually see them, and the size and depth of these roots are exaggerated to ensure that they are binding. In addition to exaggerating the importance of the past, antiquarian history also suffers from what Nietzsche calls an "extremely limited field of vision." Its limited field of vision prohibits it from seeing the whole of the past it

venerates, and this causes it to perceive whatever it does see "too closely and in isolation." Distinguishing between historical objects that are venerable and those that are not is made difficult by this limited vision. Whatever antiquarian history sees is venerated with enthusiasm merely because it is ancient, and not necessarily because it merits veneration. Abiding love of the old causes antiquarian history to regard all aspects of the past—no matter how minor or major—as equally important. Minor events are overvalued and major ones underemphasized because antiquarian history has "no criterion for value, and no sense of proportion for the things of the past that would truly do them justice when viewed in relation to each other." Whereas monumental history concerns itself with the few ancient men and events that are truly deserving of monuments, antiquarian history judges all ancient men and events to deserve monuments because its goal is blindly to preserve an entire past as exemplary instead of elevating particular parts of it.

Just as monumental history can be abused to prevent greatness from emerging when its use is not regulated by need, antiquarian history can be abused to prevent new life from emerging when its powers are not used cautiously. It must be prescribed with caution because all new life is "met with hostility and rejected" under its tutelage. When it is abused by a culture that is not in need of it, antiquarian history "impedes the powerful resolve for the new, and lames the person of action, who, as a person of action, must always offend certain acts of piety." Its historical virtues become historical vices when it attempts to guide a culture that needs creativity instead of preservation. The gravest danger posed by an overdose of antiquarian history is, therefore, that a people will begin indiscriminately to "mummify" their entire past instead of selectively conserving it to inspire life. When used prudently and moderately antiquarian history fosters a healthy historical piety, but this piety loses its force when too many objects are judged worthy of it.

Once a culture sees all aspects of its past as equally valuable, Nietzsche says that "scholarly habit [*die gelehrtenhafte Gewöhnung*]" gradually replaces historical piety and begins to revolve "with self-satisfied egoism around its own axis." In degenerated antiquarian times, historical scholarship and academic egoism become synonymous with piety. Antiquarian history's scholarly degeneration often culminates in an outbreak of a "blind mania to collect, of a restless gathering together of everything that once existed." Degenerated antiquarian peoples are so inundated with scholarly habits that they are "satisfied with any fare and even devour with

gusto the dust of bibliographical minutiae." Cultures that abuse antiquarian history are therefore in danger of permitting scholarship and science to lead life instead of insisting that life lead scholarship and science. It is in this way that the degeneration of antiquarian history turns "a more significant impulse, [and] a nobler need" for history into a mere "insatiable curiosity" for as much history as it is possible to consume. Healthy antiquarian historical horizons are shattered when an insatiable curiosity about what lies outside them takes flight. What was once ahistorical for the sake of life becomes historical for the sake of scholarship whose goal is knowledge instead of life. German culture, which Nietzsche describes in sections 4–9 of *HL* as an excessively scholarly and scientific culture, suffers from precisely these ailments. The German culture of the late nineteenth century is a degenerated antiquarian culture, and *The Use and Disadvantage of History for Life* is both its accuser and its physician.[86]

Interlude on Sections 4–9: German Culture as Degenerated Antiquarian Culture

Nietzsche thought the German culture of the late nineteenth century was a degenerated antiquarian culture because it was a culture of scholarly, scientific, and philosophic history. What was once a historical virtue had become an academic historical vice.[87] His critique of scientific and philosophic history in the remaining sections of *HL*, combined with his critique in *DS* of scholarship's inability to lead German culture, clearly illustrates Germany's degenerated antiquarian character.[88] In the foreword to *HL*, Nietzsche subtly alluded to this degenerated antiquarian character when he warned that hypertrophied virtues can easily become vices. "The historical sense of our time," he said, "seems to me to be just such a hypertrophied virtue."[89] Antiquarian history, like the other modes of history, is a virtue when used properly, but a vice when overused.[90] In fact, in section 3 of *HL*, antiquarian history used for life is said to be so virtuous as to warrant being called "the true historical sense." This "true" historical sense stands in stark contrast to what Nietzsche called the "historical sense of our time" in the foreword, which was described there as "hypertrophied," "superfluous," "detrimental," "infirm," and "debilitating."[91]

If the preceding lines do not sufficiently prove that Nietzsche thinks his culture is a degraded antiquarian culture, then consider the

antiquarian criticisms he makes of it on almost every page of sections 4–9 of *HL*. In section 4, for example, he says that the healthy "constellation of life and history" has been altered in nineteenth-century Germany because a "magnificent star" has appeared in the night sky. This magnificent star is the star of "science [*Wissenschaft*]," and more specifically of "*the demand that history be a science*."[92] His description of German culture as a culture of historical science echoes his description of degenerated antiquarian culture in section 3, whose principal vice was its transformation of the study of history into a scientific or scholarly habit.[93] Nietzsche also says in section 4 that historical knowledge is produced and consumed in his time in an indiscriminate fashion that lacks any awareness of the rank order of historical subject matter. His contemporaries judge all history to be deserving of scholarly piety, and "historical knowledge constantly flows into [the contemporary person] from inexhaustible sources, alien facts crowd in upon him, his memory opens all its gates and is still not open wide enough." The German mind "struggles as best it can to receive, order, and honor" the historical facts its scholars collect, but it ultimately fails to establish any order.[94] Historical studies in Nietzsche's time exhibit the same insatiable curiosity, blind mania to collect, and ravenous hunger for bibliographical minutiae that were said in section 3 to characterize all decaying antiquarian cultures.

Section 5 of *HL* also portrays German culture as a degenerated antiquarian culture. Here Nietzsche attacks the sterility and lack of creativity of his contemporaries. The description of antiquarian history in section 3 stated that it "only understands only how to *preserve life*, not how to create it; therefore it always underestimates those things that are in the process of becoming because it has no divining instinct—as, for example, monumental history has." In section 5, Nietzsche attributes precisely this lack of creativity to the Germans, who he calls "a race of eunuchs" and "neuters who consider history to be neuter as well."[95] The scientific history that guides nineteenth-century German culture exhibits symptoms of hypertrophied antiquarian virtue because it is over-concerned with preserving life and unconcerned with creating it. This is why Nietzsche announces in section 5 of *HL* that history "is preserved [in Germany] by those who themselves can never make history."[96] It is also why he says that "I consider [history] to be the eternal masculine." Nietzsche prefers the manly and fecund creativity of monumental history to the antiquarian sterility of his own age.[97] Monumental history is an antidote for

hypertrophied antiquarian cultures that know only how to preserve the past and are consequently in danger of extinction.

Section 6 of *HL* portrays German culture as a degenerated antiquarian culture by criticizing its "much touted" but ultimately fictional spiritual strength. This strength is said to consist in the false belief that the historicized German has "the right, on the basis of his well-known historical 'objectivity,' to call himself strong, that is *just*, to a higher degree than the human beings of other ages."[98] Like Nietzsche's own culture, the degenerated antiquarian cultures described in section 3 also misunderstand their capacities for objectivity and justice. One of the primary shortcomings of these cultures was said to be their "limited field of vision," which causes them to "regard everything as equally important" and, thus, to have "no criterion for value and no sense of proportion for the things of the past that would truly do them justice when viewed in relation to each other."[99] Degenerated antiquarian cultures have no sense for how to order and rank historical objects. They are objective to a fault because they regard everything as equally important, and this is precisely the flaw Nietzsche attributes to his own culture when he criticizes it in section 6 for being proud of its historical objectivity. The conviction that doing justice to history means treating all of it as equally important originates not in objectivity, but in an unconscious subjectivity. In section 3 of *HL*, Nietzsche said that when antiquarian peoples attempt to rank historical events, the "measure and proportions are always taken only in relation to the antiquarian individual or people" who are doing the ranking. Antiquarian cultures, in other words, tend unconsciously to make *themselves* the subjective measures of history even though they appear in their own eyes to be treating history objectively. In section 6, Nietzsche attributes this same error to the "objective" historians of his time, who he says are more subjective than objective because they measure "past opinions and deeds according to the widespread opinions of the present moment."[100] Like all declining antiquarian cultures, German culture inwardly makes itself into a subjective measure of history while outwardly claiming to be an objective and just measure.

In *HL 7* Nietzsche again links his own culture to degenerated antiquarian culture when he observes that "scholarship has been furthered at an astonishingly quick pace in the last decades."[101] He said in section 3 of the essay that the most fatal symptom of a degenerated antiquarian culture appears when its piety toward the past withers, and "the

scholarly habit persists without [piety] and revolves with self-satisfied egoism around its own axis." In *David Strauss the Confessor and the Writer*, he portrayed German culture as a culture of scholarly habit when he lamented the way it "places the supreme judgement of culture and taste into the hands of the scholar."[102] He went on to dub this scholarly culture "philistine culture," and to call its adherents "cultivated philistines." *HL* reveals that this philistine culture is a degenerated antiquarian culture because it is the culture *par excellence* of scholarly habit and self-satisfied egoism.[103] This is why Nietzsche says in *HL* 10 that contemporary historical education's purpose is to cultivate "the historically and aesthetically cultivated philistine."[104] Near the end of section 7, he picks up where he left off in *DS* and criticizes the manner in which university students in Germany are "forced to work in the factory of scholarship and become useful before they are mature." German "philistine" culture exhibits the telltale symptom of a degenerated antiquarian culture because it identifies education with the cultivation of scholarly habits. The other telltale symptom of degenerated antiquarian culture—its self-satisfied scholarly egoism—is also rampant in German culture. Nietzsche decries this egoism in section 7 when he pans the egoistic manner in which young German scholars are now demanding "honors and advantages for themselves." He adds that a description of these honors and advantages would require "all of the auxiliary verbs that egoism now employs."[105] Section 7 concludes with the terrifying observation that the cultural consequence of rampant scholarly egoism in Germany is that scholars have "declared genius to be superfluous—by reminting every carter as a genius." Scholarship and egoism were such essential parts of German culture that scholarly "carters" like David Strauss were treated as though they were monumental geniuses. The source of the denigration of genius elaborated in the first Untimely Meditation is thus revealed in the second to be decayed antiquarian history and the scholarly infection it produces. The bizarre treatment of scholars as geniuses in Germany created a booming market for what Nietzsche calls in *HL* 7 the "universally favored 'popularization' […] of scholarship" in the form of easy to read scholarly books. The fact that David Strauss's *The Old and New Faith* had gone through six editions by the time Nietzsche attacked it, and that Strauss was hailed as a genius whose ideas could reshape German culture, shows how deeply the antiquarian decay had set in.

If the preceding observations from sections 4–7 of *HL* do not adequately demonstrate that Nietzsche thought his own time was a

degenerated antiquarian time, then the fact that he begins calling the Germans "antiquarians" and "antiquarian late offspring" in section 8 of the essay should erase any remaining doubts. Prior to this section, his criticisms were aimed primarily at the life-denying crimes committed by scientific history. Here, he takes aim at a new adversary, namely philosophic history, and more specifically Hegelian philosophy, which he charges with its own life-denying crimes when he says that:

> I do not believe that there was any dangerous deviation or turn in German cultivation this century that did not become more dangerous due to the enormous and still spreading influence of this philosophy—Hegelian philosophy.[106]

The crux of his critique of Hegelian philosophy is that it paralyzed the German spirit's active and creative capacities by persuading the German people that they were the "late-born offspring" and "epigones" of a world historical process whose goal was their emergence. Hegel taught in the *Philosophy of History* and the *Philosophy of Right* that the modern German liberal state marked the endpoint of a millennia-long historical dialectic.[107] Nietzsche argues that this teaching misled the culturally desiccated Germans into thinking that they were culturally rich. Instead of owning up to their cultural poverty, they mistook themselves for "the true meaning and purpose of all previous historical events."[108] Hegelian historicism was hostile to life because it explicitly and proudly encouraged the Germans to identify the "knowing wretchedness" of their antiquarian decay with the culmination of the spiritual sojourn of the entire human race. Hegel saw a spiritual zenith in German culture at the precise place Nietzsche saw a spiritual nadir.[109]

Hegelian philosophy perpetrated a stunning reversal of historical values in Germany because it portrayed the sterility characteristic of decayed antiquarian culture as a virtue instead of a vice. Whereas Nietzsche explicitly criticizes "neuter" antiquarian cultures that lack creativity, Hegel's followers seemed to revel in the notion that spirit had fulfilled its productive purpose in modern man, and that they stood at the end of the last productive period of history.[110]

Nietzsche makes readers aware of this reversal of values when he pauses in the middle of his critique of Hegel to repeat his high estimation of the value of antiquarian history properly used for the sake of life. He reminds readers in section 8 that conceiving of oneself or one's people as

epigones of a past great age can be salutary instead of destructive, as it was with Hegelian philosophy. In fact, when an epigonic conception is "conceived grandly," he says that it can "guarantee both to the individual and to a people a hope-filled longing for the future: insofar, at least as we understand ourselves as heirs and descendants of the remarkable powers of antiquity and see in this our honor and incentive."[111] Antiquarian history rightly used inculcates a hope-filled longing that the past and its ways will continue in the future.[112] Hegelian philosophy, on the other hand, misused the epigonic power of antiquarian history because it claimed that men of the present were the heirs and descendants of the remarkable power of antiquity, but it did not punctuate that claim with a hope-filled longing for the future. Instead, it punctuated its antiquarianism with a theory of the hopeless end of history in which the owl of Minerva takes flight at dusk, "when philosophy paints its grey in grey, [and] one form of life has grown old, and cannot be rejuvenated."[113] Hegelian philosophy failed to compel the Germans to hope for the continuation of a great past in the future because it implied that no great struggles remained for the Germans to overcome. This argument, in turn, produced what Nietzsche calls an "anemic and stunted late-born offspring of powerful generations, who eke out a cold existence as the *antiquarians* and grave diggers of these prior generations."[114] What is anemic and stunted is not a blossom or fruit. Nietzsche's conception of nineteenth-century Germans as "antiquarians" in section 8 does not correspond to the blossoming antiquarianism featured in section 3. On the contrary, it corresponds to the decayed antiquarianism outlined there whose corruption is caused by the fact that it no longer conserves life through veneration, but "mummifies it" by digging the grave of humankind.[115]

In section 3 of *HL*, Nietzsche also said that a healthy antiquarian culture uses history to "justify its existence." This observation is telling because he says in section 8 that Hegelian philosophy taught nineteenth-century Germans to lead an "ironic existence" in which "destruction follows hot on the heels of their limping course through life."[116] Hegelian philosophy initiated a dangerous deviation in nineteenth-century German culture because its peculiar brand of antiquarianism destroyed life instead of justifying it. It made existence in the present ironic because it transformed Germans into products of the memory of past cultures whose present culture was not memorable because it was the last culture. The Germans, in other words, became a people whose existence was defined by memories, yet no future people would need to remember

their existence because the end of history had arrived. Nonetheless, Hegel's Germans were so intoxicated by what Nietzsche calls "the power of history" that they enthusiastically embraced the irony of their historical existence. Their enthusiasm was so ardent that they impudently declared themselves the apex of a race which "only now has attained knowledge of itself and been revealed to itself."[117]

The source of this impudence is said by Nietzsche to be traceable to Hegel's argument that history unfolded through the development of a rational spirit. The notion that world history was guided by a rational or providential hand nurtured an almost religious faith in Germany in the "power of history" to guide human affairs.[118] Widespread Hegelian faith in history's power and providence gradually unleashed what Nietzsche calls a "naked admiration" for any party, policy, or class in Germany whose cultural or political agenda achieved public success. This naked admiration flourished under the Hegelian the presumption that every success was the result of history's rational development. In Nietzsche's telling, Hegel's Germans became increasingly eager to "kneel down" and "nod their 'yes' as mechanically as a Chinese puppet to every power—regardless of whether it is a government, a public opinion, or a numerical majority."[119] The final ironic triumph of decayed antiquarianism in Germany was that its fanatical efforts to preserve the past culminated in a thoughtless progressivism which was antithetical to preservation. Hypertrophied historical conservatism unleashed hypertrophied historical progressivism, or even historical relativism, in the name of history's providential power.[120]

Section 9 of *HL* describes the most dreadful theoretical expression of decayed antiquarianism's Hegelian form, which Nietzsche sees most clearly in psychologist Eduard von Hartmann's book *Philosophy of the Unconscious*. A thorough examination of Nietzsche's critique of Hartmann goes beyond the scope of the present volume, but Anthony Jensen has analyzed the critique at length and has shown that Nietzsche presents Hartmann ironically, as though Hartmann were both an admirable thinker and a buffoon.[121] On one hand, Nietzsche was impressed by Hartmann's attempt to psychologize history because—like Nietzsche himself—Hartmann attributed the motives of historians and historical actors to unconscious drives and instincts.[122] On the other hand, however, Nietzsche was horrified by Hartmann's attempt to combine his own psychology of the unconscious with Schopenhauer's teaching that the will was the source of action, and Hegel's teaching that

history had unfolded through a world process. This combination yielded a deadly doctrine which claimed that all historical events are predetermined by a divine will that operates through the unconscious of every individual. By studying history, Hartmann concluded that human beings become increasingly conscious of the will's unconscious operation. Their gradual coming into consciousness of the power of the unconscious culminates in the revelation that human free will and self-determination are illusions. This insight necessarily leads to despair at fact that "the individual is nothing more than a cog in the world process."[123] For Hartmann, resigned despair and bemusement at the powerlessness of the will in the face of the unconscious are the fundamental and final attitudes of historically enlightened humankind.

Nietzsche judged Hartmann's book to be spiritually poisonous because it encouraged "the total surrender of the personality" to the historical world process.[124] Whereas Hartmann looked approvingly, or at least unperturbedly, at the paralysis of thought and action caused by this surrender, Nietzsche spends most of *HL* criticizing it and holding scientific and philosophic history accountable for it. According to Nietzsche, Hartmann stooped so low as to praise the sick and impotent culture of modernity as:

> the joyous state in which there is nothing but 'solid *mediocrity*,' in which art is the equivalent of 'what an evening's farce is, say to a Berlin stockbroker,' and in which 'geniuses are no longer necessary, because that would be tantamount to throwing pearls to swine, or even because the age has progressed beyond that stage suited to genius to a more significant stage'—that is, to that stage of social development in which 'every worker leads a comfortable existence, due to the fact that his working hours leave him sufficient leisure to attend to his own intellectual education.

If this criticism sounds familiar, it is because it echoes line for line the criticism Nietzsche made of David Strauss and the "cultivated philistine" in the first Untimely Meditation.[125] Just as Hartmann exhibits joy in mediocrity, the cultivated philistine exhibits "a contentedness with his own narrowness, his own untroubledness, indeed even with his own limited intelligence."[126] In section 9 of *HL*, Nietzsche says that the type of human being Hartmann's philosophy speaks to does not have passions or longings "but merely blinks [*blinzelt*]," just as Zarathustra's last man asks what love, creation, and longing are and then "blinks [*blinzelt*]."[127]

The second Meditation follows the first because the degenerated antiquarianism described in the second produces as its side effect the mediocre "philistine type" described in the first. Nietzsche confirms the connection between the two Meditations when he remarks in the middle of his critique of Hartmann that the "horrifying ossification of our age" which "David Strauss has naively depicted in all its splendid facticity" is justified and intensified by Hartmann's philosophy.[128] Hartmann and Strauss are both manifestations of the antiquarian decay encouraged by Hegel's philosophy. Like Strauss and his philistines, Hartmann looks joyfully on a world in which culture is identical to entertainment, in which genius is no longer possible or desirable, and in which great thought and action are no longer needed. His ideal human type "has to do nothing but go on living as he always lived, go on loving as he has always loved, go on hating as he has always hated, go on reading the same newspapers he has always read."[129]

Unlike Strauss and Hartmann, Nietzsche sees the spiritual mediocrity engendered by decayed antiquarianism and its belief in the "world process" to be an inducement to "nausea" instead of a cause for joy.[130] He concludes his critique of Hartmann by prescribing a remedy for this nausea. The remedy consists—perhaps not surprisingly—of a concentrated dose of monumental history and a prolonged exposure to monumental men. The ailment, to be clear, is that the belief in the world process (which is hypertrophied antiquarianism because it makes modern men the neuter descendants of antiquity) has cheated the German youth out of "the power to plant, overflowing with faith, a great thought within itself and to let it grow into an even greater thought."[131] History can no longer be used ahistorically for the benefit of future life because it has been abused to show that the era of the eternal present has arrived. Once Nietzsche has clarified this ailment, he says that Germany will only be cured of it when they "wisely avoid all constructions of the world process or even the history of humanity," and when the youth of every generation once again strive to live among "the republic of geniuses of which Schopenhauer once spoke," where "one giant calls to another across the desolate expanses of time."[132] Monumental figures must once again speak to monumental figures across the swath of history and plant the seeds of great thoughts. Stated differently in Nietzsche's previous description of monumental history: "the greatest moments in the struggles of individuals [must] form links in one single chain," and "combine to form a mountain range of humankind throughout the millennia."[133]

Great individuals from the republic of genius must take the reins of humanity instead of leaving them in the hands of either the destructive world process described in the second Meditation, or pseudo-geniuses like David Strauss described in the first.[134]

Once Nietzsche articulates his monumental remedy, he announces for the first (but not the last) time in the *Untimely Meditations* that: "the goal of humankind cannot possibly be found in its end stage, but only in its highest exemplars."[135] The goal of humankind, in other words, is a monumental goal. In the sixth section of *Schopenhauer as Educator*, he repeats this assertion when he says that "humanity should work ceaselessly toward producing great individuals—this and only this should be its task."[136] His intention in the two sequels to *HL* is to reintroduce decayed antiquarian and scientific souls to monumental men—men like Schopenhauer and Wagner—who populate the republic of genius.[137] These monumental geniuses stand in stark contrast to pseudo-geniuses like David Strauss, not least because they know how to enhance life through the creation of intellectual and spiritual horizons instead of shattering those horizons like Strauss did. A culture bound by such horizons cultivates a strong and active human type, and thereby reverses the cultivation of the mediocrity and philistinism engendered by a culture whose horizons are boundless because they have been torn down by scientific and philosophic history.

Section 3, Part II: The Second Untimely Meditation as Critical History

The preceding pages of this interpretation have argued that Nietzsche thought nineteenth-century German culture was a degenerated antiquarian culture whose typical ailments of sterility, scholarly egoism, scientific triviality, and widespread mediocrity could be remedied by a generous dose of monumental history. This conclusion was reached through an analysis of two of the three modes of history (monumental and antiquarian) presented in sections 2–3 of *HL*, and a subsequent broader analysis of sections 4–9, in which Nietzsche looked at the ailments of his own time and found them to be antiquarian in character.[138] On the basis of these observations, it was concluded that the second Untimely Meditation is the sequel to the first because it presents the primary cause of the cultural degeneration described in the first. The first Meditation

criticized David Strauss—a scientific historian influenced by Hegel—on the grounds that his historical-scientific approach to cultivation engendered a culture of "cultivated philistinism" and spiritual mediocrity in Germany. This same Germany, with all of its scientific and philosophic history, is shown in the second Meditation to harbor a decayed antiquarian culture that is rife with the scholarly habits, epigonism, spiritual averageness, cynicism, irony, and apathy that Nietzsche attributed to cultivated philistinism in the first. Not only does the second Meditation deepen the themes of its prequel, however, but it also prepares the way for its sequels because it lays the groundwork for the presentation of monumental geniuses like Schopenhauer and Wagner. Their authentic genius and capacity to create cultural horizons through philosophy and art is the antidote to the pseudo-genius and shattering of horizons attributed to David Strauss in the first essay, and to scientific and philosophic history in the second.

Having come this far, only two interpretative tasks remain before the third and fourth Meditations may be analyzed. The tenth and final section of *HL*, which Nietzsche says contains "a parable for the course and progress of [the] cure" for the historical sickness, must be shown to constitute a bridge between the major themes of *HL* and its sequel, *Schopenhauer as Educator*. First, however, the cultural role of the third and final mode of history presented in section 3 of the essay, namely critical history, must be accounted for in Nietzsche's historical scheme.

The description of the critical mode of history is unique among the three modes featured in sections 2–3 because Nietzsche does not differentiate between its proper use for culture and its destructive abuse. Critical history always abuses the culture to which it is applied because it is always critical. Unlike monumental history, critical history does not create positive cultural content that will inspire the future. Nor does it preserve past cultural content for the benefit of the present like antiquarian history does. Instead of creating or preserving, critical history serves a negating function which is needed when the cultural horizons created and preserved by its counterparts begin to decay and become harmful to life. This is why critical history's destructive effects—unlike those of monumental and antiquarian history—are life-enhancing instead of life-denying. It is "critical" to the extent that it appraises and condemns a sick past, but it always condemns for the sake of a healthy future. Its lust for negation means that no culture can live under the influence of critical history for long without running the risk of disappearing entirely. It

must be used with caution because its quick and ugly destruction of a people's past is not an end in itself. Critical history merely paves the way for something new and more lasting than what its criticism alone can provide.

Since critical history has no creative powers and exerts a purely negating force, it would seem to depend on the creative potential of monumental history to help it make good on its promise to enhance life. It only renders service to life insofar as it provides a clean slate, or a mostly clean slate, on which the culture of the future can be inscribed by creative forces, and Nietzsche defines monumental history as creative history *par excellence*.[139] Critical eras must, therefore, be followed by monumental ones so that culture (and by proxy life) is not annihilated entirely. In the same way that critical history needs monumental history, monumental history seems to need antiquarian to preserve and venerate what monumental human beings create. By definition, antiquarian history preserves and venerates the greatness of "antiquity," but antiquity consists primarily of the memory of the great works and deeds of the monumental men of the past. As Nietzsche has taken pains to show, however, antiquarian cultures grow stale and degenerate with time because they are so fixated on the old that the creative potential of the present is neutered. It is at this point that a culture must call upon critical history to tear down its decaying antiquarianism and begin the process of cultural renewal. Taken together, Nietzsche's three modes of history thus come to sight as a cycle—perhaps even a "world process"—in which the decay of the antiquarian leads to a need for the critical, in the destructive wake of which the monumental is necessary for inspiring the great deeds that will one day be preserved by the antiquarian again.[140] Culture which has grown old is renewed through a cycle of birth (monumental), subsistence (antiquarian), and death (critical).[141] Like the life that culture cultivates, all cultures must die and be reborn to carry out their functions. Life needs history because history ministers to culture, which in turn ministers to life.

It is not by chance that Nietzsche introduces the concept of critical history immediately after his lengthy description of degenerated antiquarian history and its symptoms. The sequence of the presentation is important because it implies that critical history tears down degenerated antiquarian cultures whose fixation with preservation brings them to a deadly cultural standstill.[142] This is why Nietzsche summarily appends the description of degenerated antiquarianism in section 3 with the

observation that "here it becomes clear [*Hier wird es deutlich*] just how badly the human being often needs, in addition to the monumental and antiquarian modes of viewing the past, a *third* mode, the *critical*; and this once again in the service of life." The word "here [*Hier*]" in this sentence is telling. It is only "here," that is, it is only after the description of degenerated antiquarianism is complete, that the need for critical history becomes obvious.

Critical history is needed because antiquarian cultures that no longer preserve life must be torn down so that life can be renewed through a process of rebirth. When a culture (such as contemporary German culture) grows old and cannot be rejuvenated through its own powers, Nietzsche says that a critical human being "must possess, and from time to time employ, the strength to shatter and dissolve a past; he accomplishes this by bringing this past before a tribunal, painstakingly interrogating it, and finally condemning it."[143] Friedrich Nietzsche is this critical human being for the decaying antiquarian culture of nineteenth-century Germany, and *The Use and Disadvantage of History for Life* is itself an example of critical history.[144] Sections 4–9 of the essay bring Germany's spiritual past before a tribunal, painstakingly interrogate it, and condemn it to die for the sake of life.[145]

The critical purpose of the essay is presented most explicitly at the beginning of section 5, the central section, in which Nietzsche introduces his plan for subsequent sections. He says that his broader purpose in these sections is to show that "the surfeit of history in a given age is inimical and dangerous to life in five respects."[146] He then proceeds to criticize and painstakingly interrogate German culture's long history of historicism in five ways. First, he shows that a surfeit of history in Germany has weakened the personality of the Germans because it has created a tension between their inner lives, which are animated by knowledge of the great deeds of the past, and their outer lives, in which no great deeds are performed because historical knowledge paralyzes action (sections 4–5). Second, he shows that a surfeit of history has led Germans falsely to believe that they are more just than past peoples because their historical enlightenment supposedly permits them to judge human affairs more objectively than other peoples (section 6). Third, and centrally, a surfeit of history in Germany has undermined the instincts of the people and hindered their maturation because it has robbed them of the life-promoting illusions and closed horizons they need to establish a firm existential footing and cultural identity

(section 7). Fourth, a surfeit of history has planted the seeds for the development of the dangerous belief in Germany that the men of the present are epigones who are incapable of being great because the great struggles of the past have been won. Fifth, and finally, a surfeit of history has plunged Germany into a dangerous attitude of self-irony and cynicism toward existence which has paralyzed and destroyed their vital forces and cultivated widespread spiritual mediocrity (section 9). *The Use and Disadvantage of History for Life* is a piece of critical history because it brings the history of German historicism before the tribunal of life and condemns it to death on these five critical counts. Nietzsche underscores these charges in section 9, when he says with emphasis that "*the aberrations of the historical sensibility from which the present suffers are deliberately promoted, encouraged, and—utilized*." He then condemns the present to a death sentence in section 10, and with critical fervor, when he declares that the fashionable belief in the goodness and necessity of historical education must, at last, be "destroyed."[147]

Nietzsche provides several additional clues in *HL* which signal that the essay is an example of critical history. One of the clearest appears when the essay's title, foreword, and first section are considered in the context of the description of critical history's methodology in section 3. In that description, Nietzsche observes that when critical history passes judgment on a culture it is not a moral or legal conception of justice that judges. "Rather," he says, "it is life and life alone […], whose verdict is always merciless, always unjust, because it has never flowed from the pure fountain of knowledge." This remark is important because Nietzsche said in the foreword and first section of *HL* that his own judgments of German historical culture would be made from the point of view of "life" and "the antithesis between life and wisdom."[148] Like all critical history, *HL* explicitly takes life instead of knowledge as the standard by which to judge Germany's history of historicism. The phrase "*for life*" (as opposed to "for knowledge" or "for justice") in the essay's title evinces its critical character.

A second indication that *HL* is critical history appears when the description of critical history in section 3 is compared to the plan Nietzsche outlines to cure the German historical sickness in sections 9–10. In section 3, he outlines critical history's power to demolish a people's decaying conception of the past and pave the way for the process of creating a new past. The creation of this new past amounts to the erection of a new historical horizon, which will in turn foster a new

culture. This new culture cultivates a new form of human nature because it allows a people to:

> cultivate a new habit, a new instinct, a second nature [*Natur*], so that the first nature withers away. This is an attempt to give ourselves *a posteriori*, as it were, a new past from which we would prefer to be descended, as opposed to the past from which we actually descended—this is always dangerous because it is so difficult to set limits on this negating of the past, and because second natures are usually feebler than first natures. […] But here and there a victory is nonetheless achieved, and for those embroiled in this struggle—for those who make use of critical history in the service of life—there is one noteworthy consolation: the knowledge, namely that even that first nature was once a second nature, and that every victorious second nature will become a first nature.[149]

Human nature as Nietzsche understands it is malleable by the culture that cultivates it.[150] Critical history is useful for life because it turns second natures into first natures by tearing down the historical horizons that cultivated first natures. Stated otherwise: second natures can become first natures when critical history clears a path for monumental figures to create a new past *a posteriori*, from which the men of the future will be descended.[151] The sickness caused by the fluidity of historical becoming described sections 4–9 of *HL* can only be cured by ardently embracing the fluidity of historical becoming. Human nature is as "historical" as history itself.[152]

Employing critical history in this manner is dangerous because it is not clear how much of the original culture and nature should be negated. It is also dangerous because new conceptions of human nature are feebler than well-established ones, and run the risk of perishing before they are ripe. Even more dangerous is the way in which every attempt to use history to cultivate a new human nature fosters what Nietzsche calls an "antagonism between our inherited, ancestral nature and our knowledge." This antagonism is perilous because it creates a struggle between the "new, stricter discipline" and "what was long ago inborn and inbred."[153] No matter how much of the old culture and nature critical history negates, it is "impossible to free ourselves completely" from the passions, errors, and inner tendencies that our former past and culture cultivated in us. Second natures still bear the marks of first natures even after the culture that cultivated the first nature ceases to

cultivate. The Germans, for example, may remain a people guided by the historical sense long after their excessively historical culture is uprooted. A Christian people may exhibit inward signs of Christian morality (the prick of the Christian conscience, for example) long after they cease believing in the Christian God. Since parts of the old nature always remain, the effects that the new culture will have on the old cultivated nature are difficult to predict. Using critical history to initiate the process of cultivating a second nature could easily result in the cultivation of a worse nature than the first. Nonetheless, Nietzsche suggests that the risk is worth the reward because every first nature was once a victorious second nature. If no attempt is made to renew and enhance human nature, then humanity is at risk of degenerating into the blinking mediocrity of the cultivated philistine or the last man. Perhaps the highest form of nobility is to risk one's own human nature for the sake of the enrichment of the human nature of the future.

There are several crucial passages in *HL* in which Nietzsche speaks in his own name about critical history's power to alter human nature. These passages suggest that his intention in *HL* is to write a critical history of his time which will initiate a process of cultural renewal and a revivification of human nature. The first such passage occurs in section 9, at the climax of his critique of contemporary historicism. After criticizing Hartmann's historical psychology, Nietzsche passionately instructs the reader who has followed him this far to consider the violence done to humanity by the belief in the "world process," and to:

> ask yourself why you, as an individual, exist; and if no one can tell you, then just attempt to justify the meaning of your existence *a posterori*, as it were, by setting yourself a purpose, a goal, a 'reason why [*Dazu*],' a lofty and noble 'reason why.' Go ahead and perish in the attempt—I know of no better purpose in life than perishing in the attempt to accomplish something great and impossible, *animae magnae prodigus* [prodigal of a great soul].[154]

Nietzsche alludes here to the *a posteriori* manner of altering human nature that he attributed to critical history in section 3. He instructs his readers to evaluate critically their present existence, and if it appears valueless then they must assign value to it *a posteriori*. A worthless existence should be criticized and destroyed by positing a new purpose for existence, just as a worthless past should be criticized and destroyed by

positing a new purpose for the past. Implementing this scheme is difficult, dangerous, and even deadly, but a successful attempt holds out the promise of transforming the attempters into great or monumental men. The incentive to initiate the process of renewal is a love of the "noble [*edles*]," which is so powerful that attempters are willing to sacrifice themselves for something thought great but impossible. *HL* is a piece of critical history not only because it criticizes and condemns a decaying culture, but also because, like all critical histories, it issues an *a posteriori* rallying cry for the creation of new existential conditions.

The critique of German historicism elaborated in sections 4–9 of the essay thus culminates in the declaration that human existence in a decayed antiquarian or excessively historical culture is meaningless. That existence must be renewed through the actions of monumental men who will posit *a posteriori* a new "reason why," or a new goal for the cultivation of humanity.[155] This humanly created "reason why" will give meaning to an existence made meaningless by excessive exposure to history, and will serve as the foundation for a new history from which the human beings of the future will be descended. Since this "reason why" is determined *a posteriori*, it is created with experience and knowledge of the cultural successes and failures of the past. Apparently, not all historical knowledge is hostile to life, especially historical knowledge which teaches *a posteriori* the means by which culture can be used to improve human nature. This is why Nietzsche concludes *HL* with the enigmatic claim that the Germans cannot cure their historical sickness until they acquire knowledge of the ancient Greek concept of "culture as a new and improved *physis*."[156] Historical knowledge can solve the problem of history *a posteriori*.[157]

The second crucial passage which suggests that *HL* is a critical history of nineteenth-century Germany appears in the tenth and final section of the essay. The critical tenor of the essay is highlighted when Nietzsche sums up its message as an attempt to "*protest against the historical education of the modern human being in his youth*."[158] He argues that this protest is needed because German culture has perpetrated the lie that historical education is necessary for a properly cultivated nature. The effect of this lie on the German youth has been the opposite of the effect of the noble lie that Socrates suggested should be told to the youth of the just city in Plato's *Republic*.[159] The Socratic lie (about bronze, silver, and gold souls) ostensibly made Greek youths and the just city better because it provided an illusory foundation for proper education.

Socrates became curiously Nietzschean by creating a new past with his lie, which paved the way for the implementation of a new culture that would cultivate a new and improved Greek nature.

The German pedagogical lie that historical education is necessary, by contrast, makes German youths and the German state worse because it obstructs true education (which would seem to require illusion) with historical education (which privileges truth). To expose this lie and the sham education it venerates, Nietzsche says that German youths must be told the "necessary truth" about their impoverished cultural conditions. The necessary truth is that "the German has no culture for the simple reason that his [historical] education makes it impossible for him to have one."[160] The remedy he prescribes in section 10 for this lack of culture is identical to the remedy that critical history was said to provide for all sick cultures in section 3. In that section, he claimed that those who utilize critical history to re-create human nature know that every "first nature was once a second nature, and that every victorious second nature will become a first nature." He applies this same critical insight to his own time in section 10, when he tells the German youth that historicism's perversion of their nature has provided them with an opportunity to become founders of a new first nature and a new first generation of Germans. To found this new first generation, Nietzsche says that the current generation must become "great fighters *against history*" and "acquire new habits and a new nature and leave [their] old habits and first nature behind."[161] Historical education has made the current generation into "late-born offspring," but Nietzsche promises them that if they follow his critical advice, then "coming generations will know them only as firstborn."[162] They will be known, in other words, as founders worthy of monuments.

HL is critical history because—like all critical history—it provides a critical evaluation of a culture, in the wake of which it advocates for the monumental establishment of a new culture and nature to replace those it criticizes. The essay does not merely describe the use of history for life, it is an example of the use of history for life.

Section 10: An Historical Parable as the Bridge to *Schopenhauer as Educator*

The final section of *The Use and Disadvantage of History for Life* concludes with a historical parable whose meaning Nietzsche does not explain. The parable addresses directly the youths whom he had earlier tasked with destroying by critical means Germany's historicized conception of culture so that a path could be cleared for a new conception that would cultivate a new human nature. Nietzsche says that the intention of the parable is to relate the "course and progress" of a cure for the historical sickness so that the German youth can cease being "human like aggregates" molded by historical education, and can become "*human beings*" again.[163]

It is odd that a parable meant to relate a cure for the historical sickness would be historical. The parable features an enigmatic historical account of the means by which the ancient Greeks overcame their own historical malady and turned themselves into "the model for all future cultured peoples." Nietzsche said in the ninth section of *HL* that "history itself *must* solve the problem of history."[164] In section 10, he reveals that he was speaking quite literally.[165] The historical parable that solves the Germans' historical problem is itself a piece of history. The poison that caused the historical affliction is also its most powerful antidote. Ancient history vaccinates against modern history or historicism. This is why Nietzsche said in the foreword to *HL* that he had only understood Germany's historical illness "to the extent that I am a student of more ancient times—above all, of ancient Greece." It is also why he says in section 10 that the Greek parable he relates is meant to serve as a model of the "personal history" that each person fighting against nineteenth-century historicism should incorporate into his own history. What the Greeks of antiquity did to overcome their historical sickness, "every individual among us" today must also do.[166]

It is not immediately evident why Nietzsche calls the parable at the end of *HL* a parable. The parable begins by recalling the centuries in which the Greeks were still a fledgling people who found themselves threatened by a danger "similar" to the one the Germans now face: namely, the danger of perishing in a flood of things "alien and past." Long before the bloom of philosophic, dramatic, and political genius that marked the pinnacle of late Greek culture, early Greek culture was a "chaos" of Semitic, Babylonian, Lydian, and Egyptian forms and

concepts whose disorder resembled the disorder characteristic of culture in modern Germany. Unlike the contemporary Germans, however, who have embraced the fact that their culture has evolved into an "aggregate" of the cultures of world history, the Greeks sought to rid themselves of the influence of foreign cultures by heeding the God at Delphi's command to "know themselves" as individuals and as a people.

The result of the Greeks' search for self-knowledge, Nietzsche says, was that they learned how to "*organize the chaos*" that stirred inside them by concentrating on "themselves," or more precisely, on their "genuine needs [*ächten Bedürfnisse*]." Once they acquired knowledge of these needs, the Greeks were able to dispense with the "pseudo-needs" imposed on them by foreign cultures and create themselves anew in accord with their own inmost longings. By these means, Nietzsche says the early Greeks took "possession of themselves again" using a "practical interpretation" of Apollo's counsel to "know thyself." They shed their identity as the "glutted heirs and epigones of the orient" and created a rich cultural horizon out of which emerged an extraordinary number of the greatest poetic and philosophic geniuses in human history. Their solution to the impoverishment of their culture by history was, in a word, to become an ahistorical people who focused on their own cultivation and the creation of a new and distinctively Greek nature. They transformed their aggregate culture into a true culture, which Nietzsche defined in *DS* and *HL* as a "unity of artistic style that manifests itself throughout all the expressions of life of a people."[167] It is in this way that the Greeks became what he calls "the first cultured people, and hence the model for future peoples." They replaced their first nature with a second nature, which later became a first nature.

The parable Nietzsche relates about the Greeks' recovery from their own unique strain of the historical sickness is meant to serve as a blueprint for the convalescence of the Germans. If the "hopeful individuals" to whom *HL* is addressed pursue Apollo's directive to know themselves and concentrate on the fulfillment of their genuine needs, they too can free themselves from the deluge of historical influences that prohibit them from acquiring a genuine culture and nature. It is this directive to identify and organize one's genuine needs that Nietzsche explicitly identifies as "a parable for every individual" among the Germans. He adds that the Greek concept of culture as a "new and improved *physis*" will be disclosed to those who discover these needs for themselves. In *DS*, he accused modern Germany and its cultivated philistines of conceiving of

culture as mere "*decoration of life*" and refinement of taste. The conclusion to *HL* suggests that the early Greeks offer a solution to this problem because they discovered that culture properly pursued has the power to cultivate and improve a people's *physis* in the same way that agriculture improves the natural characteristics of their land.[168] The key to the Germans' recovery from the historical sickness lies therefore in their ability to unravel the "parable" of Greek self-discovery and self-knowledge. They must adopt the Greek concept of culture that results from the search for self-knowledge and use it to expose the dissimulation and inauthenticity characteristic of modern historical culture. A properly cultivated human nature like the one possessed by the Greeks exhibits what Nietzsche calls a harmony of "life, thought, appearance, and will." This is the harmony of a closed horizon. The Germans can harmonize their chaotic inner lives by mimicking the Greeks and cultivating by means of a closed horizon a second nature that will one day become the first nature of their posterity.

Once Nietzsche has alluded to the potential of culture rightly understood to make "new and improved" natures, he concludes *HL* by again addressing the German youth. When these youths grasp culture's power to alter nature, he says that they will also learn that it was the "higher power of *ethical* nature [*sittlichen Natur*]" that made possible the Greeks' victory over foreign cultures. The essay then ends, and Nietzsche never specifies what the content of the Greek's *sittlichen Natur* is. In Hegel's *Philosophy of Right*, however, which Nietzsche referenced in section 8 of *HL*, Hegel describes Greek *Sittlichkeit* as consisting of the social practices, political institutions, and cultural norms that formed the spiritual horizon of the ancient *polis* and gave the Greek citizen his identity.[169] He argues that Greek *Sittlichkeit* was not a fully self-conscious realization of ethical life because it did not allow for subjective particularity and individual freedom. Nietzsche, on the other hand, concludes *HL* by hinting that a form of German life modeled on the horizon of Greek *Sittlichkeit* Hegel rejects is the cure for the German historical sickness for which Hegel's philosophy is responsible.[170] Hegel, of all people, failed to see that history solves the problem of history.

The parable that concludes *HL* is thus parabolic in two major ways. First, like the parables in the Bible, it relays an ethical lesson whose deeper meaning is obscure but promises to offer a path to "redemption" (in this case from the historical sickness) when properly understood. Second, just as the teachings of Biblical parables are often so

ambiguous as to have the initial effect of confounding rather than edifying, Nietzsche's parable raises many more questions than it answers and leaves readers at a loss about the practical meaning of its imperative to seek self-knowledge. It is not clear how the Greeks' "practical interpretation [*praktische Auslegung*]" of Apollo's exhortation to seek self-knowledge transformed them into the "first cultured people." It is even less clear what it means to interpret "practically" an exhortation which seems on its face to be concerned with the purely inner or spiritual matter of self-knowledge. Furthermore, if the Greeks found their "genuine needs" in a quest for self-knowledge, then it is not clear how their concentration on these needs freed them from foreign influences and enabled them to make use of "the higher power of ethical nature [*sittliche Natur*]." Finally, it is exceedingly unclear what it means for culture itself to be disclosed as "new and improved *physis*" to those who organize their lives in accord with their genuine needs. In the analysis of critical history featured in section 3 of *HL*, Nietzsche presumed that human nature is so malleable that it is possible to acquire or mold a "new" nature through the work of prudent cultivation. His claim is seductive, to be sure, but he has not yet clarified what nature is or how the transformation of human nature works, especially if that transformation is initiated by permanent needs that cannot be transformed.[171]

In the chapter that follows I argue that *Schopenhauer as Educator* answers these questions and clarifies much of what is unclear in the parable at the end of *HL*. Nietzsche's account of the power of culture to transform human nature (and hence of the Greeks' "practical interpretation" of Apollo's directive) is contained in *SE*. It is not by chance that the subject of the final section of *HL* is the relationship between self-knowledge and culture.[172] This is the subject with which *Schopenhauer as Educator* begins, and I argue that *SE* is best read as an interpretation or elucidation of the mysterious parable that concludes *HL*.[173] The first section of *SE* explains how a young person can acquire self-knowledge by being cultivated or educated by a neo-Hellenic genius like Schopenhauer. In *RW*, Schopenhauer is compared to the Greek philosopher Empedocles and Wagner is compared to Aeschylus.[174] The essay then proceeds through a lengthy discussion of the means by which true culture and the monumental geniuses who create it can emerge in society again and reshape human nature.

In *HL*, Nietzsche suggested that German culture and nature could be restored by means of the creation of a new culture and nature. In *DS*,

he elaborated the significance of the genius for culture and lamented the lack of culture-shaping geniuses in contemporary Germany. *Schopenhauer as Educator* brings these two themes together in what is perhaps Nietzsche's clearest statement of the solution to the problem of the modern mis-cultivation of man.

Notes

1. In *EH*, Books, Untimelies 2 Nietzsche says that of the four essays, "the first was extraordinarily successful." Schaberg (1995, 44) shows that the first Meditation sold slightly less than 500 copies, whereas the second had sold less than 200. Brobjer (2004) says Nietzsche had "little or no interest" in *HL* after he published it, and that he "seems mostly to deny its argument" later in his life. This is contradicted by what Nietzsche says about *HL* in *EH,* Books, Untimelies 1. Brobjer tries to invalidate Nietzsche's account of *HL* in *EH* by speculating about his medical condition: "It is at least as likely that the statement [in *EH*], at this late stage, during the last few months before his mental collapse, indicates that [Nietzsche's] megalomania had grown to such a degree that he had problems recognizing or even admitting his previous mistakes" (Brobjer 2004, 310). I take Nietzsche at his word in my interpretation instead of attempting to serve as his psychiatrist.
2. Some examples include Zuckert (1976); Salaquarada (1984); Stambaugh (1987); Lacoue-Labarthe (1990); Nehamas (1991); Berkowitz (1995); Doran (2000); Most (2002); Brobjer (2004); Jensen (2008), (2016), and (2015); Jenkins (2014); Lemm (2007) and (2010); Lars (2008), and Large (2012).
3. See the works cited in footnote 2, especially Jensen (2016) and Jensen (2015). Also see Taylor (1997) and Yack (1986).
4. *DS* 2. Also see Chap. 2 of this volume.
5. *HL* 10. This up-to-date "babbler" bears a striking resemblance to the progressive Germans Strauss called his "We" in *The Old and New Faith.* See Strauss (1997, 119) and Chap. 2 of of this volume.
6. See Yack (1986, 326). Yack argues that the historical sense "produces the *Bildungsphilster* as its crowning achievement."
7. See Breazeale (1990, 69 fn1, 119–120). Ahern (1995, 10–50) provides a comprehensive analysis of the many ways in which Nietzsche understood himself to be a cultural physician. Dannhauser (1990, 75) also views *HL* as an instance of Nietzsche playing the role of cultural physician.
8. *HL* 7.

9. Ibid.
10. Ibid.
11. I do not address the political context in which *HL* was conceived, but my understanding of that context has benefited greatly from Emden (2006).
12. Beiser (2016, 133–154); Beiser (2011, 3–10).
13. Beiser (2011, 3).
14. The cultural method of history featured in the works of Jacob Burkhardt stands in stark contrast to the scientific method of history. Emden (2006, 23–25) shows that Burkhardt's method of history heavily influenced Nietzsche.
15. Jensen, (2013, 41–68; 134–141). Also see Brobjer (2007).
16. Jensen (2016, 103–129). Beiser argues that it is a misconception to think that historicists thought history could be a science only if it became an objective enterprise (2011, 7). Be this as it may, Nietzsche criticizes historical science's demand for objectivity in *HL* 6.
17. Niebuhr is named several times in *HL*. Jensen (2013 and 2016) has shown that the doctrines of these scholars heavily influenced Nietzsche, and that he owned and read several of their works.
18. *HL* 7. Beiser (2011, 7) argues that it is a misconception to think that historicists thought history could be a science only if it relinquished its status as an art. He observes that Herder, Humboldt, Ranke, and Simmel saw history as "in equal measure both science and art." Be this as it may, Nietzsche appears to treat historical science and historical art as mutually exclusive in *HL* 6.
19. Beiser (2011, 8–9) notes that Humbolt, Ranke, Dilthey, and Weber were highly critical of the philosophy of history because they feared its metaphysics would undermine the science of history itself.
20. *HL* 8.
21. See Hegel (1991, 372–380) and 1998 (92–98).
22. For a fuller analysis of the usage of the terms "*Geschichte*" and "*Historie*" in the essay, see Jensen (2016, 13) and (2008, 213–214). Jensen surmises that Nietzsche's selection of the term "*HIstorie*" indicates that his intention was to expound on history as an academic discipline. Large (2012, 93) observes that the word "*Historie*" is unusual in German, and that the standard word for history is *Geschichte*. Large says that *Historie* connotes historiography and the writing of history as an academic or scientific discipline.
23. It is worth noting that Nietzsche uses the term "*Historie*" in the essay's title. This may mean that his primary criticism in the piece is of scientific or academic history. This observation is born out by the fact that he spends more time criticizing scientific history than he does its

philosophic counterpart. One could also wonder whether Nietzsche is not as critical of the philosophy of history as he seems, and whether he might understand himself to be a new kind of historical philosopher. Cf. *BGE* 224.

24. *HL* 3.
25. *HL* 3. Lemm (2011) provides a helpful and thorough account of what Nietzsche means when he says that life is unjust.
26. *GS* 26.
27. See the closing paragraphs of *HL* 9 and the opening paragraphs of *HL* 10.
28. Taylor (1997, 74–76) shows that frameworks like this are common in Nietzsche's thought but highly problematic. He observes that Nietzsche anticipates a rebirth of myth in the modern age, yet science had demonstrated the erroneous basis of myth. The burden is on Nietzsche to show how myth can be reintroduced to culture in a compelling way in the age of science. Church (2015, 55) does not think Nietzsche should be understood as "a simple defender of closing our 'horizons.'"
29. My interpretation of these sections and the use I make of them to understand *SE* and *RW* stands in contrast to Brobjer (2004), who argues that "Nietzsche he changed his views on history, and for the rest of his active life his views were rather different from the ones he had put forward in the second Untimely Meditaiton.
30. Morely (2004, 29–31) gives a helpful and precise account of the way in which Nietzsche thought the Greeks were "ahistorical."
31. See Nietzsche's comparison of the modern mind to the Greek mind in *HL* 4.
32. All quotations in this section appear in *HL* Foreword or section 1 unless otherwise noted. I have separated those that appear in the foreword from those that appear in section 1 by noting those that appear in section 1.
33. My italics.
34. Goethe's letter to Schiller, 19 December 1798. A copy of the letter is available in English in *Correspondence between Schiller and Goethe, From 1794 to 1805*, vol. 2, p. 181–182. The reference is to Goethe's reading of Kant's *Anthropology*.
35. *SE* 4.
36. Ibid.
37. *HL* 1. Goethe is quoted 3 times in the foreword and first section of *HL*. Also see Nietzsche's reference to Goethe's *Maxims and Reflections* in *HL* 1: "Just as anyone who acts, in Goethe's words, is always without conscience, so he is always without knowledge: he forgets most things

in order to do one thing." Goethe is again presented as a man of knowledge who thought that knowledge was detrimental to action.

38. *SE* 4.
39. See *HL* 10 for Nietzsche's claim that the historically educated person is a cultivated philistine. See the introduction to Chap. 2 of this volume for an account of Strauss's cultivated philistines.
40. *HL* 1.
41. Ibid.
42. Ibid.
43. Ibid. Dannhauser (1990, 76) observes that Nietzsche's claim that children and animals can be happy marks a major departure from Aristotle. Church (2015, 34–35) argues that this passage indicates that Nietzsche thinks human beings have two "contradictory *teloi*." The first is life, the second is "freedom from nature's imperatives and ends." Much of Church's interpretation of Nietzsche as a friend to freedom and democracy depends on whether this second telos is indeed present in Nietzsche's understanding of human nature.
44. Ibid.
45. Ibid.
46. Ibid. See Zuckert (1976, 58) for an account of the implications of this passage for Nietzsche's view of the limits of knowledge and reason.
47. Nietzsche explicitly praises the historical sense as a virtue in *HL*, although he qualifies his praise by calling it a "hypertrophied virtue" whose inflammation has resulted in a spiritual disease. Twelve years after writing *HL*, Nietzsche again called the historical sense "our great virtue" in the section of *Beyond Good and Evil* entitled "Our Virtues" (*BGE* 224).
48. *DS* 1.
49. *HL* 1.
50. Ibid.
51. Ibid.
52. *DS* 1.
53. *Ibid*. Cf. *HL* 4.
54. See Berkowitz (1995, 31) for a fuller analysis of suprahistorical human beings.
55. Richard Gray notes in his translation that the source of the quotation is unknown.
56. *HL 1*, Nietzsche's emphasis.
57. Ibid.
58. Ibid.
59. Ibid.
60. *HL* 10.

61. Ibid.
62. Ibid.
63. Cf. *HL* 10 and *SE* 1.
64. *HL* 8. Emden (2006, 29) interprets this quotation to mean that historical orientation is a constant process of revision and reexamination. I agree with Emden that this process continues to inform Nietzsche's project.
65. These four theses are stated in the final paragraphs of section 1. The rest of the quotations in this section of the chapter appear in *HL* 2 unless otherwise noted.
66. This is what David Strauss did to Jesus in *The Life of Jesus Critically Examined*.
67. *HL* 4.
68. My emphasis.
69. Nietzsche devotes almost two times more space to describing monumental history than he does to antiquarian or critical. Jenkins (2014, 169–179) has convincingly argued that monumental history is the most important of the three to Nietzsche, and that many of its concepts guide his later work. Zarathustra, for example, would be a monumental figure meant to inspire life. Large (2012, 95) agrees that Nietzsche "defends a more monumental, elitist view of history." Jensen (2016, 15) says it is unclear which of the three Nietzsche prefers, but that monumental is the most advantageous. He then argues that monumental was not Nietzsche's favorite, and that Nietzsche did not privilege any of the three modes (74). Jensen also argues that the monumental-antiquarian-critical triad is not a central theme of the essay because Nietzsche added it after composing the later parts (68–69). In (2013, 84), Jensen seems to indicate that Nietzsche favors critical history. Emden (2006) does not explicitly weigh in on the debate of which mode of history Nietzsche favored, but he does observe that the political circumstances surrounding the composition of *HL* point in the direction of the need for monumental history. Large (2012, 94) thinks that "the most lasting contribution" of *HL* is it's the division between monumental, antiquarian, and critical history.
70. Jenkins (2014, 170–172) persuasively argues that monumental history is the history of the ancient world.
71. Lemm (2011) argues that history that is unjust to the past can provide the material for a just life.
72. Cf. *TSZ*, Prologue 2.
73. Cf. *TSZ*, Prologue 3.
74. See Zuckert (1976, 61) for an account of the self-conscious character of monumental history.

75. This definition of life appears in *HL* 3.
76. *HL* 6. Also see Nietzsche's claim in *HL* 9 that there are "a hundred more people than there were a hundred years ago who know what poetry is; perhaps a hundred years from now there will be a hundred more who meanwhile will also have learned what culture is, and will have learned that the Germans no matter how much they might speak of it and flaunt it, to this day simply have had no culture."
77. Church (2015, xi) argues that it is a "recurring interpretive mistake" to think that Nietzsche advocates any kind of hero worship. Whether monumental history constitutes hero worship is debatable, but in general, my interpretation of Nietzsche's preference for monumental history stands in opposition to Church on this point.
78. *DS* 1.
79. Quotations in this paragraph appear in *HL* 2 unless otherwise noted.
80. *HL* 4.
81. Quotations from the remaining paragraphs in this section appear in *HL* 3 unless otherwise noted.
82. Goethe (1986, 8–9).
83. Ibid.
84. Cf. *HL* 4–6.
85. See Lemm (2011, 175–177) for a more complete account of the corruption of antiquarian history.
86. Emden (2010, 18–22) discusses many of the antiquarian tendencies with which Nietzsche was familiar as a classical philologist.
87. Brobjer (2004, 313) tries to defend Nietzsche as a lover of academic history.
88. See Chap. 2 of this volume and *DS* 8.
89. *HL*, Foreword.
90. Nietzsche even refers to the "virtues and gifts" of antiquarian history in *HL* 3.
91. *HL*, Foreword.
92. *HL* 4, Nietzsche's emphasis.
93. Nietzsche uses *Wissenschaft* and *Geleherten* interchangeably in *HL*. He also does this in *BGE* part 6, whose subject is scholarship and the scientific type.
94. *HL* 4.
95. *HL*, 5.
96. Ibid.
97. Ibid. Cf. *HL* 3.
98. *HL* 6. See Lemm (2011) and Berkowitz (1995, 36–38) for a fuller analysis of this section.
99. *HL* 3.

100. *HL* 6. Doran (2000, 324) makes the interesting observation that the truly objective historian as Nietzsche understands him matches the description of the Dionysiac poet in *BT*. He also helpfully explains the way that Nietzsche's subject-centered metaphysics factor into his conception of the aesthetic historian.
101. *HL* 7.
102. *DS* 8.
103. See Chap. 2 of this volume for an explanation of philistine culture and cultivated philistinism.
104. *HL* 10.
105. Also see the end of section 9, in which Nietzsche describes further the egoism of his time.
106. *HL* 8.
107. See Hegel (1991, 372–380) and 1988 (92–98).
108. *HL* 8.
109. Dannhauser (1990, 76) makes a similar observation and has shaped my understanding of Nietzsche's relationship to Hegel.
110. Nietzsche argues in *HL* 9 that David Strauss and Eduard von Hartmann are among these followers.
111. *HL* 8.
112. Stated otherwise in section 3 of HL, antiquarian history can make a people feel as though "it grows as the blossom and the fruit of a past that is its inheritance, and thereby excuses, indeed justifies, its existence."
113. See the last lines of Hegel's preface to the *Philosophy of Right*.
114. *HL* 8, my emphasis.
115. *HL* 3.
116. *HL* 8.
117. Ibid.
118. Ibid.
119. Ibid.
120. See Strauss (1989, 24–26). Jensen (2013, 105) argues that teleological historiography leads to cultural nihilism.
121. See Jensen (2006, 41–61) and (2013, 100–104) for a comprehensive analysis of Nietzsche's presentation of Hartmann.
122. Jensen (2006, 48).
123. Jensen (2013, 103) and (2006, 45).
124. *HL* 9.
125. See *DS* 2–3 and Chap. 2 of this volume.
126. *DS* 2.
127. Nietzsche uses the word "blink" in a similar way to describe both the modern German in *HL* 9, and the last man in *TSZ*, Preface 5.

128. *HL* 9. Nietzsche also calls both men "cynics." See the end of *DS* 3 and his description of Hartmann in *HL* 9.
129. Ibid.
130. Ibid.
131. Ibid.
132. Ibid.
133. *HL* 3.
134. Church (2015, 69) provides a helpful account of what Nietzsche means by "republic of genius" and explains how the republic serves as a cultivating influence on humanity.
135. *HL* 9.
136. *SE* 6.
137. Large (2012, 95) concurs that *HL* "prepares the way for the two exemplary portraits, of Schopenhauer and Wagner, that he draws in the next two Untimely essays."
138. *HL* 4.
139. *HL* 2: "But one thing will live on: the signature of their most authentic being, a work, a deed, a rare inspiration, a creation."
140. Despite his many apparent assertions to the contrary, there are legitimate grounds for wondering how far Nietzsche's thought truly strays from Hegel's claim that history unfolds in a rational or at least predictable manner.
141. Zuckert (1976, 64) makes a similar argument to which I am indebted.
142. Zuckert (1976, 62) also notices this.
143. *HL* 3.
144. Zuckert (1976, 62–63) also argues that "Nietzsche engages in 'critical history.'"
145. Emden (2006, 30) is a helpful resource for understanding the historical context of Nietzsche's critique of historicism. Emden also concludes that *HL* adopts a position of "critical historicism," although on very different grounds than I do.
146. See the beginning of *HL* 5 for Nietzsche's list of the five respects.
147. *HL* 9 and 10.
148. *HL* Foreword and 1.
149. *HL* 3.
150. For additional evidence that Nietzsche thinks human nature is malleable, see *SE* 5–6 and my interpretation of these sections in this volume.
151. See Berkowitz (1995, 29): The art of the genuine historian springs from and reflects his understanding; his ethics hinges upon his metaphysics; his making is based on knowing." And (1995, 34): "Nietzsche uses the term nature to denote something essentially man-made and perishable, the nameless and vague standard which nevertheless condemns the 'first

nature' and governs the fashioning of the 'second nature' has no identifiable maker and no apparent limits to its duration."

152. See Zuckert (1976, 65): "If human nature can be changed, men can again, honestly and rationally, desire to produce a better life."
153. *HL* 3.
154. *HL* 9.
155. Consider these remarks in light of *TSZ*.
156. *HL* 10. The paragraphs that follow diverge from Church (2015, 209), who says that it is wrong to think that Nietzsche thought "what was appropriate for the Greeks was appropriate for the moderns." In the last paragraph of *HL* 10, Nietzsche advises the Germans to resurrect the concept of Greek culture.
157. Cf. Nietzsche's claim in section 9 that "history must solve the problem of history."
158. *HL* 10, Nietzsche's emphasis.
159. *Republic*, 414b–415d. It could be argued that in Socrates's ideal city a second generation was educated to become a first generation, or that Socrates created a new past on the basis of which a second generation became a first generation.
160. *HL* 10.
161. *HL* 10. My emphasis.
162. *HL* 10.
163. *HL* 10. All quotations in this section appear in HL 10 unless otherwise noted.
164. *HL* 9.
165. Yack (1986, 334) makes a similar observation. He shows how and why Nietzsche thinks that it is "our remembrance of other cultures is what teaches us to forget them. The need to limit historical knowledge is derived from historical knowledge."
166. Nietzsche alluded to the Greek solution to the problem of the historical sickness in *HL* 7: "But even if we were happy to accept our calling as descendants of antiquity, even if we were resolved to take this calling seriously and pursue it vigorously and to acknowledge this vigor as our distinguishing and unique privilege—in spite of this we would still have to ask whether we are forever doomed to being the disciplines of a fading antiquity. At some time or other we may be allowed gradually to set our goal higher and farther; at some time or other we should be able to praise ourselves for having recreated ourselves in the spirit of Hellenistic and Roman culture—even by means of our universal history—in such a fruitful and magnificent manner, so that we now, by way of the most noble reward, can charge ourselves with the even more prodigious task of striving to go behind this Hellenistic world and seek our models in

the primordial world of ancient Greece with all its greatness, naturalness, and humanity. *But here we will also find the reality of an essentially ahistorical cultivation and of a form of cultivation that despite—or precisely of—this fact is indescribably rich and vital.*"

167. *DS* 1, *HL* 4.
168. See Berkowitz (1995, 40–41) for a helpful discussion of this passage.
169. Hegel (1991, secs. 145–155.) See Luther (2004, 152): "[it is only by] sacrificing their particularity, abandoning any conception of themselves as individuals apart from their cultural identity, and subordinating their separate and particular interests to the shared [spiritual] interests of the community that members of ancient *Sittlichkeit* come to see themselves as the kind of beings they are—individual instantiations of the shared spirit of their community."
170. See Hegel (1991, sec. 124): "The right of the subject's particularity, his right to be satisfied, or in other words, the right of subjective freedom, is the pivot and center of the difference between antiquity and modern times. This right in its infinity is given expression in Christianity and it has become the universal effective principle of a new form of civilization. Amongst the primary shapes which this right assumes are love, romanticism, the quest for the eternal salvation of the individual […], next come moral convictions and conscience; and, finally, the other forms, some of which come into prominence in what follows as the principle of civil society." See Church (2011, 57–63) for a helpful interpretation of what Hegel meant by *Sittlichkeit*, and Church (2011, 154–169) for an account of how Nietzsche thinks human beings become individuals through ethical activity.
171. See Zuckert (1976, 66).
172. Zuckert (1976) also makes this connection.
173. See Zuckert (1976) for a similar claim. Also see Berkowitz, (1995, 40–41): "Nietzsche insists that modern man must do as the Greeks did: each must organize the chaos within him by thinking back to his real needs." Berkowtitz reads Nietzsche's essay on history as I do, but he concludes that Nietzsche: "does not clarify the difficulty involved in treating *physis*, which is by definition above and untouched by human will, as the subject of human will; and [Nietzsche] leaves uncertain how a higher moral nature can serve as the foundation of a culture where culture is understood as the creation of a new nature." In the chapter that follows, I argue that Nietzsche does explain these matters, only he does so in *Schopenhauer as Educator* instead of *HL*.
174. *RW* 4.

CHAPTER 4

Schopenhauer as Educator

Introduction: Nietzsche as Educator

Schopenhauer as Educator (*SE*) concludes Nietzsche's critical task in the *Untimely Meditations* and marks the beginning of his creative one. In *David Strauss the Confessor and the Writer* and *The Use and Disadvantage of History for Life*, he took modern culture and education to task for numbing and narrowing the modern soul. In *Schopenhauer as Educator* and its sequel *Richard Wagner in Bayreuth*, he sketches a plan to revitalize the modern soul by fostering a cultural climate that facilitates the emergence of a new kind of cultural genius who can cultivate human nature anew. The third Untimely Meditation is the sequel to the second because it begins the process of rebuilding the culture that the second destroyed through its critical history of historicism. It is the sequel to the first Meditation because it provides an image (*Bild*) of a monumental and authentic genius in the person of Arthur Schopenhauer, whose life and works stand in sharp contrast to the pseudo-genius David Strauss and his mediocre writings. The promise Schopenhauer holds out of being able to cultivate a true culture (*Bildung*) through his philosophy, and the promise Wagner holds out of being able to transfigure that philosophy into life-inspiring art, point the way toward antidotes to the culture of cultivated philistinism described in *DS* and *HL*. The *Untimely Meditations* bearing the names of Schopenhauer and Wagner present images of the types of creative cultural geniuses whose emergence Nietzsche thinks is necessary to create a new past—and hence a new first nature—in Germany.

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Although the essays on Schopenhauer and Wagner are ostensibly about the men named in their titles, there are compelling reasons to suspect that neither piece is wholly or even primarily about the man it appears to praise. In *Ecce Homo*, for instance, Nietzsche reveals that the third and fourth *Untimely Meditations* were not intended to be psychological portraits of the two men they purport to describe.[1] On the contrary, he says that when he wrote the last two Meditations his aim was to use Schopenhauer and Wagner to present "an unequaled problem of education" and a "new concept of self-discipline," which were articulated poetically by:

> catching hold of two famous and as yet altogether undiagnosed types, as one catches hold of an opportunity, in order to say something, in order to have at hand a few more formulas, signs, means of language. […] Plato employed Socrates in this fashion, as a sign language for Plato.[2]

Plato famously admitted in his second letter that he had beautified the Socrates that Nietzsche calls a "sign language" for his philosophy.[3] Similarly, Nietzsche beautifies Schopenhauer and Wagner in the last two Untimely Meditations and uses them as a sign language for his own new philosophy. This is the reason he declares in *Ecce Homo* that *SE* presents "my concept of the philosopher," which is "worlds removed" from the conventional conception of what a philosopher is.[4] The essay bearing Schopenhauer's name uses its protagonist as a character in a drama that tells a much larger philosophic story than meets the eye.

In 1877, just three years after *SE* was published, Nietzsche expressed similar thoughts on *SE* in a letter to his friend Paul Deussen. He confessed that "already, when I wrote my essay on Sch[openhauer], I no longer held fast to any of the dogmatic points [of his philosophy]."[5] Oddly, and somewhat fittingly, Nietzsche was no longer a Schopenhauerian when he wrote *Schopenhauer as Educator*, and many scholars have observed that the essay is not about Schopenhauer's philosophy.[6]

If Nietzsche's remarks to Deussen are true then they beg the obvious question of precisely what *SE* is about. To answer this question, it is helpful to turn once again to *Ecce Homo*. There, a much older Nietzsche revealed that the cultural genius whose nature he described in his essays on Schopenhauer and Wagner, and whose works he thought could provide a foundation for a new culture, was Friedrich Nietzsche. He reiterated this seemingly haughty remark

in a letter to Georg Brandes in 1888, in which he emphasized that "the two essays on Schopenhauer and Richard Wagner are, as it seems to me now, confessions about myself—above all, they are avowals to myself, rather than, say, real psychological accounts of those two masters."[7] Two months later, Nietzsche again told Brandes that *SE* "contains the basic scheme according to which I have so far lived; it is a rigorous promise."[8] Although he did not fully realize it at the time he wrote *SE* and *RW*, the essays are about the creative cultural genius and educator that Nietzsche himself was starting to become. In hindsight, he said that *SE* in particular "speaks basically only of me," and that it is not "'Schopenhauer as Educator' who speaks here but rather 'Nietzsche as Educator.'"[9] In both essays, he says that his intention was to provide "hints toward a *higher* conception of 'culture,'" in which "two images [*Bild*] of the harshest *egoism* [and] *self-discipline* are set up: […]—Schopenhauer and Wagner *or*, in one word, Nietzsche."[10] *Schopenhauer as Educator* is about what it means to be educated and cultivated by a towering and profound genius. It is the first hint toward a higher conception of culture because it presents an alternative to the philistine culture criticized in its prequels.

There are likely many reasons Nietzsche believed himself to be a combination of Schopenhauer and Wagner, but few loom larger than the fact that the concept of philosophy he presents in *SE* and *RW* transforms it into a culture shaping force that consists of both philosophic discovery, and artistic creation.[11] This is why Nietzsche says in *Ecce Homo* that *SE* contains an account of "how I understand the philosopher." Looking forward twelve years to *Beyond Good and* Evil, it is perhaps also why the "new philosopher" described in that work is called a "Caesarian cultivator and powerful man of culture [dem cäsarischen Züchter und Gewaltmenschen der Cultur]."[12] A philosopher for Nietzsche is someone who partly or entirely creates the world and the "nature" about which he philosophizes.[13] Our limited access to truth, combined with the true but deadly status of the "doctrines of sovereign becoming and the fluidity of all concepts, types, and species," necessitate a more creative task for philosophy than the traditional conception permits.[14] Nietzsche's philosophers would seem to combine the intellectual perspicacity of a thinker like Schopenhauer with the artistic and world creating powers of a supreme artist like Wagner. Stated otherwise in *Beyond Good and Evil*: the philosopher reaches for the future with a "creative hand" because their "'knowing' is *creating*, their creating is a legislation.[15] Philosophy is a "tyrannical drive" to the "creation of the world," and the philosopher

is the "complementary man in whom the *rest* of existence is justified."[16] *Schopenhauer as Educator* serves as a preview of Nietzsche's later conception of philosophy because it too presents the philosopher as a creative and "redeeming human being [*erlösenden Mensch*]," whose activity justifies existence by making it "intelligible and meaningful for human beings."[17]

Beyond Good and Evil is not the only one of Nietzsche's later writings on which *SE* sheds valuable light.[18] If the older Nietzsche truly understood himself to be the redeeming philosopher-artist depicted in the combined teaching of *SE* and *RW*, then he must have thought he had proven himself to be someone capable of creating artistically a new past which could serve as the foundation for a new understanding of nature and human nature in the future.[19] Such a created past would amount to the monumental history described in *HL*, and it would provide the foundation for a new culture that could cultivate a new and higher type of human being. Scott Jenkins has argued persuasively that Nietzsche's *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* was precisely this kind of monumental history.[20] According to Jenkins, Nietzsche poetically created Zarathustra as an "invented type" meant to inspire health and life-affirmation for himself and his future readers. In this sense, Nietzsche was not only a thinker like Schopenhauer, he was also an artist like Wagner who created new myths (or pasts) to serve as foundations for culture. In a letter written to Franz Overbeck in August of 1884, Nietzsche linked *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* to his broader philosophic task as he presented it in *Schopenhauer as Educator*:

> I have *lived in the very manner* that I sketched out for myself in advance [in *Schopenhauer as Educator*]. In case you should find the time to look at *Zarathustra*, take *Schopenhauer as Educator* along with you as well, simply for the sake of comparison. (The *error* of the latter is that it is not really about Schopenhauer, but almost solely about me—but I myself did not realize this as I was writing it).[21]

Just as the overman remedies the problem of the last man in *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, the "redeeming human being" and philosopher presented in *SE* provides the remedy for the last man-like cultivated philistine described in the first two Untimely Meditations. The redeeming task of such philosophers is bound up with the fact that they are the creators of values, truths, and even of "nature" itself. Nietzsche is both the herald

for the redeeming philosopher and a kind of redeeming philosopher, just as Zarathustra was both a herald for the overman and a kind of overman. This is why he proudly declared in *Ecce Homo* that *Schopenhauer as Educator* contains "my innermost history, my *becoming*." When he wrote *SE*, he was on the verge of being the new philosopher he had been slowly becoming for the past decade. He also announces in *Ecce Homo* that *Richard Wagner in Bayreuth* presents "a vision of my future." This "vision" is that of a creator of monumental myths and images that can cultivate human nature anew.

Interpretation of *Schopenhauer as Educator*

Since *Schopenhauer as Educator* is perhaps the most confusingly organized of Nietzsche's four *Untimely Meditations*, it will be useful to summarize our path through the text before embarking. My interpretation of *SE* begins with a series of observations meant to show how sections 1–2 of the essay continue Nietzsche's exploration of the two most prominent themes in the parable in *HL*: the theme of acquiring self-knowledge, and the theme of enriching human nature by using culture to improve *physis*. The discussion of these two themes sets the stage for a subsequent discussion of section 3 of *SE* and Nietzsche's account of his admiration of Arthur Schopenhauer as a man and a philosopher. Here, I analyze Nietzsche's claim that Schopenhauer made a physiological impression on him that made him feel more "natural," that made his existence seem more meaningful, and that ultimately remedied in his own soul the "disquiet [and] confusion" that characterizes modern souls and "condemns them to be unfruitful and joyless."[22] I understand the sickness of the soul Nietzsche is describing in *SE* to be identical to the one whose cause he attributed to excessive historicism and antiquarian history in *HL*. The symptoms of that sickness are the practical paralysis, unfruitfulness, and "weak personality" of a people—especially their youth.[23]

The first part of my interpretation of section 3 outlines the Schopenhauerian remedy Nietzsche applied to his own soul in order to cure his spiritual illness. The second part examines how he universalizes this remedy and applies it to the Germans, and indeed to modern man more generally, in section 4. According to Nietzsche, modern culture can be saved from its impending spiritual collapse by a very rare type of genius whose formal model he found in monumental geniuses like Rousseau, Goethe, and Schopenhauer. These authentic geniuses

are the opposite of pseudo-geniuses like David Strauss, and the cultural antidote to the cultivated philistinism Strauss cultivated. Their extraordinary intellectual, spiritual, and creative capacities permit them to cultivate [*Bildung*] new "images [*Bild*]" of what human beings should strive to become in the future. They make second natures into first natures, and Nietzsche thinks they must rise and cultivate humanity anew to save Germany, and perhaps all of the humanity, from sliding even deeper into decay. In the later sections of *SE*, he calls this rare type of cultivator "the redeeming human being" and "the true human being" because their existences redeem nature as a force capable of continually improving upon human *physis*, and elevating mankind ever higher above their animal origins. In fact, Nietzsche seems to suggest that nature is capable of creating almost god-like human beings whose creations furnish the people among whom they live with an ahistorical horizon of meaning which cultivates their ethical (or *sittliche*) nature.[24] The "redeeming human beings" featured in *SE*, and the self-knowledge we all must acquire in order properly to long for them, constitute the most necessary of the "genuine needs" the early Greeks were said to have discovered on their quest for self-knowledge in the parable that concluded *HL*. *SE* instructs the Germans to discover and fulfill these same needs. When the Greeks organized their lives around the production of high human types, their culture began cultivating geniuses at an unprecedented rate whose works imbued Greek culture and identity with meaning.[25]

Once my analysis of the redeeming human being is complete, I turn to an analysis of Nietzsche's account of the painful process of self-discovery he says his readers must undergo in order to transform themselves into the sorts of people who can create the conditions necessary for the emergence of redeeming geniuses in Germany. In sections 5 and 6 of *SE*, he says that the creation of these conditions requires those who are not redeeming types to acquire self-knowledge of their defective natures, to despise themselves and their lack of intelligence, and to devote their lives to "paving the way for and promoting" the production of higher types by discovering all that is "hostile to [their] development and sweeping it aside." These remarks bear a striking resemblance to Zarathustra's teaching that the greatest event a person can experience is the "hour of [his] great despising," when he acknowledges his own baseness and inferiority to the overman.[26] Nietzsche concludes in these sections that "culture [Kultur]" is "the child of every individual's self-knowledge," and presumably of the self-despising acquired

through self-knowledge. Once this self-knowledge is acquired, he says that it "charges each of us with one single task: *to foster the production of philosophers, artists, and saints* [i.e., redeeming human beings] *within and around us, and thereby to work toward the perfection of nature*."[27] Deciphering the meaning of this extraordinary statement is crucial for understanding Nietzsche's intention in the *Untimely Meditations*, and much of my interpretation of *SE* revolves around this task.[28] When Nietzsche said in the parable that concludes *HL* that the Greeks utilized a "practical interpretation" of Apollo's imperative to know themselves, he seems to have had in mind the complex relationship between self-knowledge and personal action he sketches in *SE*.

Following my account of the connection between Nietzsche's exhortation to search for self-knowledge and his claim that culture is at once the "child of every individual's self-knowledge" and the "perfection of nature," I turn to the difficult question of how Nietzsche understands the term "nature" in his early works. My intention in approaching this complex question is by no means to settle it once and for all, but rather to shed light on what Nietzsche means in sections 5–7 when he argues that redeeming human beings are "bound to and bound up with nature," and that the task of culture is to perfect *physis* by fostering their production.[29] According to Nietzsche, nature sought in producing the redeeming man "to make existence intelligible and meaningful for [all] human beings." [30] But because nature's goals far exceed its capacities, it must be cultivated if it wants to overcome the "ineptitude" it commonly evinces in its utilization of the human geniuses it has labored for millennia to perfect.

In the concluding pages of my interpretation, I therefore investigate the conditions Nietzsche thinks his readers must cultivate and the obstacles he thinks they must remove from modern life to insure that nature more frequently produces redeeming types. Chief among these obstacles are the modern liberal state and its educational institutions, both of which Nietzsche takes to task in section 8 of *SE*. According to my interpretation of this section, Nietzsche is an opponent of modern liberal politics and an advocate for a state whose focus is the maintenance of a cultural aristocracy and a Platonic devotion to the creation of philosophers.[31] This interpretation places my view of Nietzsche's early politics in opposition to those of Jeffrey Church and James Conant, both of whom have made compelling arguments that the early Nietzsche was much friendlier to liberalism and democracy than interpretations like

mine suggest.[32] In my view, however, the fourth and final Meditation, *Richard Wagner in Bayreuth*, provides compelling evidence for thinking Nietzsche was a proponent of the type of cultural aristocracy alluded to at the end of *SE*. The very title of *RW* invokes that cultural aristocracy because it emphasizes the role that a genius (Wagner) can play in creating and leading a closed cultural "city" (Bayreuth).

Section 1: How One Discovers What One Is

Schopenhauer as Educator opens with the provocative claim that the single characteristic "common to all of humanity" is laziness.[33] Although Nietzsche puts this insight into the mouth of an anonymous traveler who is said to have discovered it on his journeys to various lands, he judges the traveler's insight to be "right." He also observes that fear is the most frequent byproduct of the laziness the traveler describes. Our laziness cultivates a fear of "those hardships that unconditional honesty and nakedness" foist upon us. This fear compels us, in turn, to "think and act like a part of a herd" instead of taking pleasure in being ourselves. For the most part, human beings hide their true selves behind conventions and opinions that are alien to who they are at bottom. They talk with the words of others, think with the thoughts of others, and never encounter the world on their own terms. Like the Greeks in the parable that concluded *HL*, whose identity as a people was once threatened by a "flood of things alien," the German people have lost themselves—or have never known themselves at all. They must follow the path of their Greek counterparts and search for self-knowledge if they are to cure themselves of their debilitating historical sickness. "How can we find ourselves again? How can the human being get to know himself?" These are the questions Nietzsche asks his readers at the beginning of *SE*. By prodding them with such questions, he signals his intention to play the role of the Delphic Oracle for modern times.[34]

In an age in which human beings are what Nietzsche calls "mass produced commodities" who are more likely to fall in with the herd instead of being their true selves, the "self" is an obscure and lost concept. It is exceedingly difficult to recover that concept from the obscurity into which it has fallen because fashion and convention are timely. On the very first page of *SE*, Nietzsche tries to overcome this timeliness by giving his readers an untimely sense for what he means by the concept of the "self." He does so by appealing to their vanity. "At bottom," he

says, "every human being knows […] that no coincidence, regardless of how strange, will ever for a second time concoct out of this amazingly variegated diversity, the unity that he is." The self, it would seem, is something unique to the body it occupies, something which determines who we are at the bottom and that can only exist once in the world. Furthermore, the distinctive physical and spiritual expressions of each human being attest to the fact that every self is a "one-of-a-kind miracle," that each person "down to the movement of his muscles is himself and himself alone," and that in the "strict consistency of [our] uniqueness [we] are as novel and incredible as every work of nature, and anything but boring." It is not clear whether Nietzsche truly believes that *every* self is beautiful (he attributes this sentiment to a mind that is not his own), but the flattering effect that these comments would have on the vanity of the "young souls" to whom *SE* is addressed is not difficult to see.

Nietzsche also claims in *SE* 1 that the conscience of youth constantly cries out "Be yourself!" It longs to acquire happiness by being liberated from the "chains of opinions and fear" that restrain it. If this statement is true, then Nietzsche's remarks on the uniqueness of each self send a signal to young readers that they have found an educator who can show them how to find themselves. Nietzsche's knowledge of the self gives readers the impression that he has found and liberated his true self from the chains he describes, thereby becoming the unique person he is. "Your educators," Nietzsche emphasizes, "can be nothing other than your liberators." Although he admits that there are other ways to go about finding oneself, he concludes that he knows "no better way" than to reflect on how his own educator, Arthur Schopenhauer, helped him find himself. His task in *Schopenhauer as Educator* is therefore to describe the sort of "teacher and taskmaster" that Schopenhauer was. By reflecting on how a superior self like Schopenhauer helped him acquire self-knowledge, Nietzsche intends to foster in his own readers a longing for the superior self that is "Nietzsche as Educator."[35]

The secondary effect that Nietzsche's comments on the self have on his young readers' souls is a corollary to the first. By flattering his audience with remarks about their beauty in the same breath in which he tells them they are lazy, he opens them up not only to accepting him as their educator, but also to accepting him as what he calls their "taskmaster." He provokes his readers to prove through their deeds that his assumptions about their laziness and herd mentality are wrong. When a "great

thinker disdains human beings," Nietzsche says—leading us suspect that he is the great thinker he does not name—"it is their laziness he disdains, for it is laziness that makes them appear to be mass produced commodities, to be indifferent, unworthy of human interchange and instruction." Immediately after making this remark, Nietzsche challenges his readers to "cease going easy" on themselves, and to assume the "dangerous undertaking" of self-discovery. His readers must prove that they are worthy of being his students. His rhetoric instills within those it captivates a hunger to think through—and perhaps even to carry out—the revolutionary cultural task whose details he elaborates in the second half of the essay. To prove you are not lazy, he seems to say, follow me.

After gently seducing his young readers into thinking that they possess the most beautiful sorts of selves and then openly challenging them to prove it through their deeds, Nietzsche turns to an account of the means by which they can begin to uncover their true selves if they should dare. By looking back on their lives and asking themselves the question: "what have you up to now truly loved, what attracted your soul, [and] what dominated it while simultaneously making it happy?," a series of objects will emerge before their young eyes whose order reveals the "fundamental law" of their "authentic selves," and whose sequence produces a "stepladder" at the top rung of which their "true being" lies. The question of who or what we are, in other words, is not separable from the question of what we love or long for. The rank order of our loves provides us with the most penetrating piece of self-knowledge we can acquire. Just as the Greeks' search for self-knowledge in *HL* was said to consist in the internal organization of their inner chaos which revealed to them their genuine needs, Nietzsche instructs the German youth to organize their inner chaos, and emphasizes the crucial instruction (withheld from the parable in *HL*) that love should serve as the ordering principle.[36]

Nietzsche never explicitly identifies the object or need he expects to come out on top once his readers have ranked their loves, but the remarks that conclude the first section of the essay give his secret away. If knowing oneself is the most important concern for a young soul because the young conscience is beset on all sides by foreign influences, then it stands to reason that the object a young soul will love or long for the most will be the one which can help it acquire the self-knowledge it so desperately desires. Immediately after he exhorts his readers to establish the order of their loves, Nietzsche asserts without explanation that: "your true

educators and cultivators [*Erzieher und Bildner*] can reveal to you the primordial sense and basic stuff of your being, something that is thoroughly incapable of being educated and cultivated, but something that in any event is bound, paralyzed, and difficult to gain access to." At the top of a healthy young soul's ladder of love there appears to stand a longing for a superior or monumental self like Nietzsche, or a philosopher as an educator. Such a human being is the young soul's most genuine need because only this type of human being can help it find the self-knowledge it is desperately searching for.

In the remaining sections of *SE,* Nietzsche explores the means by which tutelage under a superior self provides self-knowledge to unformed selves and lends meaning to their existence. Before he begins this exploration, however, he concludes the first section of the essay with what he calls "the secret of all cultivation [*Bildung*]," which sets the stage for the lengthy discussions of nature, human nature, and culture that appear in later sections. He says that the purpose of a great teacher's cultivation is not to provide "artificial limbs, wax noses, or corrective lenses" to his pupil. On the contrary, the true purpose of education and cultivation is:

> liberation, removal of all weeds, rubble, and vermin that seek to harm the plant's delicate shoots […]. It is imitation and adoration of nature where nature displays its maternal and merciful disposition; it is perfection of nature when it prevents nature's cruel and merciless onslaughts and turns them to good, when it drapes a veil over the expressions of nature's stepmotherly disposition and sad lack of understanding.

Since the foregoing remark touches on the theme not only of *SE*, but of the *Untimely Meditations* as a whole, it is worth considering carefully. To get a better sense of what is at stake in Nietzsche's discussion of the relationship between culture and nature, it is helpful to consult Leo Strauss's penetrating analysis of the term "culture." In Strauss's *Notes on Schmitt's 'Concept of the Political,'* he observes that culture is always the "*culture of nature*" because the term culture "always presupposes an object"—namely nature—that is to be cultivated.[37] Although the prevailing understanding of culture in modern society defines it as a "sovereign creation" or "pure product" of the human spirit, Strauss maintains that this understanding is mistaken inasmuch as culture presupposes by definition the

existence of a nature whose potential it aims to cultivate, and whose character determines the limits of the cultivating task.[38]

Turning back to Nietzsche's remark on culture in the first section of *SE*, it initially appears that his understanding of it aligns with Strauss's because he claims that culture is the "imitation and adoration of nature" on one hand, and the "perfection of nature" on the other. Culture, in other words, is the cultivation of an object (nature) which is by no means a pure product of the spirit. Nature and the meaning of nature determine the limitations of culture's power and the scope of its task. What Nietzsche does not reveal in section 1 of *SE*, however, and what he spends much of the rest of the essay trying to clarify, is whether he understands nature (and especially human nature) to be a permanent order that can be perfected but not changed by culture, or whether he understands it to be something impermanent and malleable by the cultivating activity of human beings.[39]

It may be that Nietzsche begins by conceiving of culture as something which (as he said in the parable in *HL*) can improve *physis*, but he says in this same parable that culture also has the potential to transform or transfigure *physis* so dramatically as to make it "new and improved."[40] At stake in the background of *Schopenhauer as Educator*, then, is the status of Nietzsche's claim in *HL* that the Greeks' quest for self-knowledge led them to conceive of culture as a "new [*neun*] and improved [*verbesserten*] *physis*."[41] Is the *physis* cultivated by a self-aware culture "new" because it is a fuller and improved realization of the potential of the old *physis*? Or is it "new" because a self-aware culture can improve and alter *physis* (and especially human *physis*) so dramatically as to make it different from previous instantiations? In the sequel to *SE* on Richard Wagner, Nietzsche observes that: "the most important question in all of philosophy is the extent to which things possess an unalterable nature and form, [because] once this question has been answered we can with relentless courage set about the *improvement of that aspect of the world recognized as being alterable*."[42] If his understanding of nature is limited to the context of human nature, then it would seem that he does indeed think there is such a thing as an unalterable natural structure insofar as every human being loves and can discover the order of rank of his loves. On the other hand, if this order of rank of loves is alterable, then a reconfiguration of human nature through culture could permit Nietzsche to speak of a formal human nature that lacks a fixed or stable content. Much of Nietzsche's thought depends on whether and how much human nature

can be altered, and in the second and fourth sections of *SE* he takes his first steps toward answering this crucial question by charting the history of the inner life of modern man.

Sections 2–3: The Impoverished Ethical Nature of Modern Man

In the parable that concluded *HL*, Nietzsche said that when a person begins to understand the Greek concept of culture as new and improved *physis*, he will also come to see that it was "the higher power of ethical nature [*sittliche Natur*]" that ushered the Greeks into an era of cultural health.[43] This "higher power of ethical nature," it would seem, played a key role in curing the Greeks of their historical sickness, yet Nietzsche never discusses this power in *HL*. Instead, the explanation of the role that a rich ethical nature plays in delivering a person or people from cultural sickness appears in the second section of *SE*, in the context of Nietzsche's recollection of his own search for a cultivator who was "a true philosopher" that could help him acquire self-knowledge.[44] According to Nietzsche, the task of such a philosophic cultivator is to "educate a human being to be a human being" because most of us are born as incomplete or imperfect human beings whose natures must be shaped by those with more perfect natures.[45] The difficulty with this shaping is that there are many obstacles to the proper formation (*Bildung*) of a human being in the modern age.

Among the most the most "important" and "dangerous" obstacles Nietzsche lists is that there are no "ethical models [*sittlichen Vorbilder*, lit. ethical pre-cultivators]" or "visible embodiments of all creative morality [*schöpferischen Moral*] in our midst."[46] The modern era, he observes, lacks philosophers like the ancient Greek Empedocles, whose teaching and way of living exerted a cultivating influence by inspiring the early Greeks to adopt a new ethical orientation.[47] "I attach importance to a philosopher," Nietzsche says in *SE* 3, "only to the extent that he is capable of setting an example [which draws] entire nations behind him. The philosopher must supply this example in his visible life […] through facial expressions, demeanor, clothing, food, and custom more than through what they say, let alone what they write."[48] Since modern man lacks ethical models (*Vorbild*) to cultivate (*Bildung*) his moral life, Nietzsche says that modern Germans no longer take ethical questions [*sittliche Fragen*] seriously, and they are now in a situation in which they are living off the "inherited ethical capital [*Capital von Sittlichkeit*] accumulated by our forefathers […], which

we no longer know how to increase." Today's teachers "simply ignore ethical education [*sittlichen Erziehung*]." Like the Greeks whose creative moral philosophers harnessed the power of *sittliche Natur* to help them overcome their spiritual woes, the Germans need ethical models whose thoughts and ways of life can cultivate a new ethical nature and redeem their cultural and spiritual flaws.[49]

In the second section of *SE*, Nietzsche provides readers with an overview of how modern man lost sight of the fact that a powerful ethical nature is a fundamental component of any culture that aspires to cultivate human *physis*. He admits before he begins that a through account of the ethical decline of the West is difficult to provide, but he boils its deterioration down to two factors. The first factor is the influence of "victorious Christianity on the ethical life [*Sittlichkeit*] of our ancient world," and the second is the "repercussions of declining Christianity" in modern times.

Christian morality achieved victory over its ancient counterpart by employing the methods of critical history described in *HL*.[50] It created a second "Christian" nature that caused the first ancient nature to wither away. Christianity's strategy for creating this new nature was to advocate a new, lofty, and difficult to attain ideal of what human life should consist in, and to promise eternal life in exchange for attempting to realize this ideal. Christianity as a cultivating influence therefore began as a powerful force of *sittliche Natur* that sought to destroy and replace the nature cultivated by its classical rivals.[51] Once Christianity had convinced Pre-Christian man to turn the knife on whatever traits ancient *Sittlichkeit* had cultivated in him, Christianity reached a moral peak in which its purity "so surpassed the moral systems of antiquity and the naturalness equally prevalent in all of them" that Christians became "indifferent to and disgusted by" that naturalness. The problem with Christianity's moral plan, however, was that it aimed too high and acted too impetuously when it sought both to rid classical *sittliche Natur* of its baser features, and to turn ancient man into a supernatural being who held nature (and his own naturalness) in contempt.[52] Instead of successfully carrying out a re-cultivation of ancient man into something supernatural, Christianity accomplished its preliminary goal of fostering "indifference to and disgust with" classical naturalness, but failed altogether to make men purer or more godlike beings. It tried to provide "better and loftier things" for ancient man to aspire to, but it vastly overestimated his potential to become morally lofty. Christianity thus left human nature in a worse and less unified moral state than that in which it had found it in classical times.

Nietzsche argues that in the nineteenth century, modern men have finally given up on the high hopes and promise of Christianity because they have seen that they are unable to become the "better and loftier" beings that Christian morality vowed to cultivate them into. In light of this realization, modern man is now confronted with a situation in which his nature has been so radically altered by Christianity that he can "no longer return" to the more moderate virtues of antiquity, and he lives in a confusing "vacillation" between two horizons whose principles he is incapable of living by. The "inherited fear of the natural" passed down to him from Christianity, the "renewed fascination for the natural" bestowed on him by his longing for antiquity, and his desire to "find a *firm footing* somewhere," have produced a "disquiet" and "confusion" in his soul which Nietzsche says has left him in a state of unfruitful joylessness. Modern man is a historical being that is a confused aggregate of historical influences. This is precisely the illness of the modern soul diagnosed in *HL*.

In light of the situation modern man now finds himself in with respect to his *sittliche Natur*, Nietzsche says that there has "never been a greater need for ethical educators [*sittliche Erzieher*]," but that there has never been less chance of finding them because physicians are most at risk in times of great epidemics. He alludes to the "genuine needs" of the ancient Greeks he mentioned in the parable in *HL* when he argues in *SE* 2 that what modern man now needs are the sorts of creative moral teachers the Greeks once had. These teachers stand "solidly and robustly on their feet" while serving as cultivators and "taskmasters" for those whose natures are not as rich.[53] It was with these thoughts in mind, and in a state of genuine "need, desire, and distress," that Nietzsche says he first turned to the books of Arthur Schopenhauer. He claims that Schopenhauer was a teacher who understood him and his needs so profoundly that it was as if he had written "expressly for me." Although Nietzsche does not yet call Schopenhauer a "redeeming human being" and will not use that phrase until much later in the essay, the glowing tenor of his account of his first encounter with Schopenhauer leaves little doubt that Schopenhauer is—as stated in *Ecce Homo*—a "symbol" for a type of man whose existence "hints at a higher conception of culture." Schopenhauer, in other words, is a symbol for a kind of human being who renews and cultivates the natures of those around him, and the type he represents has the potential to redeem Germany from the cultivated philistinism outlined in the first two Untimely Meditations. In this sense,

Schopenhauer is the anti-David Strauss. He is a true genius for a true culture instead of a pseudo-genius for a fake one.

Nietzsche says that he took Schopenhauer as his educator because he knew from the moment he read Schopenhauer's books that he had found a teacher who could help him acquire the *sittliche Natur* he lacked as a soul vacillating between classical naturalness and Christian anti-naturalness. Schopenhauer, he says, is the sort of rare human being whose very way of being is contagious, and whose robust personality serves as a model for those among his readers who lack their own distinctive personality but are willing to learn from him by becoming his "sons and disciples." Remarks like these indicate that Nietzsche is less interested in Schopenhauer the thinker—that is, in Schopenhauer's philosophy—and much more interested in Schopenhauer as a unique self whose very presence has a cultivating effect. It was apparently this unique self, and not Schopenhauer the thinker, that Nietzsche found most helpful in his search for solid ground upon which to begin his own journey of self-understanding. In his notebooks from the 1870s, Nietzsche described his relationship to Schopenhauer as follows:

> far from believing that I have understood Schopenhauer correctly; on the contrary, it is only myself that I have come to understand a little better by means of Schopenhauer; that is why I owe him the greatest debt of gratitude. But in general it does not seem very important to me to fathom completely and bring to light, as one does today, the actual teachings, understood comprehensively and rigorously, of any particular philosopher: this kind of knowledge is, at any rate, not suitable for human beings who seek a philosophy for their life, rather than merely a new form of learnedness for their memory: and ultimately it seems to me improbable that something of this sort can ever really be fathomed.[54]

Schopenhauer was Nietzsche's educator, but he was not his educator in the conventional sense of the term.[55] In Section 3 of *SE*, Nietzsche praises Indian philosophers for bringing "entire nations along behind [them]" by means of the examples they set "not merely in [their] books but in [their] visible lives."[56] Schopenhauer had a similar effect on the young Nietzsche, drawing him behind him because he provided a powerful example of what a cultivated human being should look, act, and think like.[57] As Nietzsche says in *SE* 2, any philosophy that aims to pave the way for the creation of a culture must be "presented in the way the

philosophers of Greece taught: through facial expressions, demeanor, clothing, food, and custom [*Sitte*]." These remarks shed substantial light on the "*sittliche Natur*" alluded to in *HL* 10, which was said to have helped the Greeks overcome their strain of the historical sickness. It was not the advent of the concept of philosophy as the pursuit of pure knowledge that helped them throw off the chains of foreign cultures, but rather the advent of the concept of philosophy as something which has the power to cultivate human nature by providing a visible example of the best way to live. Philosophy in Germany, Nietzsche concludes, must "gradually forget about being 'pure knowledge,'" and this is "precisely the example set by Schopenhauer the man."[58] *Schopenhauer as Educator* is monumental history for a sick antiquarian age because it presents Schopenhauer as an exemplar, teacher, and comforter for an era which is embroiled in a great struggle, but which is unable to find great men among the contemporaries of the present. This is exactly the purpose Nietzsche assigned to monumental history in *HL* 2.

Nietzsche's description of his initial reaction to Schopenhauer's writings is intended to give readers a feel for how his new concept of philosophy discovers, creates, and cultivates. He emphasizes that the honesty and confidence in Schopenhauer's books made him feel as though he had entered a "highland forest" in which he could "breathe deeply, and suddenly have a sense of well-being again." Schopenhauer the man was such a powerful force of nature (a highland forest of a man) that it was easy to mistake his writings for the writings of nature herself. His thought fashioned the world around him into the world he wanted it to be, and he imbued nature with his distinctive personality and manner of thinking.[59] According to Nietzsche, the "inimitable uninhibitedness and naturalness" exuded by Schopenhauer is attributable to the fact that he was both "at home" in himself, and the "master of a very wealthy home." He was a rare type of person who was self-knowing enough to flourish as a free "creature of nature," yet self-disciplined enough that he could think through and "conquer the most difficult things" in a way that was entirely unique to him. The effect such a man has on the natures of those around him resembles what Nietzsche calls a "magical outpouring of innermost force from one natural being [*Naturgewächses*, lit. natural plant] to another that results from the first, slightest contact." In the same way that ivy entangles itself around the trunk of the strongest tree and absorbs its abundance while taking the shape of its host, the young Nietzsche attached himself to Schopenhauer,

absorbed his "innermost force," and shaped his own being to resemble the form or nature of his host and cultivator.[60] His account of the way Schopenhauer's books affected him when he was young illustrates by example the character of the relationship he wants to forge with his own young readers.[61]

Nietzsche's next task is to show why he thinks the existence of the type of person Schopenhauer represents "redeems" nature and human nature. To do so, he reflects on the cheerfulness and courage with which Schopenhauer approached "the problem of existence." In Nietzsche's telling, his cultivation under Schopenhauer showed him that an ordinary person can "never experience anything better and more joyful" than being in the company of a cultivator who has felt the weight of the most profound philosophic problems. The reason for this joy is that great cultivators "cannot help but love what is alive, and because they are wise, they are ultimately disposed to what is beautiful." Philosophers and cultivators as Nietzsche understands them love the beautiful, and this love of the beautiful produces wisdom. Earlier in the essay, he downplayed the importance of Schopenhauer's philosophic thought to stress the importance of his manner of living. Here, he restores primacy to a type of philosophic thinking whose aim is not pure knowledge, but rather the redemption of existence by way of its beautification through love. This type of "thinking," Nietzsche stresses, consists not of an objective analysis of the world, but rather of reading oneself or one's personality *into* the world as Schopenhauer did when he articulated a vision of being that existed in him "even as a child."[62] A genuine philosopher, Nietzsche says, "serves himself as a likeness and compendium of the entire world," and he never looks at the world through the opinions of others because he knows that these opinions threaten to obfuscate his sovereign self.[63] A philosopher, in other words, creates the world in his own image.[64]

When ordinary people live under the influence of a superior self like Schopenhauer whose unique interpretation of the world makes clearer sense of it than our own minds can, life and existence become more attractive because they are imbued with a rich meaning whose source lies in the creative subjectivity of the superior self. A philosopher who is a "redeeming human being," therefore, does not enlighten us by providing scientific knowledge of the world. Rather, he makes us feel so "human and natural" in the world in which we find ourselves that we long to cry out: "How magnificent and precious every living thing is! How suited to its condition, how true, how full of being."[65]

The redeeming man's eye is always "trained on existence" because he is a value creator, and Nietzsche says that his particular task is to be the "legislator of the measure, mint, and weight of things." When Schopenhauer, for example, confronted the question: "of what value is life at all?" Nietzsche says that he understood enough about the power of his creative self and the malleability of the "realm of transfigured *physis*" to know that he could redeem human life from its ugly and apparently valueless guise by becoming its "advocate and savior."[66] Schopenhauer's longing for a "strong nature" and a "healthy and simple humanity" was actually a longing for himself and his own transfiguration of nature through his work. Once Schopenhauer realized his significance for humanity, Nietzsche says that he was called to join the ranks of the "marvelous and creative" philosophers like Empedocles of ancient Greece. Like those ancient philosophers, he was compelled to pass judgment on whether he, as the "supreme fruit of life," could justify life as such.[67]

Section 4: *Bildung* and *Bild*—The Redeeming Human Being as Cultivator of a New Image of Man

In sections 2–3 of *SE*, Nietzsche accounted for the "vacillation" between Christianity and antiquity in which modern man finds himself and hinted that the emergence of the type of man represented by Schopenhauer could steady this vacillation by making us feel human and natural again. In section 4, he elaborates three "images [*Bilder*] of humanity" that modern philosophers have set up to imbue human existence with meaning, and "spur mortals on to a transfiguration of their own lives."[68] These cultivating [*Bildung*] images are sources for a new and improved transfiguration of human *physis* because each provides a unique and ahistorical interpretation of the world and man. Before these images are unveiled, however, Nietzsche pauses briefly to describe the "tremendous, but wild, primal, and completely pitiless" forces of spirit that threaten to destroy the image of humanity we currently know. His purpose is to demonstrate why a new "image" of humanity is necessary in modern times.

The modern German spirit needs a new cultivating image because, in addition to having been ravaged by the excessive science and historicism that were the subjects of critique in the first two Untimely Meditations, it is also under siege by conflicting liberal, monarchic, and secular political influences. The tension between these influences has produced a spiritual

chaos of repressed political forces which have failed to imbue modern life with a cultural structure that can provide meaning. According to Nietzsche, the spiritual–political chaos that underpins the modern soul is beginning to bubble over, and German social structures may soon "implode or explode" into "horrible apparitions." He traces the source of this tension to the French Revolution, which raged a century prior Bismarck's Chancellorship in Germany. Since the outbreak of that revolution, Europe has been preparing for what Nietzsche calls "radical upheavals," whose violence the German Kingdoms have tried to avert by forming a nation-state meant to provide a more stable social order. He compares the modern nation-state's efforts in this regard to those of the Church of the Middle Ages, which "held together and to some extent assimilated" the inimical religious forces of past European centuries. Like the medieval church, the modern German nation-state wants to "organize everything anew out of itself," but instead of fostering a religious unity, it aims to construct a new secular political bond that will hold the older political and religious forces in check. To accomplish this task, Nietzsche says that the modern state has adopted the strategy of encouraging citizens to worship in it the "very same idols" they once worshipped in the church, only this time the worship is not religious but nationalist.

The spiritual difficulties triggered by this strategy are many, but none loom larger than the fact that politics and economics cannot fill the same cultural and spiritual void that religion did. Nietzsche thus predicts that the modern state's lack of concern with moral and spiritual cultivation will bring "nothing but an increase in the general insecurity and apprehension" that is already characteristic of modern life. The inimical forces once subdued by the medieval church eventually broke through their bonds and demanded a Reformation in which many social spheres under the church's jurisdiction were declared "domains in which religion should no longer hold sway." Nietzsche suspects that the same holds true for the bonds forged by the modern state, which may soon be shattered by a revolution or reformation of society into its "smallest indivisible elements." In Nietzsche's view, the modern nation-state has been created by the "crude" and "evil" forces of "moneymakers and military despots" who do not pay sufficient attention to the need and value of culture. As Bismarck wages a *kulturkampf* whose implications he does not fully understand, contemporary Germans find themselves submerged in a new and more perilous "ice-filled stream of the middle ages"

whose social and political solidity is breaking up and overflowing with devastating power.

The inclination of most Europeans in the face of this impending crisis is to act as though they "know nothing of these concerns," and to conduct their lives in an unthinking haste whose end is material acquisition and cultivated philistinism. Nietzsche, on the other hand, observes that the unthinking and easygoing anxiety characteristic of fast-paced modern life demonstrates "just how well aware" modern people are of the declining spiritual conditions in which they live. He warns that the fearful anticipation that precedes great political upheavals tends to intensify human lust and greed before bloody revolution erupts and moderates them. His fear is that the human spirit is in much more danger of regression now—in the moments leading up to the European crisis he predicts—than it will be during the crisis itself, at which point unspeakable horrors will ennoble men's souls and make them "better and more warm hearted."

In moments like those preceding the outbreak of a great spiritual revolution, the "sacred treasures" of the human spirit amassed over many generations of refinement are in danger of being squandered through a regression into the "bestiality" and "robotic automatism" provoked by animalistic fear. In dark hours like these, what is needed above all else is what Nietzsche calls a "watchman and knight of *humanity*" who can erect an "*image* [*Bild*] *of the human being*" whose contemplation will cultivate [*Bildung*] men and effect a "transfiguration of their lives" that advances, or at least preserves, the richness of the human spirit.[69] Despite the fact, then, that modern, philistine, historical man represents a low watermark of culture and human development for Nietzsche, he does not deem the modern soul to have decayed so deeply that it is no longer worth saving. On the contrary, the modern soul possesses great potential to be cultivated into something noble by the right sort of cultivator, and Nietzsche cites Rousseau, Goethe, and Schopenhauer as geniuses who have set up competing images of man "one after the other," each of which is intended to put the modern human being on course to becoming a higher being.

To begin to understand what Nietzsche means when he suggests the creation of an "*image* [*Bild*] *of humanity*" in section 4 of *SE*, it is useful to turn back briefly to his praise of Schopenhauer the man in section 3. Near the end of the lengthy discussion of Schopenhauer's greatness, he addressed the subject of how philosophy goes about its task

of shaping the world. He observed in this context that every great philosophy tells its adherents: "this is the image [*Bild*] of life; learn from it the meaning of your own life."[70] The task of a great philosopher, he adds, is to "read [his own] life and understand on the basis of it the hieroglyphs of life in general." Great philosophies are ethical (or *sittliche*) tablets upon which philosophers write their own lives into the general concept of humanity, thereby providing humanity with rich and meaningful "images" or ideals of what human life should aim to become.[71] When these remarks are read in the context of Nietzsche's remarks about Europe's need for a "watchman and champion" who can create an "*image of the human being*" that will lead humanity through its impending spiritual crisis, the meaning of the creation of this image becomes clear. It would appear that Rousseau, Goethe, and Schopenhauer are all philosophers Nietzsche thinks have tried to redeem Europe by reading themselves into humanity and painting images [*Bild*] of the type man they each hoped to cultivate [*Bildung*] their contemporaries into.[72]

A brief look at the images erected by these three philosopher-redeemers illustrates the formal mechanism by which Nietzsche thinks culture and philosophy interact.[73] It also reveals the dialectical means by which he thinks Rousseau, Goethe, and Schopenhauer relate to one another, and exposes the reasons he endorses Schopenhauer's image instead of the other two.

The first image of cultivation Nietzsche presents is that of the French philosopher Jean-Jacques Rousseau, whose picture of man possesses "the greatest fire and is assured of attaining the greatest popular effect." The popularity of Rousseau's image is traced to the fact that it encourages Europe's revolutionary tendencies instead of restraining them. In Nietzsche's view, Rousseau harbored such a powerful longing for "holy nature" that he created an image of man meant to volatize the explosive social forces of modern life so that some form of return to nature could be instigated. For Rousseau in contrast to Goethe, modern life admitted of no "sacred treasures" worth saving because modern man's "fanciest finery"—his enlightenment arts and sciences—had reduced him to something unnatural and inhuman. Nietzsche shares Rousseau's longing to make man "human and natural" again, but he judges Rousseau to have believed that modern Europe had "sunk so deep into the chaos of the unnatural" that it could no longer be redeemed.[74] When Rousseau erected a revolutionary ideal of European man which declared: "only nature is good; [and] only the natural human

being is human," he prepared Europeans to make "frightful," "destructive," yet "noble" decisions about the future of European society by way of a revolution. Insofar as Rousseau's image of man is a revolutionary image that is critical of all that came before it, the Rousseauian image of man could be said to be the human analog of critical history in *HL*. Both harbor longings to shatter and dissolve the past in unjust ways for the sake of something new.[75] Just as periods of critical history are dangerous because they often lack a stable standard to guide their negation of the past, Nietzsche warns that Rousseauian men can become "Catilinarian" in character. They are prone to lose sight of the fact that revolutions should be carried out only for the sake of a new stability, and not for the purpose of the perpetual discord hoped for by the Roman Praetor Catiline.

In contrast to the dangers posed by the Rousseauian image of man, Goethe's Faustian image possesses "no such threatening power" and is the "corrective and sedative" for the dangerous excitations to which Rousseau's human being is prone.[76] Like Rousseau, Goethe too "clung to the gospel of the goodness of nature," but his longing for nature originated not in his sentiments but in his scientific curiosity. Goethe was not compelled (as Rousseau was) to work for the destruction of the very civilization that made possible his beloved arts and sciences. Far from being a world liberator or revolutionary, Goethe's image of man is a Faustian thinker and "world traveler" who hates "all violence [and] every sudden leap—but that means: every action." The Goethean man thus elevates to the rank of life's highest goal Goethe's own desire to "consume insatiably all domains of life and nature, all past ages, all arts, mythologies, and science." The image of man Goethe erected over modernity valorizes the scientific way of life and resonates more with intellectual elites than it does with Rousseau's masses. The Goethean image is, therefore, a historicizing and even scholarly image of man because it finds the meaning and richness of life in the act of gathering nourishment from "everything great and memorable that ever existed." For this reason, the Goethean human being could be said to be the human analog of antiquarian history in *HL*. Such men aspire to be the knowers and curators of a world they do not actively seek to change, and they are therefore prone to sterility and scholarly pettiness. Although the Goethean image of man is useful in times of social peril because it promotes a "conserving and conciliatory force" whose intellectual curiosity helps preserve the treasures of human history,

Nietzsche warns that these types are also prone to "degenerating into philistines"—perhaps the "cultivated philistines" described in *DS*—because their all-consuming desire for knowledge leads them to lose sight of the most important human problems. In the same way that antiquarian cultures run the risk of becoming caught up in the "dust of bibliographical minutiae," the Goethean image of man risks cultivating a type of human being who moves from one study to the next without considering the importance of that study for life.[77] The Goethean image of man is therefore the image whose model most resembles Nietzsche's contemporaries. These contemporaries were shown in *HL* and *DS* to be antiquarian cultivated philistines who harbor a scholarly and scientific taste that makes them capable of preserving but incapable of acting.

Whereas Goethe's human being is so contemplative that he disdains all action, and Rousseau's human being is so active that he never contemplates, the Schopenhauerian image of man synthesizes the Goethean love of contemplation with the Rousseauian passion for revolutionary deeds to produce an active, destructive, yet thoughtful ideal from whose image Nietzsche instructs his readers to "draw a new set of duties."[78] Like his Rousseauian counterpart, the Schopenhauerian image of man is an annihilator and actor, yet his motive for annihilation and action lies in his Goethean love of contemplation and the promise that truth holds out for providing intellectual "salvation" from the philistinism and historicism that characterize modern times. Unlike the Goethean man, however, who approaches the pursuit of truth as though it were a "noble delicacy" meant to satiate his scholarly hunger, the Schopenhauerian man approaches it with a "fierce, consuming fire" meant to harden him against what Nietzsche calls "*the suffering inherent in all truthfulness.*" To be cultivated by the Schopenhauerian image of man, therefore, means living a life in which truth or a new kind of truth is pursued despite or because of the antithesis between life and knowledge described in *HL*. This antithesis makes the pursuit of truth noble for the Schopenhauerian man because it is self-sacrificing and carried out not merely for the sake of knowing. Pursuing truth in this mode requires the Schopenhauerian type to undertake the painful process of "negating" the falsehood that has been cultivated in him so that his individual will is extinguished and the way is prepared for "that complete revolution and reversal in his being whose achievement is the true meaning of life." Living in this way is dangerous because it demands being "hostile to the human beings whom [one] loves and to the institutions from whose womb [one] has

sprung." The Schopenhauerian man must, therefore, resign himself to the fact that happiness is "impossible," and that he will always appear unjust to others because his motive for negation is easily mistaken for malice. The aim of his negation is intellectual liberation from the conventional and timely ways of thinking about the world, and he offers up his own attachments and opinions as "the first victim of recognized truth."[79] This is what Nietzsche does in *HL* when he says that he suffers from the very historical sickness he wishes to cure. The truth he reveals is that life hates truth and requires illusion or created truth to flourish. There is perhaps no truth which causes more suffering—or creative vigor—than the truth that there is no truth. The Schopenhauerian image of man is in this sense a Nietzschean image of man.

The Schopenhauerian image's "Nietzschean" character reveals itself even more clearly in Nietzsche's account of the means by which the pursuit of self-knowledge helps the Schopehauerian man overcome the cultivated philistinism described in the first two Untimely Meditations.[80] In Nietzsche's view, the modern family, state, and university all cultivate cultivated philistinism because they all tell young people that the purpose of their lives and selves should be to find success in the politics, business, and scholarship of their day. Those cultivated by the Schopenhauerian image, on the other hand, do not conceive of themselves as "point[s] of evolution" in the historical life of a state, business, or academic field because doing so hides their authentic selves behind selves that are shaped by what is fashionable and timely. The Schopenhauerian human being does not consider himself to be a fashionable, timely, or historical being, and therefore he does not lose sight of himself in the transition from present to past. On the contrary, he holds becoming (or history) in contempt because it obscures the fact that all men "*are something*" at bottom that can "never become" something else. "The riddle that the human being is supposed to solve can be solved only in being," Nietzsche says, and specifically "in being what he is […] and in the immutable." By resolving to remain his own person and to "destroy all becoming" and history, the Schopenhauerian type lives both ahistorically and philosophically. He creates a stable horizon of being for himself within which a new kind of truth is possible because it is viewed or constructed from the stable perspective of his liberated self.[81]

Since the Schopenhauerian man descends into the depths of his own existence and sacrifices his timely opinions for truths, he is said by Nietzsche to live a "*heroic life*" whose memory is worthy of celebration

and emulation by future generations. By giving humanity the gift of a new image of philosophy, the Schopenhauerian man sets an example of what the human being can strive to know and be that beautifies the entire species. His heroism derives from the fact that he is an exemplar, comforter, and teacher who sacrifices himself, and whose image inspires activity, discovery, and creation.[82] For this reason, the Schopenhauerian image of man could be said to be the human analog of the monumental mode of history presented in *HL*.[83] Like monumental history, his example provides creative inspiration for future Schopenhauerian types who long to imitate him, and he perishes for the sake of something great but impossible (namely, the "truth"), *animae magnae prodigus*.[84] This is the most profound sense in which Schopenhauer, and perhaps Nietzsche, come to sight as educators. In a century obsessed with history and becoming, the demand that human beings concern themselves with being and truth (despite the ultimate inaccessibility of both) serves as a monument which cultivates a sense of the need and value of what is ahistorical, apparently permanent, and hence cultural.[85] This is why Nietzsche affirms the "true but deadly" status of "the doctrines of sovereign becoming, of the fluidity of all concepts types and species" in *HL* 9, and then subsequently advocates for the life-promoting benefits of being and the immutable in *SE* 4:

> Everything that is in the process of becoming is empty, deceitful, flat, and worthy of our contempt; the riddle that the human being is supposed to solve can be solved only in being, in being what he is and not in being something else, in the immutable. Now he begins to test how deeply he is rooted in becoming, how deeply in being—an enormous task arises before his soul: to destroy all becoming, to bring to light everything that is false in things.

This is not only the Schopenhauerian man's task, it is also Nietzsche's monumental task in the *Untimely Meditations*. It is why the second Meditation on becoming and historicism is followed by a third on the creation of being and the truth.[86]

Section 5, Part I: The Human Animal and the "True Human Being"

The Schopenhauerian image of man is the only image among the three Nietzsche presents that provides an image of the nature of philosophic image creators themselves. It may not aim to cultivate all Europeans, but rather the new Rousseaus, Goethes, and Schopenhauers

who could save Europe from its impending spiritual crisis.[87] It is the counter-image to the popular image of the genius embodied by David Strauss and criticized by Nietzsche at length in the first Untimely Meditation.[88] To be a Schopenhauerian human being means to be the type of human being Schopenhauer was for the young Nietzsche, that Socrates was for the young Plato, and that Nietzsche longs to be for a handful of unnamed—and perhaps still unborn—youths. It is to be a human being who pursues "truth" and cultivates the image of that pursuit in others.

Once the three images of man are presented and the Schopenhauerian image is explicitly adopted, Nietzsche devotes the remainder of *SE* to demonstrating why this particular image of the human being is the "true human being." He also gives an account of what humanity must do to make this image of the human being a reality.[89] "It is by no means enough for me to paint a picture, and an inadequate one, at that, of that ideal human being who, as his Platonic Idea, holds sway in and around Schopenhauer," Nietzsche says, "[and] the most difficult task still remains: to describe how we can derive a new set of duties from this ideal and how we can get in touch with such an ambitious goal on the basis of regulated activity."[90] The Schopenhauerian ideal is an attainable ideal that strengthens humanity instead of weakening or confusing it like the Christian ideal did. The Christian ideal was said in section 4 to have engendered tremendous spiritual tension on account of its unobtainability, but Nietzsche says that is possible to "start from" the Schopenhauerian ideal and "impose upon you and me a chain of fulfillable duties" that will lead to the actual emergence of the Schopenhauerian man in modern times.

To give readers a sense of the "duties" that will help make the Schopenhauerian image of man a reality, Nietzsche says that he must first make a few "preliminary observations" about what nature and human nature are. These observations will determine where "we" (the readers of *SE*) stand in the order of rank of members of the human species, and thus where we stand in comparison to the Schopenhauerian man. Section 5 begins by implying that the search for self-knowledge encouraged in section 1 of the essay culminates in the insight that, in all likelihood, nature was not generous enough to shape us (Nietzsche's readers) into Schopenhauerian human beings. Our search for self-knowledge, in other words, forces us to come to terms with our natural shortcomings and to know ourselves through our flaws. Cultivation by Schopenhauerian men or philosophers has the likely effect of revealing

to us that we are not Schopenhauerian men or philosophers because we begin to see the great distance that separates us from our monumental teachers. And yet, Nietzsche says that we need not be depressed by our shortcomings. Instead, he tells his young readers that they can transform their longing to be Schopenhauerian human beings into a passion for performing the practical tasks and duties that will "sweep aside" the obstacles that "prevented us" from becoming them, and "robbed *us* of the supreme fulfillment of our existence." If the Germans want to acquire genuine culture they must interpret practically Nietzsche's imperative to know themselves, just as the ancient Greeks in the parable that concluded *HL* 10 found their culture by interpreting practically the famous Delphic imperative.[91] Nietzsche kindly includes himself among his readers when he uses terms like "we" and "us" to describe the injustices nature commits when it fails to make ordinary men like "us" into Schopenhauerian types, but he seems also to anticipate that his readers may see that he—their educator, cultivator, and taskmaster—is precisely the kind of Schopenhauerian human being that they are not. As the first Schopenhauerian human being to acquire self-consciousness of the human need for Schopenhauerian human beings, Nietzsche's own practical task in the later sections of *SE* is to transform the disappointment his readers feel on account of their shortcomings into motivation to fight for the emergence of the cultivators and geniuses he shows them they need.[92]

In order to see how badly we need Schopenhauerian types as cultivators of culture, Nietzsche tells us that we must observe and come to terms with the difference in quality between our own average natures and those of superior Schopenhauerian men. The true measure of this difference in quality reveals itself only to those who know themselves well enough to see how much their natures lack, but we can begin to get a sense for the difference by comparing an animal's view of the world to the view of "human beings of greater profundity [*Die tieferen Menschen*]."[93] The life of an animal consists entirely of instinctual desires for objects like food and sex which are scarce in the wilds of nature. Animals are thus said to "suffer from life" as a punishment whose cause they are not intelligent enough to understand. They do not know why they are punished or even that they are punished, and their minds are incapable of grasping the character of their own situation in the world. They live their lives "thirsting with the inanity of a horrible desire" for

things whose acquisition provides them only fleeting satisfaction, and they never truly understand this facet of their existence.

In contrast to animals whose torment is neither satiable nor comprehensible, "human beings of greater profundity" are said to have always felt compassion with animals because animals suffer from life and do not possess the quality of mind (as profound human beings do) to "turn the sting of suffering against themselves and understand their existence metaphysically." In a number of places on earth, for example, the teaching has arisen "that the souls of guilt-laden human beings are trapped inside the bodies of animals." This moral–religious teaching lends the senseless suffering of animals a "sense and significance" because it creates a horizon of thought in which their suffering makes sense to the human mind on the basis of the existence of divine justice. When nature brings profound human beings into being among animals and they create profound teachings like this one, nature's intention is to show that human beings are "necessary for [nature's] salvation from animal existence." In the profound human being, existence holds before itself a "mirror in which life no longer appears senseless but appears, rather, in its metaphysical meaningfulness." The profound human's mind reflects the unjust and irrational world of nature back at itself in a just, rational, and apparently absolute hue. Profound types like Schopenhauer improve and redeem *physis* because they imbue it with a metaphysical sense and purpose it lacks in their absence. Their creative interpretations of nature turn the world into a more hospitable (because more sensible or providential) place than it would otherwise be. Wherever nature lacks a reason for its ways, the Schopenhauerian man furnishes it with a reason that is by no means strictly rational. This furnished or created reason erects a horizon of meaning around those under its influence.[94]

Once Nietzsche has sketched the metaphysical relationship between profound human beings and animals, he exhorts his readers to reconsider "where the animal ceases and where the human being begins" in order to see more clearly the Schopenhauerian human being's significance in their own lives. He cites the "tremendous mobility" of human herds across continents, their founding of rival factions, their ceaseless waging of wars, and their "confused mingling and imitation of one another" to prove that the vast majority of human beings are still animals who cannot escape the world of instinct. Nature has worked for millennia to raise humanity from its animal origins, but an honest inquiry into the way most

human beings live yields the unfortunate insight that we are not "true" or profound human beings like Schopenhauer, Rousseau, and Goethe. These are the types of human beings nature sought when it devised man because they are the types who can make sense of nature. Since it is difficult to heed the painful insights of our own self-knowledge, however, and to own up to the fact we are not the fullest expressions of what it means to be human, Nietzsche indicates that we must become courageous and hard if we hope to come to terms with the fact that "we ourselves *are* those animals who seem to suffer senselessly."[95] Just like animals, we too are in need profound human beings and philosophers to help us make sense of our situation in the world.

Section 5, Part II: The Self-Conscious Longing for the Schopenhauerian Human Being

At the beginning of section 5 of *SE*, Nietzsche revealed the sobering insight that the spiritual state of ordinary human beings evinces at least a partial failure on the part of nature to overcome the animal and create the "true human beings" it longs for. He gloomily ponders whether nature could have overestimated its powers when it conceived of humanity, and flirts with the notion it could now be pushing mankind back in the direction of the animal. In the same breath in which he expresses doubts about humanity's future, however, he also voices hope that nature may still have a plan for mankind's advancement. This hope is the focus of his remarks at the end of section 5 and the beginning of section 6 of *SE*, which contain the central paragraphs of the essay.

At the heart of Nietzsche's hope that humanity is on the upswing lies his observation that, unlike animals, human beings have the unique capacity to become aware of their intellectual limitations and to submit themselves to the tutelage of those whose apparent limitlessness represents the fullest expression of nature's hopes for the species.[96] Ordinary human beings resemble animals inasmuch as we suffer from unfulfilled longings that we do not fully comprehend, but we can find solace for, and a solution to, this problem in the fact that there are "moments *when we understand this* and perceive how we, along with all of nature, are pressing onward toward the [true] human being as toward something that stands high above us."[97] To help us understand the moments he is describing, Nietzsche observes that life seems to want to tell us something about who we are as human beings during every moment that

we are alive. We have difficulty hearing this message because the animal inside us resists it on the grounds that it is easier to remain blissfully unknowing than to acquire self-knowledge.[98] On rare occasions, however, during our quietest moments of solitude, this voice breaks through the herd sociability with which we ordinarily "drug ourselves" in our daily lives. In these moments, we are often overcome with a feeling of astonishment at "the entire dreamlike state of [human] life which seems to dread our awakening."[99] The full impact of these moments is rarely felt by ordinary human beings because nature deprives most of us of the wherewithal necessary to maintain a heightened state of self-consciousness for long periods of time. Our ordinariness makes us prone to regressing back into the idleness and meaninglessness that typically characterize our lives, and the human situation remains dark to us for all but the most fleeting moments.

Schopenhauerian human beings are different. They live in a continuously heightened state of awareness which compels them to press toward an ever higher instantiation of what it means to be human. According to Nietzsche, extraordinary types like "philosophers, artists, and saints" have the power to "lift us up" into wakefulness because they understand the human situation more thoroughly than we do. When we become conscious of their superiority and admit to ourselves that we are not the "human beings toward whom nature presses for its own salvation," our self-despising leads us to long for those who are, and who can lead us to wholeness and redeem the mistakes nature made when it created us.[100] It is "our" painful fate, Nietzsche writes, "to have just enough of an inkling of the peculiar definition and blessedness of the philosopher to sense all the definitionlessness and unblessedness of the non-philosopher." When ordinary people consider what a man like Schopenhauer must have thought over the course of his life, we are driven to lament our own "deaf ears," "dull heads," "flickering rationalities," and "shriveled hearts."[101] From deep within the valleys of our own darkness and ineptitude, we long for the peaks of superior men, from whose summit "the fundamental nature of things expresses itself, stark and unbending, with unavoidable clarity." Every culture, insofar as it exhibits a unity of artistic style, possesses this clarity about the "fundamental nature" of things. The Germans must acquire this clarity in order to overcome the historical sickness described in *HL*.

Nietzsche emphasizes throughout *SE* (and especially in section 8) that philosophers are the most impressive of the rare and cultivating human

beings toward which nature aims. It is important to note, however, that he also includes artists and saints among the class of "no-longer-animals" whose activities clarify the fundamental nature of things. Just as nature needs philosophers like Schopenhauer to explain or create what Nietzsche calls its "metaphysical purpose," it also needs artists to present it with a "pure and finished image" of itself which it never has the opportunity to see in the "tumultuousness of its own becoming."[102] Since nature is a ceaseless process of "experimentation" in becoming, its results are made known only when an artist divines its intentions and meets it "half-way." This is why the sequel to *SE* presents a model of the artist in *Richard Wagner in Bayreuth*. Wagner, Nietzsche says, is a model of the artistic "purification and transformation of nature" whose operas make nature more attractive to itself and to denatured modern souls.[103] In the same way that Schopenhauer's books help readers feel more "natural" and at home in a world whose mysterious character his philosophy makes intelligible, Wagner's operas present an intensified image of nature that seduces listeners to desire to become "nature again yourselves."[104]

The saint's redeeming role is not spelled out as clearly as that of the artist and philosopher, but Nietzsche indicates that what differentiates the saint from the other redeeming types is that his task is to master, extinguish, and subjugate his ego so that it practically "melts away" and becomes nature itself. Whereas artists and philosophers read their unique selves into nature to make it more intelligible and purposeful, the saint understands himself to be one with nature and goes so far as to identify his will with nature's in order to express his "love for all living things."[105] Whether artist, philosopher, or saint, all "true human beings" seek to "augment nature with a new living nature" in order to understand it, and they never seek to "kill nature" like the scientists who dissect it.[106] The true human being's "understanding" of nature is therefore not as objective as that of the scientist. On the contrary, it is a more accurate understanding because it acknowledges that the very existence of the concept "nature" depends upon the free subjective organization and inner life of a world-ordering being like man.[107]

Section 5, Part III: Nietzsche's View of Nature as New and Improved Physis

Questions about Nietzsche's conception of nature arise in every essay in the *Untimely Meditations*. Since the question of what nature is has been shown in *SE* to be inseparable from the question of who the highest type

of human being is, it is fitting that some of the most important and explicit remarks on nature in Nietzsche's corpus appear just after he discusses the true human being in section 5. Here he addresses openly—if somewhat abstrusely—nature's teleological or non-teleological character.[108] A detailed consideration of these remarks helps readers acquire a better understanding of his view of nature, and more importantly for our purposes, a better understanding of what he thinks the limits are to cultivating human nature through culture. If the term "culture" must signify the cultivation of an object like nature, then Nietzsche's conception of nature must be clarified before the task or meaning of culture can be fully understood. This is why he proposes to undertake a "preliminary observation" of nature in section 5 of *SE* in which he examines both its method of creation and its practical intention.[109]

At the heart of Nietzsche's teaching about nature lies a claim that appears at first glance to be contradictory. On one hand, he argues that the production of the true or Schopenhauerian human being is the "goal" of nature and thus that nature is teleological. In the same breath in which he affirms nature's teleological character, however, he also says that when nature achieves its goal of producing the true human being it realizes simultaneously that it must "unlearn" the notion of having goals, implying thereby that nature is a non-teleological force. "By means" of the appearance of true human beings in the world:

> nature, which never leaps, takes its only leap; and it is a leap of joy, for it feels that for the first time it has arrived at its goal, namely at that place where it understands that it must unlearn [*verlernen*] having goals and that it bet [*gespielt*] too much on the game [*Spiel*] of living and becoming.

This extraordinary statement must be considered closely to be understood. When nature creates a true human being like Rousseau, Goethe, or Schopenhauer, it makes a "leap." Such a leap, it would seem, is first a biological leap from the animals and half-animals nature ordinarily produces to the true human being it rarely produces. Secondarily, this leap is also a metaphorical leap of joy for having attained its long sought after but seldom achieved goal of producing a human being whose existence embodies or exceeds the entirety of human potential.[110] If the human being is the highest creature nature can create, then the genius is the highest of the highest: a being whose extraordinary

talents and capacities bear the fruit of millennia of nature's labors. As the being toward whom the development of all biological life points, and from whom the concept "nature" acquires its meaning, the genius is the manifestation of nature's "goal" in flesh and blood.

Viewed from the perspective of Nietzsche's discussion of the philosopher, artist, and saint, it could be said that nature's "goal" is to bring into being the sorts of superior minds whose works explain or depict in being the constant becoming that prevents nature from understanding itself and fulfilling its potential. In the process of a superior mind's explanation and clarification of nature, nature itself is augmented, improved, and made new by being presented as a more rational, hospitable, or beautiful phenomenon than it would be in the absence of the superior mind's artistic activity.[111] As Nietzsche said in the first section of *SE*, nature often exhibits a "step-motherly disposition and sad lack of understanding" in its capacities as nurturer and creator. The true human being is nature's goal because his mind cultivates nature and human nature, and makes both of them better than they would be if left to develop or "become" on their own. By explaining nature to his readers in such anthropomorphic language (as a thing that leaps, longs, creates, and understands), Nietzsche tacitly indicates that he possesses the sort of mind that nature brings into being to explain itself to itself through the creation of a new and improved image of *physis*.[112]

Up to this point in our interpretation of the preceding quotation, Nietzsche's understanding of nature appears to be a teleological one whose end is the production of the highest human being. However, this same quotation also indicates that this teleological view of nature is not the full story. After nature finishes leaping for joy at the realization that it has achieved its goal, it sobers up and "understands that it must unlearn [the notion of] having goals, and that it bet too much on the game of living and becoming." When nature recovers from the elation it feels at producing the superior mind, it perceives that it can go beyond this goal, aim for greater heights, and—with the aid and cultivation of superior minds like Nietzsche's—create an even higher type of being than it previously thought possible. Apparently, nature did not overestimate its capacities when it created the human being, which is what Nietzsche initially worried it had done. Instead, it underestimated itself when it set its sights on—and decided to stop human advancement at—the Schopenhauerian type. Through the work of cultivators like Nietzsche who erect new "images" of man for nature to strive toward, nature can "unlearn" the notion of

having a finite or definite goal and become a non-teleological force that has no set destination.[113] From Nietzsche's point of view, nature thus comes to sight as a garden of living and becoming in which creation is possible by means of human cultivation. Such creation is not entirely free because it is limited, at least in the short term, by the starting materials nature provides and the initial trajectory of their developmental course. On the other hand, it is by no means unfree creation because these materials can be shaped, improved, and perhaps even made new by the superior minds that nature brings into being for its own benefit and enlightenment.

It is for this reason that Nietzsche says nature was wrong to stake [*gespielt*] the development of the highest type of life on the game [*Spiel*] of chance that comprises natural (or uncultivated) becoming. The development of the human being should not be left up to chance because there is no guarantee that nature and its "sad lack of understanding" can navigate the chaotic waters of becoming and insure that the development of humanity remains on an upward trend. As Nietzsche noted in section 2 of *SE*, unpredictable threats like Christianity have arisen to the development of the human being which nature has proven itself unable to contend with alone. Nature must, therefore, be cultivated by human beings to produce a better nature and ever higher types of human beings whose task is always to cultivate, improve, and make new the natural materials they are presented with.[114] The second natures described in *HL*'s description of critical history must continually strive to become first natures.[115]

When nature or human nature apprehends this insight, "nature is transfigured, and a gentle weariness of evening—what human beings call 'beauty'—spreads across its face." What nature's beautiful face acknowledges in these moments is that it has achieved what Nietzsche calls "*enlightenment about existence*." The "supreme wish" ordinary human beings can wish is to "participate constantly" in this enlightenment. Such participation, Nietzsche says, constitutes the "fundamental idea of culture [*Kultur*]." This fundamental idea commands each individual to: "*foster the production of philosophers, artists, and saints within us and around us, and thereby to work toward the perfection of nature*." Culture understood in this mode demands practical and even revolutionary action. To achieve it, we must "fight" for the proper cultivation of nature and "oppose those influences, habits, laws, and institutions" that stand in the way of its production of the genius.[116] This is what the *Untimely Meditations* together aim to accomplish.

Sections 6–8: Nietzsche's Cultural Teaching and the Modern State

In the concluding sections of *Schopenhauer as Educator*, Nietzsche argues that his diagnosis of the sickness of the modern soul, his account of that soul's need for a cultivator, and his insight into nature's evolutionary ambitions, all combine to yield the practical imperative that "humanity should work ceaselessly toward producing great individuals—this and nothing else is its task."[117] This practical imperative is what he was referring to in section 10 of *HL* when he said that the ancient Greeks transformed themselves into the first cultured people by interpreting practically Apollo's imperative to seek self-knowledge.[118] The search for self-knowledge culminates in the search for great individuals who fulfill our genuine spiritual needs. The greatness of these individuals stands in stark contrast to the baseness of men like David Strauss, the pseudo-genius that German culture currently mistakes for a great individual. The greatness of a culture can be measured by the human peaks it cultivates, and contemporary German culture—in contrast to ancient Greek culture—has shown itself to be an abject failure on this score.

Section 5 of *SE* argued that nature, aided by culture, can produce true human beings and Schopenhauerian types with much more success than it could on its own. Culture makes *physis* new and improved.[119] Nietzsche also hinted that nature has the potential to produce even greater human types than we now know if it can forget altogether the notion of having goals and constantly strive for new heights. In section 6, he reaffirms his desire for nature to create ever higher types when he states explicitly his hope that the human species will one day evolve to "that point at which it reaches its limit and begins the transition to a higher species."[120] This goal-less "goal" for humanity serves as the foundation for Nietzsche's remarks in the rest of the essay.

The sections that remain explain why achieving this state of continuous human development requires the reorganization of contemporary political arrangements.[121] The crux of the argument is that, because nature has given humanity the singular capacity among animals to "acquire consciousness of [nature's] aim," humankind must "search out and create" the favorable social and cultural conditions in which the highest human types are most likely to emerge.[122] In his earlier account of the Schopenhauerian man, Nietzsche claimed that "starting with that ideal image it is possible to impose upon you and me a chain of fulfillable duties" that will make his appearance more common on the basis of

"regulated activity." Sections 6–8 of *SE* provides readers with a glimpse of what these social, political, and educational duties entail, and hence with an account of what this regulated activity is.[123]

Nietzsche admits from the beginning of section 6 that his call to organize society around the production of the highest human types will be "hard" for his contemporaries to swallow. Most of these contemporaries have become convinced in recent years that the "ultimate aim" of modern politics lies in ensuring the well-being of all instead of a select few. Europe is trending away from Nietzsche's political ideology, which deems "absurd" the founding of a state for the sake of the "happiness of all or the majority." According to Nietzsche, only the "common man [*Biedermann*]" measures the quality of human life according to the degree of its comfort and happiness. The true measure of a life, he says, can only be determined by asking the question of whether it is well-lived or wasted: "How can your life, the life of the individual, obtain the highest value, the deepest significance, and how is it least wasted? […] Surely only by living for the benefit of the rarest and most valuable specimens, and not for the benefit of the majority, that is, for the benefit of those who, taken as individuals, are the least valuable specimens." In section 6 of *SE*, the antidemocratic sentiments that made Nietzsche infamous after his death make their first appearance in the *Untimely Meditations*.[124] These sentiments are summed up in his assertion that: "all states in which people other than politicians must concern themselves with politics are badly organized."

Nietzsche's claim that a non-democratic political order is necessary for the production of great human beings is complicated by the fact that the concept of nature upon which his demand for this order rests is, by his own admission, a philanthropic concept concerned with the well-being of all. Just twenty pages after he announces that nature's goal for a species is not the well-being of the majority or the common man, he makes the striking and seemingly contradictory assertion that: "nature always seeks to work for the common good but does not know how to find the best and most skillful ways and means of accomplishing this process."[125] It would appear that nature's final "goal" is not the production or ceaseless transition to higher types after all. Instead, these types are means for the creation of a spiritual "common good" which could be more accurately termed "culture."[126] In his early notebooks Nietzsche speculated that "the entire life of a people reflects in an unclear and confused manner the image [*Bild*] offered by their highest geniuses," and that "imitation [*Nachahmen*]

is the means employed by all culture" because "the greatest and most powerful specimens" among a people can be imitated by the rest.[127] He returns to this same theme in the opening section of *RW* when he expresses his frustration with the fact that peoples like the Germans are often not prepared to benefit from the images of genius that arise in their midst.[128] He reiterates this sentiment again in section 7 of *SE*, when he complains that nature produces philosophers and artists "to make existence intelligible and meaningful for human beings," yet "nature's procedure seems to be wasteful" because contemporary social and political arrangements do not permit philosophers and artists to have their full effect.[129] These frustrations lead Nietzsche to suggest that a society whose concern is not primarily the common good must be set up to guarantee the emergence of high types whose task is to work on behalf of the common good. For this reason, it would appear that the primary beneficiary of Nietzsche's undemocratic political system (not to mention the primary concern of nature) is the common man he holds in contempt, and whose interests he elsewhere implies are the least of nature's concerns. Philosophers, it would seem, do not rule and cultivate for their own good but for the sake of the good of others. This is borne out in section 8 of *SE*, when Nietzsche says that the philosopher has the right to demand that his city "take care of me, since I have better things to do: namely, taking care of you." Despite the fact that Nietzsche's campaign on behalf of the genius has a clearly anti-majoritarian tone, it is undertaken out of a concern for the majority of ordinary men whose philistinism he thinks stands in the way of the emergence of the geniuses he longs for.[130] Nietzsche's and his philosophers love mankind despite or because of their contempt for it.[131]

The last two sections of *SE* sketch a revolutionary political plan meant to address nature's failure to use geniuses for the common good. Section 7 states that nature's failure on this score is "particularly obvious with regard to its use of the philosopher." The theme is elaborated further in section 8, in which Nietzsche asks readers to help him remedy the fact that "most philosophers do not serve the common good" because nature "shoots them like an arrow into the midst of humanity" without taking aim and insuring they will have a meaningful impact. Although Richard Wagner is not a philosopher in the conventional sense of the term, Nietzsche picks up this thread in the opening sentences of *Richard Wagner in Bayreuth* when he complains that it "may happen that a powerful human being strikes a blow that falls without effect"

on his contemporaries.[132] Ultimately, a cultural "city" like Wagner's Bayreuth may be the only, or at least the initial, solution to the political problem of cultural legislation as it appears in *SE*. To prepare the way for this solution, Nietzsche assumes the role of "taskmaster" for his readers in the final section of *SE* and presents the "duties" of the culture he hopes they will adopt and carry out in his name.[133] Chief among these duties is the removal or destruction of the "obstacles" he thinks inhibit the emergence of philosophers in modern times and prohibit them from having an effect on common people. Many obstacles are mentioned, but none loom larger than the "modern state," which, in the aftermath of Hegelianism, has begun to understand itself—and not culture or the genius—as "the highest aim of humanity."[134] It is therefore the modern state and its harsh treatment of philosophy to which Nietzsche turns his critical eye in the final paragraphs of the essay.

Before the critique of the modern state begins, however, Nietzsche pauses briefly to emphasize that there is a precedent for a kind of state—or at least a state in speech—which does not understand itself to be the highest aim of humanity. The state he refers to is the one featured in Plato's *Republic*, and he judges its purpose to have been the production of humanity's true highest aim: the philosophic genius. In Nietzsche's view, Plato was troubled by the fact that Socrates could be executed on account of the irrational whims of Athenian patriarchs. He wrote his *Republic* to express thoughts similar to those Nietzsche expresses in *SE*, namely that the existence of the philosopher should not be left up to chance. Like Nietzsche, Nietzsche's Plato judged that "the establishment of an entirely new state was necessary in order that the emergence of the philosopher not be dependent on the unreason of the fathers."[135] The claim in *SE* 6 that "humanity should work ceaselessly toward producing great individuals" by organizing society around their production was inspired by Platonic political philosophy. In fact, just a year before Nietzsche wrote *SE*, he drafted a short essay titled *The Greek State* whose thesis was that the "authentic goal" of the state was the "ever-renewed generation and preparation of the genius."[136] This generation and preparation is said to be part of the "*secret teaching of the connection between the state and the genius*" in the *Republic*.[137] For Nietzsche and his Plato, the tension between philosophy and the city could be resolved for short periods of time if the right cultural conditions were put in place. Part of the goal of *SE* is to renew and revise the "secret teaching" of Plato for an audience of modern Glaucons who Nietzsche hopes to inspire to bring about Platonic cultural conditions in their own time.

The reason Plato's "secret teaching" is in need of Nietzsche's assistance is that "historically Plato has been amazingly unfortunate." According to Nietzsche, a few states have indeed arisen in human history that took seriously Plato's proposal to cultivate philosophers, but these states have always proven to be "ugly changelings" compared to the Platonic original because they either misinterpreted his teaching, or exploited it for their own selfish ends. Among the states that can lay claim to being partly "Platonic" in character, Nietzsche says that the modern state is the one guilty of the deepest perversion of Plato's teaching. The modern state does not appoint philosophers as its rulers as Plato's state did, but he observes that it does give a small number of its citizens—namely university philosophy professors—the "freedom we understand to be the essential condition of the genesis of the philosopher." This freedom makes the modern state appear at first glance to have a Platonic concern with the promotion of philosophy.[138] To see whether the modern state takes philosophy as "seriously and sincerely" as Plato did, and hence, whether the modern alliance between these two entities is good for philosophy, Nietzsche proposes to examine the modern state by a Platonic standard, "as if it were its supreme task to produce new Platos" and to turn the "chance" appearance of the philosopher into necessity. If philosophy is truly an end for the modern state and not merely a means of its legitimation, this attitude should bear itself out not only in the way the modern state treats philosophy, but in the way philosophy understands its own task while under the modern state's protection.

Contemporary philosophy as Nietzsche understands it makes three major concessions to the modern state when the latter serves as its promoter and protector. Each of these concessions compromise philosophy's future by robbing it of the "freedom" he thinks is the "essential condition" for the philosopher's genesis. The first concession philosophy makes to the modern state is that it turns over the authority to choose those who are worthy of being called philosophers to officials from state-run universities. This permits nonphilosophers to dictate the types of natures suitable for philosophy, and the sorts of answers philosophy is allowed to give to the most important questions. When the modern state turns philosophy into the "breadwinning occupation" of university professors, the state is empowered to hire only those candidates who are friendly to its policies and whose philosophies (like

Hegel's) teach that the modern liberal state is the goal of humanity. Just as Plato argues that philosophy is corrupted when philosophers are paid to teach because their desire for truth becomes entwined with their desire for money, Nietzsche argues that state supported professorships in philosophy solicit natures who care more about feeding their families (and hence about praising the state) than they do about pursuing truth. If a person who "acted as though he wanted to measure everything, including the state, by the standard of truth" were to apply for a philosophy professorship at a state-funded university, Nietzsche says that the state would be "justified in banishing such a person and treating him as an enemy" because the state seeks above all to affirm its own existence. Unlike the Platonic state, which Nietzsche thinks had a genuine interest in organizing humanity around the discovery or creation of truth, the modern state is not interested in truth but only in "half-truths and errors."

The second concession philosophy makes to the modern state that prohibits the development of true philosophers is a consequence of the first. The modern liberal state claims to provide a safe haven for philosophic freedom insofar as it turns philosophy into an occupation, but this occupation must itself be useful to the state in order to be deemed worthy of being an occupation. This means of protecting philosophic freedom is, in reality, a means of denying it. Those who are philosophically inclined are given the impression that they must work for their living, and particularly that they must "teach every day and at fixed hours to each and every student who seeks instruction." Nietzsche learned from his own scarring experience in the academy that a potential philosopher cannot "commit with a good conscience" to having something to teach on a daily basis. The demand the state places on the developing philosopher to produce new truths every day makes him dishonest and unphilosophic because it accustoms him to pretending to know more than he actually does. Furthermore, when philosophers are forced by their salaries to discuss important matters with youths and to frame their thoughts in a language that is suitable to their level of understanding, the potential philosopher's thinking gradually becomes "emasculated." A philosopher who is required to teach young people forfeits the time and brainpower required to think through matters that he can "only safely discuss with his closest friends."

The problem of having to produce truths on a daily basis which are accessible to young minds leads to the third and final concession philosophy makes to the modern state. This concession is that philosophy agrees to transform itself into the history of philosophy instead of occupying its rightful place as the discoverer or creator of new truths. Genuine philosophizing takes a great deal of time, but this time is not permitted under the state university's demand that professors present new lessons on a daily basis. The task of the state-sponsored university philosopher, therefore, is merely to "rethink things" that were thought in the past so that he has something to say to his students. Under these circumstances, philosophy exists "first and foremost as scholarship, and above all as knowledge of the history of philosophy." Although Nietzsche by no means opposes the study of the history of philosophy, he indicates here, just as he did in *HL*, that gorging on history leads to intellectual paralysis instead of productivity. This is especially true for the potential philosopher who, "similar to the poet, views things purely and with love" and is overflowing with creative energy. The modern state does violence to Nietzsche's understanding of philosophy because it bars philosophers from engaging in the poetic and erotic side of the philosophic activity. To philosophize in modern times means to study and present the history of philosophy, and nothing more.

The three concessions that the modern state demands of philosophy lead Nietzsche to conclude that the state is more interested in stifling genuine philosophy than promoting it. Academic philosophy, he says, is "ridiculous" and suitable only for "warped heads." As long as state-sponsored "pseudo-philosophy" remains the standard by which potential philosophers judge themselves, "every great effect of a true philosophy will be thwarted or at least hampered," and the philosophic geniuses required to foster a genuine culture will rarely come into being. For philosophy and philosophers to be rescued from their current low point and reestablished as humanity's highest aim, it is now a "requirement of culture [*Kultur*]"—and hence the duty of Nietzsche's readers—to eliminate "every form of state and academic recognition" from philosophy so that nonphilosophers no longer have the power to decide what philosophy should be and who philosophers are.[139] When the "sham-philosophers" who currently populate German educational institutions are denied honors and payment from the state, Nietzsche predicts that they will "flee the coop" to pursue occupations more suitable for their mediocre minds. Plato may have constructed his city in speech

to prevent the political persecution of philosophers, but Nietzsche states explicitly that the modern state has so thoroughly twisted Plato's teaching that the philosophers it harbors deserve persecution: "Persecute them, look unfavorably upon them—then you will behold miracles!" [140]

True philosophers will not be taken seriously enough to have an effect on culture until contemporary philosophy is cleansed of imposters. This is why Nietzsche announces in the penultimate sentence of *SE* that "true friends" of philosophy must now work to restore its dignity by "proving through their actions that love of truth is something terrible and powerful." Just as the Greeks in the parable that concluded *HL* acted on the basis of a "practical interpretation" of Apollo's imperative to know themselves, the Germans must now act on the basis of a practical interpretation of Nietzsche's imperative to do the same.[141] Like a plant that needs pruning by an able cultivator to reach its greatest height and yield its sweetest fruit, philosophy must be pruned by action so that only those natures remain who are willing to write and philosophize in spite of persecution. Nietzsche is the self-conscious cultivator of this new philosophy and *SE* 8 is a prelude to the philosophy of the future.

At first glance, Nietzsche's teaching in *SE* 8 appears anti-Platonic because it encourages the conditions under which persecution occurs instead of seeking, as Plato did, to prevent them. Upon further consideration, however, the seemingly anti-Platonic tone of Nietzsche's message gives way to a pro-Platonic concern for what he thinks is the restoration of Plato's true intention. That intention is to foster philosophic and poetic geniuses who rule by means of the culture they create.[142] It is not by chance that *Richard Wagner in Bayreuth* is the sequel to *SE*, for this is precisely what Nietzsche hoped Wagner would attempt to do in the cultural city of Bayreuth.

Notes

1. *EH*, Books, Untimelies 3.
2. *EH*, Books, Untimelies 3. Also see Kofman (1995) and Franco (2011, Prologue). Breazeale (1998, 6–7) quotes a passage from Nietzsche's notebooks in which Nietzsche confesses that he presented portraits of Schopenhauer and Wagner in the third and fourth Untimely Meditations in order to "paint portraits of 'the philosopher' and 'the artist'—to render as it were, my own 'categorical imperative.'" He says that he chose to paint these portraits using Schopenhauer and Wagner because "it was an inestimable benefit for me not to have to apply my

own colors to an empty canvas containing nothing real, but rather to be able to paint, so to speak, upon shapes that were already sketched out in advance. Without realizing it, I was speaking only for myself—indeed, at bottom, only of myself."

3. Plato, Epistle 2.
4. *EH*, Books, Untimelies 3.
5. *Samliche Briefe* 5: 265.
6. Many scholars agree that *SE* is not about Schopenhauer. See, for example, Schacht (1995, 153); Janaway (1998, 18–21); Conant (2001, 202–208), Large (2012, 97); Gray (1995, 408–409). Also see the first section of Nietzsche's late preface to the second volume of *HA* in which he states that he no longer "believed" in Schopenhauer when he wrote *SE*.
7. Brandes (1914), Letter from Feb. 19, 1888.
8. Ibid., Letter from April 10, 1888.
9. *EH*, Books, Untimelies 3.
10. *EH*, Ibid., 1.
11. Cf. the last sentence of *BGE* 12. Schacht (1995, 162–163) says that *SE* presents "the kind of philosopher through whom human life might be enhanced," and notes that Nietzsche's philosopher is not primarily concerned with fidelity of thought and expression to the way things are even though he apprehends something about them. Also see Berkowitz (1995, 28). Franco (2011, 6–7) has a different take on the philosopher as presented in *SE*. He argues that "the emphasis on heroic truthfulness in the Schopenhauer essay seems to signal a fundamental shift in Nietzsche's assessment of the respective ranks of art and knowledge in relation to the problem of culture." For Franco, the emphasis on truthfulness and knowledge in *SE* marks the beginning of Nietzsche's turn to rational thought and science in *HA*.
12. *BGE* 207, 211. My arguments here and in other places that Nietzsche's early works shed light on his later stands in opposition to the argument of Brobjer (2004, 303–307) who says that Nietzsche entirely rejected his early writings later in life.
13. Schacht (1995, 163) makes a similar argument when he says that "the philosophic endeavor Nietzsche champions is likewise concerned above all with the pursuit of a kind of "truth" that is not merely a matter of fidelity of thought and expression to the way things are, even though it presupposed their clear and candid apprehension."
14. *HL* 9. It would appear that human beings have access to a permanent truth insofar as they can apprehend that the doctrine of sovereign becoming is true. Nietzsche confronts this problem or

contradiction more forcefully in the will to power doctrine featured in his later writings.

15. *BGE* 213, 211.
16. *BGE* 9, 207.
17. *SE* 7.
18. Schacht (1995, 41) argues that *SE* "affords considerable insight into Nietzsche's early intellectual development" and "contributes to the understanding of changes in his thinking."
19. See Berkowitz (1995, 28): "Nietzsche's master or 'genuine historian' is both philosopher and artist: he writes edifying historical poetry based on knowledge of metaphysics and human nature for the education of higher human beings."
20. Jenkins (2014, 175–179).
21. Letter to Overbeck, August 1884 (*Samliche Briefe*). See Breazeale (2012, 90).
22. *SE* 2. Also See Schacht (1995, 164–165).
23. *SE* 2. *HL* secs. 4–6.
24. *SE* 5 and 6 beginning. The "redeeming human being" also seems to make an appearance in *Beyond Good and Evil* 207, where Nietzsche refers to his conception of the philosopher as "the complimentary human being in whom the rest of existence is justified." See Berkowitz (1995, 38): "Nietzsche's genuine historian is a lover of truth who transforms history into art to educate noble natures and cultures." It is also fruitful to compare Nietzsche's "redeeming men" to Ralph Waldo Emerson's "representative men," as Church does in (2015, 67).
25. Cf. Nietzsche remarks on Empedocles near the end of *SE* 3. Also consider his early essay *The Greek State*.
26. A strong case could be made that the "redeeming human being" featured in *SE* is an early but more explicitly fleshed out version of the overman of the later works. See *TSZ*, Prologue 3.
27. *SE* 5. Compare this definition of culture to the one Nietzsche gave in *DS* 1: "Above all else, culture is a unity of artistic style that manifests itself throughout all the expressions of life of a people." See Church (2015, 84–100) for an account of why Nietzsche specifically chooses the philosopher, artist, and saint as his exemplary types.
28. Conant (2001) also emphasizes the importance of statements like these.
29. *SE* 5.
30. *SE*, 7.
31. For a similar view, see Detwiler (1990). A translation of *The Greek State* appears in Grenke (2005).
32. Conant (2001) and Church (2015) have been invaluable resources for my own thinking about Nietzsche's politics, which they treat in much

greater depth than I do. Church, for example, argues that "properly understood, culture is not an enemy but a friend of liberal democracy; that is, it is not only compatible with but also productive of equality and liberty" (2015, 2). Church gives an excellent overview of the debate between the aristocratic and democratic interpretive schools in (2015, 123–134).

33. Citations in this section appear in *SE* 1 unless otherwise noted.
34. Church (2015, 55–63) uses this section of *SE* as the lynchpin of his argument that "for Nietzsche freedom as self-determination is the human good."
35. *EH*, Untimelies 3.
36. Large (2012, 96) notes that the second Meditation concluded with the incitement to character formation though self knowledge, and that "the third continues in this vein with a concrete example of one who has done this" (i.e. Schopenhauer).
37. Strauss (2007, 88–90).
38. Nietzsche would seem to be partially responsible for the understanding of culture as the pure product of the spirit.
39. Strauss touches on a related point in his notes on Schmitt when he says that: "whether culture is understood as nurture of nature or as a fight with nature depends on how nature is understood: as exemplary order or as disorder to be eliminated." If I am not mistaken, Nietzsche never indicates that he understands culture to be a "fight" against nature, but rather he conceives of it as a nourishing of nature, or at most a "transfiguration" of nature (see *SE* 5). His gentleness toward "nature" is evident from his claim in *SE* 1 that the "perfection of nature" consists in turning its "cruel and merciless onslaughts" to good and "draping a veil" over its sad lack of understanding, and not in punishing it or using its own laws to conquer it. What is at stake in *SE*, then, is not whether culture for Nietzsche is a fight or nourishment, but rather whether culture conceived as the nourishing of nature *necessarily* implies that nature is a permanent "exemplary order." I argue that Nietzsche thinks nature can be nourished or improved to such a high degree that its order and goals can be altered (see his claim in *SE* 5 that nature can "unlearn" its goals).
40. *HL* 10.
41. *Ibid*.
42. See *RW* 3.
43. *HL* 10.
44. All quotations in this section appear in *SE* 2 unless otherwise noted.
45. See *SE* 5.

46. It is worth noting that the word "*schöpferischen*" in the phrase "*schöpferischen Moral*" may be a play on Schopenhauer's name. *Der Schöpfer* [the Creator, the Maker] is a name used for God in the German Bible. Interestingly, the word *Hauer* in German means "hewer" or "worker." The essay's title could perhaps be understood to mean "Creation Hewer as Educator." For an account of the way that exemplary models cultivate ethics, see Conant (2001, 216–217).
47. See *SE* 3. Nietzsche's unfinished book *Philosophy in the Tragic Age of the Greeks* is invaluable for the clarity with which it expresses the ways in which philosophy can shape the ethical life of a people. Also consider the following remark from *HL* 7: "At some time or other we may be allowed gradually to set our goal higher and farther; at some time or other we should be able to praise ourselves for having recreated ourselves in the spirit of Hellenistic and Roman culture—even by means of our universal history—in such a fruitful and magnificent manner, so that we now, by way of the most noble reward, can charge ourselves with the even more prodigious task of striving to go behind this Hellenistic world and seek our models in the primordial world of ancient Greece with all its greatness, naturalness, and humanity. *But here we will also find the reality of an essentially ahistorical cultivation and of a form of cultivation that despite—or precisely of—this fact is indescribably rich and vital.*"
48. *SE* 3, beginning.
49. See Church (2015, xi), who argues that "Nietzsche's key theoretical contribution" is to "conceive of a culture constituted by the lives and works of exemplary individuals rather than by particular identities."
50. See *HL* 3, 10, 8.
51. Cf. *BGE* 51.
52. When Nietzsche says in *HL* 10 that the founders of the next generation of Germans must aim to foster "better health and even a more natural nature" than the culture out of which they were born, it is perhaps the supernaturalness of Christianity he hopes to leave behind for a partial return to the more moderate "naturalness" of ancient morality. He once described his hope for a "return to nature" as something that was "not a going back but a *coming up*" toward something more real, and he singled out Goethe and Napoleon as exemplars of his concept of naturalness because they were "self-created," "self-disciplined," and "convinced realists" who permitted themselves to participate in the entire range of human experiences in the midst of a Christian age "disposed to unreality." *TI*, Reconnaissance Raids, 48–49. Cf. *GS* 109.
53. All quotations in this section appear in *SE* 2 unless otherwise noted.
54. *UPW* 350. Also see Schacht (1995, 153–155).

55. See Large (2912, 97) who argues that "instead of presenting Schopenhauer as a historical teacher, then, Nietzsche presents him as a mode, an exemplar, who taught by merely being, who indeed taught a mode of being—'be yourself!'"
56. *SE* 3.
57. *SE* 3. Compare Nietzsche's critique of Kant in this section to his claim in *EH, Books,* Untimelies 3 that the concept of the philosopher he presents in *Schopenhauer* surpasses even a man like Kant.
58. *SE* 3. Cf. the first section of Nietzsche's *Philosophy in the Tragic Age of the Greeks* and his lecture courses on the "Pre-Platonic" philosophers. Also consider this remark in light of Nietzsche's praise of Empedocles in the last lines of *SE* 4.
59. Cf. *BGE* 6 and 9. See Taylor (1997) 74–76 for an account of the problematic character of myth creation as philosophy in Nietzsche. Taylor observes helpfully that "art, in the metaphysical, broadest and profoundest sense, is no longer opposed to science, but rather exists as a necessary corrective of, and supplement for science. Art accorded primacy. Life cannot be justified or provided with metaphysical significance by the mere accumulation of facts, or through historical scientific modes of understanding."
60. In notebooks from the period in which he wrote *SE*, Nietzsche sheds light on the mechanic he presents here by observing that "the individual, morally outstanding human being radiates a power of imitation" which the philosopher "is supposed to disseminate [because] what is law for the highest specimens must be accepted as universal law: even if only as a barricade against others." Nietzsche also notes that while every human being is already an "intelligible being" (i.e. a determined nature), the moral powers of humans can be "strengthened by the excitation of certain sensations by means of concepts." Interestingly, he concludes in his notebooks that "nothing new is created [in the inner life of a human being under the influence of moral concepts], but rather "the creative energy [of the concept] is focused on one side [of the human being's moral life]." As an example of what he has in mind, he points out that "the categorical imperative has greatly strengthened the sensation of unselfish virtue." See *UPW* 39, 19 [113].
61. Conant (2001, 207–208) makes a similar and compelling argument. Also see Schacht (1995, 156–158) for an account of the way Schopenhauer educated Nietzsche.
62. *SE* 7.
63. Ibid.
64. Cf. *BGE* 3, 6, 9.

65. Nietzsche also singles out Montaigne as a type of human being who is capable of re-naturalizing man and making him feel at home in the world: "Since my first encounter with this freest, most energetic of spirits, I have found it necessary to say of him what he said of Plutarch: 'As soon as I cast a glance at him, I sprouted another leg or a wing.' I would take my example from him if I were set the task of making myself feel at home on this earth" (*SE* 2). See *GS* 109 for the source of my usage of the term "re-naturalization."
66. *SE* 3.
67. *SE* 3 end. To get a better sense of Nietzsche's claim at the end of section 3 that the true genius always gives "the answer given by Empedocles" when confronted with the question of whether his own existence "affirms existence" and entitles him to become its "advocate and savior," it is helpful to consult the lecture on Empedocles he gave as a part of his course on the Pre-Platonic Greeks at Basel University in the early 1870s. Although this lecture is far too long to summarize here, it is not far-fetched to suspect that Nietzsche's study of Empedocles shaped his understanding of what he would later call the "redeeming human being." In his notebooks from the year he wrote *SE*, he called Empedocles the "ideal and complete Greek," and he concluded his lecture on him with the remark that: "Empedocles hovers between poet and rhetorician, between god and man, between scientific man and artist, between statesman and priest, and between Pythagoras and Democritus. He is the motliest figure of older philosophy; he demarcates the age of myth, tragedy, and orgiastics, yet at the same time there appears in him the new Greek, as democratic statesman, orator, enlightenment figure, allegorist, and scientific human being. In him the two time periods wrestle with each other; he is a man of *competition* through and through" (*The Pre-Platonic Philosophers*, 119). Also see Heilke's argument (1998, 83 ff.) that Nietzsche's study of the Pre-Platonics showed him that "the importance of philosophy did not lie directly in its truth claims," and that "the life of the philosopher is a work of art intended to edify both himself and others."
68. All quotations in this section appear in *SE* 4 unless otherwise noted.
69. See Nietzsche's assertion in *SE* 3 that "unusual people" who are not themselves redeeming men should "surround [themselves] with the images [*Bilde*] of good courageous fighters of the sort that Schopenhauer himself was."
70. *SE* 3.
71. Consider Nietzsche's claims in *BGE* that philosophy is "the most spiritual will to power" and that every philosophy is essentially the confession of its author. Also see *SE* 5, beginning. Berkowitz (1995, 39) notes that

the cure to the historical sickness described in *HL* included "creating horizons to repel the ceaseless onslaught of what is transient, mortal, and devoid of inherent significance." Church (2015, 67–70) argues that the lives of exemplary individuals are "the highest form of artwork, since they supply both illusion and truth at the same time."

72. Nietzsche understands such image creation to be a political activity. See Abbey (1998, 92–94): "As the capacity to create and transform includes the ability to work on, shape, order and organize human beings, it is unsurprising that Nietzsche construes politics as an aesthetic activity."
73. See Zuckert (1976, 74–78) for deeper analysis of this section. Also see Schacht 1995 (159–160).
74. Cf. Nietzsche's description of his first impression of the naturalness of Schopenhauer in section 3.
75. See *HL* 3 and my interpretation of critical history in the previous chapter.
76. See Löwith (1964, 176–181) for an analysis of Nietzsche's view of Goethe.
77. *HL* 3.
78. *SE* 5, beginning.
79. In this sense, the Schopenhauerian image of man resembles the free spirit of Nietzsche's later work because it combines a Schopenhauerian pessimism which says no to the world with a yes-saying thirst for intellectual liberation. See *HA*, Preface, section 3 and 6. Like the Schopenhauerian man, the free spirit is characterized by "a sudden fear and suspicion of what it has loved," and his "tearing apart of whatever attracts him" and realization that "injustice is inseparable from life" are central to the "awful and painful" experience that constitutes his great spiritual liberation. Interestingly, the first usage of the term "free spirit" in Nietzsche's published works occurs in *SE,* when Nietzsche describes his own task as that of "introducing Schopenhauer to the free spirits and to those who profoundly suffer from this age, and gathering them together and producing by means of them a current strong enough to overcome that ineptitude that nature commonly evinces in its utilization of the philosopher." See Franco (2011) for a discussion of the ways in which the Schopenhauerian man prefigures Nietzsche's turn to rationalism in the middle period works.
80. Schacht (1995, 159) observes that the Schopenhauerian man is Nietzsche himself.
81. See *HL* 4 for Nietzsche's reference to history as "the science of becoming." Also See *HL* 1: "Imagine […] a human being who does not possess the power to forget, who is damned to see becoming everywhere, such a human being would no longer believe in his own being, would

no longer believe in himself, would see everything flow apart into turbulent particles, and would lose himself in this stream of becoming."

82. Church (2015, xi, 140ff.) may disagree with my claim that Nietzsche longs to reignite monumental history. Church argues: "Though Nietzsche asks us to place great individuals at the center of culture, he does not advocate hero worship."
83. Zuckert (1976, 76) observes in passing that the 3 images of man resemble the 3 forms of history. I have tried to flesh out this comparison.
84. See *HL* 2 and Nietzsche's claim in *HL* 9 that "I know of no better purpose in life than perishing in the attempt to accomplish something great *animae magnae prodigus*."
85. See *HL* 9. Also see Zuckert (1976, 77).
86. See Taylor (1997, 82) for a helpful analysis of Nietzsche's response to the tragic nature of existence, which Taylor says "required the appearance of art as mankind's redeeming savior."
87. Consider the role of the "new philosopher" and Nietzsche's paving of the way for him in *BGE*. Also see Jurist (2000, 58–59).
88. See the second chapter of this volume.
89. See Schacht (1995, 160–161).
90. All quotations in this section appear in *SE* 5 unless otherwise noted.
91. Like the Greeks in *HL* whose "practical interpretation" of the Delphic imperative revealed the genius as their culture's most genuine need, the German youth must interpret practically the fruit of their own self-investigation and use it to pave the way for the emergence of the type of human being who could redeem their culture.
92. Cf. *HL* 10.
93. Conant (2001, 194–205) does not mention this passage in his argument that Nietzsche's teaching on the genius in *SE* is inclusive instead of elitist. If ordinary human beings are like animals compared to the genius, then it would stand to reason that the distance between ordinary human beings and the genius is so great as to refute Conant's claim that exemplars possess an excellence that all members of the genus can attain. Conant also claims that the genius "cannot be understood to be somebody that is qualitatively unlike you." In the passage in which Nietzsche compares ordinary men to animals, however, he indicates that the genius is a different class or species than the ordinary person. This contrasts Conant's claim that we are more similar to Nietzsche's exemplars than so-called "elitist" readers of Nietzsche realize. Conant does mention the passage on animals at pp. 224–225, but he does so in the context of an argument which states that anyone can become an educator or exemplar like Schopenhauer. It is difficult to square this claim with Nietzsche's remark in *SE* 6 that the attitude that should be cultivated

in every young person is the attitude that: "In my case nature did a bad job […], but I shall pay tribute to its great intention by being at its service so that it might someday be more successful." This line does not give the impression that, as Conant claims, everybody or anyone can become an exemplar and find their highest and best self. Church (2015, 2–3) seems to agree with Conant's general position that every human being is capable of a certain kind of excellence. Church qualifies his position with the claim that Nietzsche recognizes that "not everyone can become a 'genius,'" yet "we can all share in the freedom of the genius by becoming cultured."

94. See Abbey (1998, 111–113) for an account of the educational purpose of what I call the Schopenhauerian type.
95. Conant's (2001) very careful interpretation of this section of the book omits a careful discussion of this line, which seems crucial to me for understanding the distance between the exemplar and the ordinary person.
96. See Nietzsche's remark in *SE* 1 that education is "perfection of nature when it prevents nature's cruel and merciless onslaughts and turns them to good, when it drapes a veil over the expressions of nature's stepmotherly disposition and sad lack of understanding."
97. This and subsequent quotations appear in *SE* 5.
98. See Nietzsche's remarks in *HL* 1 on the difference between man and animal as it relates to the capacity of memory. Also recall his remark in *SE* 1 that the defining characteristic of man is laziness.
99. Consider Heidegger's discussion of *Dasein* in its "everydayness" in *Being and Time*.
100. Cf. *TSZ*, Preface 3: "Behold, I teach you the overman: it is this sea, in this can your great despising submerge itself. What is the greatest you could experience? It is the hour of the great despising. The hour in which even your happiness disgusts you and likewise your reason and your virtue…" See *HL* 10 for the reference to a "more natural nature."
101. Cf. *TSZ*, Prologue 3: "What is the greatest you could experience? It is the hour of the great despising. The hour in which even your happiness disgusts you and likewise your reason and your virtue."
102. Thiele (1990, 99–182) provides an extremely helpful account of the importance of the philosopher, artist, and saint (and their fusion into a single type) in Nietzsche's thought. According to Thiele: "The philosopher, artist and saint may be thought of as the incarnations of the Nietzschean hero. […] The knower, the creator, and the lover are defined by the quite specific objects of their activity. The philosopher is not merely in search of knowledge, but of wisdom. […] The artist is no mere fabricator of art. His task is the creation of life-affirmative art, his

works being tributes paid to life. As his greatest tribute he transforms his life into an aesthetic phenomenon. The saint is not infatuated with his fellow man; nor does he pity him. His love is a rapture at the pregnancy of being and an active force in the realization of ideals. […] The solitary and the educator are the two ways of being in the world for one who simultaneously incarnates the philosopher, artist, and saint" (165).

103. *RW* 5.
104. Ibid.
105. See *BGE* 51 where Nietzsche says that "the powerful men of the world" have always sensed the will to power in the presence of saints.
106. *SE* 6. Also see *BGE* 9.
107. Cf. Nietzsche's claim in *HL* 6 that creative history is more accurate than objective history.
108. Nietzsche was extremely interested in this subject. He planned to write his academic dissertation on "The Concept of the Organic since Kant." An English translation of the notes for that dissertation is available in Padderborn (2010). See Church, (2015, 39–41) for an account of the significance Nietzsche's reading of Kant had on his view of nature. Church (2015, 38–50) is a valuable resource for understanding the early Nietzsche's view of nature.
109. All quotations in this section appear in *SE* 5 unless otherwise noted.
110. It is significant that Nietzsche chooses to anthropomorphize nature when he speaks about it. If Nietzsche himself is the type of genius he wants to bring into being, perhaps this is his way of explaining nature to itself.
111. See *SE* 2 for Nietzsche's reference to Schopenhauer as a "natural being." See *HL*10 for his reference to "new and improved physis." Zuckert (1976, 77) observes that Nietzsche discovered "the possibility of changing nature through art."
112. Conant (2001, 204) makes a similar claim, although it does not involve Nietzsche as a creator of a new nature.
113. Schacht (1995, 162) argues that "the quest to know nature and one's own time and the human norm and prevailing modes of thought *in order to transcend them*—[…]is for Nietzsche an aspiration that sets Schopenhauer apart, and an essential aspect of what it means to be a genuine philosopher." Also see Berkowitz (1995, 34) on human nature in particular.
114. Zuckert (1976, 77–83) explains the epistemological implications of this position.
115. *HL* 3.
116. *SE* 6.

117. *SE* 6. My interpretation of this passage and those like it in *SE* 5 differ from that of Conant (2001, 191–194). Conant argues that the translation of *Examplare* as "specimen" by R.J. Hollingdale has led to a more elitist interpretation of this line than the line deserves. He also argues on the basis of a grammatical analysis of the sentence that the "exemplar" Nietzsche describes here is an ideal which all men can strive to attain, and not just the most excellent. I take Nietzsche's claim that one's life achieves deepest significance by "living for the benefit of the rarest and most valuable exemplars, not for the benefit of the majority" to be a more elitist statement than Conant does. I put more weight on Nietzsche's account of the relationship of the majority to the minority in this and other passages in the essay than on his usage of the term *Exemplare*. Also see Church (2015, 123–126) for an interpretation that builds on Conant's.
118. *HL* 10.
119. *HL* 10. Nietzsche attributes this insight to the ancient Greeks.
120. All quotations in this paragraph appear in *SE* 6. Cf. Nietzsche's remark in *BGE 277*: "A people is a detour of nature to get six or seven great men. Yes, and then to get around them." Also See Abbey (1998, 111–113).
121. See Nietzsche's early essay *The Greek State*.
122. See *SE* 6: How gladly we would apply to society and its aims a lesson that can be derived from the observation of every single species of animal and plant life, namely, that the only thing that matters is the superior individual specimen…"
123. Cf. *BGE* 203 where Nietzsche discusses his intention to "teach man the future of humanity as his *will*, as depending on human will," and describes "the conditions which one would partly have to create and partly exploit" for the genesis of the new philosopher. The quote about "regulated activity" appears in *SE* 5.
124. There is a troubling kinship between the view of greatness propounded in *SE* and German fascism. I lack the space needed to address Nietzsche's political thought in any comprehensive way, but there have been many excellent treatments of Nietzsche's politics that deal in depth with this and other themes. Among those I have found most helpful are Drochon (2016), Shapiro (2016), Clark (2015), Shaw (2007), Abbey and Appel (1998), Conway (1997), Ansell-Pearson (1994), Detwiler (1993), Thiele (1990), Bergmann (1987), Hunt (1985), Warren (1988), and Strong (1975). Church (2015) is of particular note since he argues that Nietzsche's thought is compatible with democratic politics and classical liberalism. A powerful alternative to Nietzsche's view of greatness exists which argues that greatness is not only compatible

with—but even flourishes in—the types of liberal democratic regimes he despises. See, for example, Faulkner (2008, chs. 7–8). Alexis de Tocqueville stated in 1840 that humanity would still produce "great artists, illustrious poets, and celebrated writers" even if a "democratic social state and institutions once came to prevail over all the earth" (*Democracy in America*, Vol II, Part I, ch. 9). Nietzsche, on the other hand, argued in 1886 that "the democratic movement is not only a form of the decay of political organization but a form of the decay of man," and he feared that "extraordinary human beings" might "fail to appear, or that they might turn out badly or degenerate" in a predominantly democratic Europe (*BGE* 206). Although it is perhaps too early to say which of these two great psychologists will be proven right in his assessment of the fate of greatness in the democratic West, the remarks Nietzsche seems to make about the aristocratic or even fascist political conditions necessary for the emergence of greatness are worthy of skepticism.

125. All quotations in this paragraph appear in *SE* 7.
126. This part of my interpretation is indebted to the insights of Church (2015). Church's work is an invaluable resource for understanding Nietzsche through a liberal democratic lens, especially because I do not see Nietzsche through that lens. On the point discussed in this paragraph, see Church (2015, 122–127).
127. I discuss this at length in Chap. 2 of this volume. See Breazeale (1990, 49–50). In another note from this period, Nietzsche concluded that "the sum total of Greek culture" and "the whole of Greek history" could be understood as "the reflection of the image which shines forth from its greatest luminaries." Also see Nietzsche (1998, 32) and Nietzsche (1994).
128. *RW* 1.
129. Nietzsche claims that nature is "just as wasteful in the realm of culture as it is in the realm of planting and sowing" because in both realms, it accomplishes its purposes in an "inefficient manner by expending too much energy."
130. See Nietzsche's claim near the end of the essay that the philosopher has the right to demand that his city "take care of me, since I have better things to do: namely, taking care of you" (*SE* 8). Just as cultivation requires nature as its object, the philosopher and artist (at least as Nietzsche conceives of them) seems to require an audience of non-philosophers and non-artists whose lives they can enrich. This requirement is discussed at length in *RW*.
131. Cf. *TSZ*, Prologue 1.
132. *RW* 1.

133. See *SE* 1 where Nietzsche refers to Schopenhauer as his "teacher and taskmaster."
134. *SE* 6 contains a lengthy outline of other obstacles like scholarship, moneymaking, the perversity of contemporary human nature, and the association of culture with expensive taste. *SE* 8 is devoted almost exclusively to a critique of the modern state on the grounds that it damages philosophy. Also see *TI*, Germans 4. Church (2011, 179) argues that Nietzsche "defends a 'weak' understanding of the power the state should wield, that the state should be primarily conservative in nature, preserving the present legal order, rather than engaged in actively transforming human cultural interactions." Although I agree that Nietzsche may take this position in his middle period, the revolutionary character of the early works and the significance of Nietzsche's revolutionary appeals to the German youth should not be overlooked.
135. All quotations in the rest of the chapter appear in *SE* 8 unless otherwise noted.
136. Church (2015, 208ff.) argues that it is wrong to interpret *The Greek State* as a document which confirms Nietzsche's affinity for aristocracy instead of democracy.
137. For an interpretation of this statement see van Boxel (2005, 36–43).
138. It is worth noting that Schopenhauer struggled to maintain his university post.
139. Cf. the fifth lecture of Nietzsche's series *On the Future Of our Educational Institutions* (pp. 114–119 of Grenke's translation). Here, Nietzsche or his philosophic mouthpiece discusses the "Burschenschaft" student movements that had been forming in the German universities. Also consider the gravity of his references to Schiller's play *The Robbers* in this same section.
140. Nietzsche's discussion of the persecution of philosophy begins in *SE* 8 with the following statement: "Most will be content to shrug their shoulders and say: […] Would you prefer that the state persecute philosophers instead of salarying them and taking them into its service?' Without yet answering this last question let me merely add that at present philosophy's concessions to the state are quite extensive." A few pages later, Nietzsche reiterates this point when he says: "Let philosophers go on proliferating wildly, deny them any hope of employment and assimilation in civil occupations, stop enticing them with salaries. Better still: persecute them, look unfavorably upon them—then you will behold miracles!" Finally, he says: "If the state ceases to treat philosophy with indifference, if philosophy becomes aggressive and dangerous to it, then the state may persecute it.—"

141. See *RW* sec 4: "The time is ripe for those who wish to conquer and triumph powerfully; the greatest empires stand waiting, a question mark has been added to the names of the property-holders, insofar as property exists. Thus, for instance, the edifice of education has been found to be rotting, and everywhere we find individuals who have already quietly left the building. If only those who are already profoundly dissatisfied with this edifice could be incited to public declarations and open outrage! If only they could be robbed of their despondency! I know: if we were to subtract the tacit contribution of these natures from the yield produced by our entire education system; this would cause a severe bloodletting, one that perhaps would weaken the system itself."
142. Nietzsche notes in *The Greek State* that: "In his perfect state, [Plato] did not place the genius in his universal concept [i.e. the poet] at the peak, rather only the genius of wisdom and knowing, that he, however, generally shut out the ingenious artist from his state, that was a rigid consequence of the Socratic judgment about art which Plato, in a struggle against himself, had made his own." The implication is that Plato, like Nietzsche, thought poetry and philosophy were equals.

CHAPTER 5

Richard Wagner in Bayreuth

Introduction: Nietzsche in Bayreuth

Richard Wagner in Bayreuth (*RW*) is the most peculiar of the four *Untimely Meditations*. The source of its peculiarity is threefold, stemming in part from Nietzsche's personal relationship with Wagner, in part from the essay's late publication date, and in part from an uneven literary tone which alternates between worshipful and ambivalent. It is the sequel to *Schopenhauer as Educator* because, like that essay, it presents a portrait of the monumental genius or "redeeming human being" whom Nietzsche believed could renew German culture through the cultivation and improvement of *physis*. This cultivation of *physis* was first alluded to in the parable that concluded *HL*, and Nietzsche continues to explain it in *RW* in passages which explicitly address the genius's power to alter nature.[1]

Despite *RW*'s obvious thematic similarity to *SE*—both essays cast Nietzsche's mentors as the highest human types—the two pieces are also quite different. Their primary difference consists in the fact that *SE* assigned philosophy the responsibility of cultivating and renewing *physis*, whereas *RW* assigns art this same task. This change, while significant, is perhaps not as surprising as it initially appears. In the preceding chapter, I argued that part of Nietzsche's intention in *SE* was to reconceive philosophy as a creative and even poetic activity. In *RW*, he underscores this reconception when he calls one of the greatest composers of the nineteenth century a "philosopher."[2] In the process of merging philosophy and poetry, Nietzsche emphasizes that Wagner employs images to

S. Brooks, *Nietzsche's Culture War*, Recovering Political Philosophy,
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philosophize instead of concepts and, therefore, that his work is different from a conventional (but perhaps not a Nietzschean) philosopher. In *The Ring of the Nibelung*, for example, Wagner is said to have created "an immense system of thought without the conceptual form of thought."[3] Nietzsche says that a conventional philosopher could recreate this dramatic system of thought, but he would have to do so "without image" and "solely in concepts," so that the thoughts Wagner articulated through drama and poetry in *The Ring* would conform to the framework of reason. Like Schopenhauer, and perhaps even more than Schopenhauer, Wagner was Nietzsche's educator. He taught him that "philosophizing" was a poetic and culture-shaping activity that was not exclusively rational or conceptual.[4] This is why Nietzsche urges readers of *Ecce Homo* to consider *RW* and *SE* in tandem. Taken together, the last two Untimely Meditations shed light on what he thought his new philosopher's cultural task was, and they reveal how the extraordinary natures of Schopenhauer and Wagner could be combined into "one word, Nietzsche."[5]

Nietzsche's relationship with Wagner was extremely complex, but their intellectual interchange was well-documented by Nietzsche himself in *The Case of Wagner*, again in *Nietzsche contra Wagner*, and finally in *Ecce Homo*. In addition to Nietzsche's own reflections on the relationship (which are admittedly one sided), scholars and biographers from a wide variety of disciplines have combed through Wagner and Nietzsche's correspondence, published writings, and notebooks to reconstruct the history of the bond and break between the two geniuses.[6] Rather than restating the details of their relationship here, it suffices for the purposes of this volume to set *Richard Wagner in Bayreuth* in the context of its three prequels in order to show how the essay develops their major themes and fulfills many of their premises.

The most striking historical fact about Nietzsche's essay on Wagner is the length of time it took him to publish it. Its prequels were published successively: *DS* in 1873, followed quickly by *HL* and *SE* in 1874. The essay on Wagner, by contrast, was not published until 1876—two years after *Schopenhauer as Educator*. Nietzsche began work on *Richard Wagner in Bayreuth* in 1874, only to set the piece aside due to increasing disillusionment with his longtime mentor.[7] He originally conceived of the essay as a continuation of the cultural argument made in 1871's *The Birth of Tragedy* (*BT*). That book, which was Nietzsche's first, elaborated his reasons for thinking that a restoration of the tragic disposition of the

Pre-Socratic Greeks was both necessary and possible in modern times through Wagnerian drama. Just two years after *BT* was published, however, he began doubting Wagner's suitability for the supreme cultural task he had assigned him.[8] Disillusioned with Wagner, Nietzsche set *RW* aside in 1874 and began drafting parts of what he thought would be a fourth Untimely Meditation entitled *We Philologists*.[9] For unknown reasons he also set this project aside, deciding to return to *RW* at the urging of his close friend and fellow Wagnerian, Peter Gast.[10] Nietzsche's revival of the essay was somewhat surprising given the fact that his notebooks from 1874–1876 indicate that he continued to question Wagner's status as a culture creator.[11] Despite the deterioration of their relationship, Nietzsche managed to finish *RW* in July of 1876, just in time to attend the inaugural Bayreuth Festival.

Richard Wagner in Bayreuth would be the last Untimely Meditation Nietzsche ever wrote, and he would leave Bayreuth disgusted with Wagner and disenchanted with his art. Instead of marking the triumph of high culture and the return to the tragic disposition Nietzsche longed for, Wagner's Bayreuth Festival was a complete disaster. The performances in the *Festspielhaus* are reported to have been awful, and Nietzsche judged the audience to be more interested in glitzy entertainment and fashionable appearances than culture and art.[12] He had hoped for something very different in Bayreuth, and he came away emotionally and intellectually scarred from witnessing what Gary Brown has called "the triumph of philistinism and the confirmation of his worst fears."[13] Far from dealing a deathblow to the cultivated philistinism Nietzsche warned against in *DS* and *HL*, the Bayreuth Festival exacerbated and paraded precisely this philistinism. What Nietzsche had taken to be a cure for Germany's cultural sickness turned out to be yet another cultural poison.[14] Looking back on his relationship with Wagner later in life, he admitted that he had "deceived myself about Richard Wagner's incurable Romanticism, as if it were a beginning and not an end; likewise about the Greeks, likewise about the Germans and their future."[15]

The older Nietzsche's criticisms of Wagner are equal parts harsh and damning, but they do not mean he thought *Richard Wagner in Bayreuth* was not worth reading. As noted in the previous chapter of this volume, Nietzsche said in *Ecce Homo* that he had utilized Wagner and Schopenhauer in the *Untimely Meditations* as "sign language" which was meant to communicate "a higher concept of culture, to restore the concept of culture."[16] The primary reason *RW* is worth reading today

despite its cringingly reverential tone is that it communicates this concept of culture in bolder relief than its prequels. The essay also sheds valuable light on Nietzsche's understanding of the psychological characteristics and spiritual task of the high human types who are responsible for the creation of authentic culture. In *Ecce Homo*, he said that *SE* contains "my innermost history, my *becoming*," and he added in the same breath that *RW* is "a vision of my future."[17] *SE* contains Nietzsche's innermost history and becoming because it relates how the young Nietzsche became a philosopher under the tutelage of a philosopher. *RW*, by contrast, relates how the older Nietzsche learned from Wagner to be a culture creator of the future, or "a destiny" as he famously described himself in his later years.[18] It is on account of Nietzsche's status as a destiny that he says elsewhere in *Ecce Homo* that anyone who reads *RW* must remember that "in all psychologically decisive places, I alone am discussed—and one need not hesitate to put down my name or the word 'Zarathustra' where the text has the word 'Wagner.'"[19] When these instructions are rigorously followed, "Zarathustra in Bayreuth" and "Nietzsche in Bayreuth" appear as world-historical figures who overcome tremendous personal struggles in order artistically to fashion humanity into an updated classical Greek ideal.[20] For his part, Nietzsche wholly endorsed and even reveled in this interpretation of *RW*, emphasizing that:

> all decisive traits of my own nature are projected into Wagner's—the close proximity of the brightest and the most calamitous forces, the will to power as no man ever possessed it, the ruthless courage in matters of the spirit, the unlimited power to learn without damage to the will to act. Everything in this essay points to the future: the impending return of the Greek spirit, [and] the necessity of counter-Alexanders who will retie the Gordian knot of Greek culture.[21]

Although Nietzsche's ambition to "retie the Gordian knot of Greek culture" in the *Untimely Meditations* and *The Birth of Tragedy* was never fully realized, he seems initially to have hoped such a retying would produce at last the "unity of artistic style" he valorized in *DS*.[22] If successful, this retying would have had the added effect of fulfilling his hopes for Germany's cultural future, which were articulated with a combination of ambition and circumspection in the parable on classical Greek culture that concluded *HL*.[23] Like *SE*, *RW* develops the meaning of this parable

and surmises that its fulfillment can only come about through the creation of new mythical or monumental histories by geniuses and "counter-Alexanders" like Wagner. According to Nietzsche, Wagner's mythical operatic histories had the potential to re-Hellenize Germany because they successfully cultivated "the tragic disposition" of the ancient Greeks in the German soul.[24] He judged this tragic disposition to be life-enhancing because he believed it compelled human beings to "forget the terrible anxiety that death and time cause."[25] Through tragic art, the anxiety caused by death and time (i.e. by becoming and history) were exchanged for "something sublime and meaningful," which was more effectively communicated through feelings inspired by music and drama than by concepts that conform to reason. "As long as we feel transfixed by the spell of art," Nietzsche says, "the value of things is altered."[26] In the "Attempt at Self-Criticism" he appended to *The Birth of Tragedy* fourteen years after it was written, Nietzsche famously rejected what he called the "artist's metaphysics" on display in *RW* and *BT*.[27] Be this rejection as it may, it is not far-fetched to understand his later "will to power" doctrine as a type of artist's physics or physiology, based, in part, on a more grounded conception of the artist's metaphysics featured in his early writings.[28]

Nietzsche thought the tragic disposition inculcated through Wagner's operas "altered" the value of things because it fixed the human mind firmly within a mythical horizon that served as a compass for understanding, or at least coping with, the mysterious world of appearance and becoming. The tragic disposition's "tragic" character derives from the fact that it seems to provide a stable intellectual and ethical orientation for man, yet this orientation is stable only because it consistently and continuously acknowledges the supreme instability and unknowability of the world. Immersion in becoming solves the problem of becoming, just as history was said in *HL* to solve the problem of history.[29] In this sense, the tragic disposition provides a cure—or at least a powerful salve—for the sickness caused by modern historicism.

To see how the curative properties of the tragic disposition work, we need look no further than the first section of *HL*. Here, Nietzsche said that historical human beings envy animals because animals are able to live ahistorically, oblivious to the passage of time and the fear of death that haunts human beings as distinctively historical beings. The tragic disposition presented in *RW* assuages this fear because its explicit purpose is to help mankind "forget the terrible anxiety that death and time cause."[30]

It restores and enriches humanity's "humanity" by re-animalizing or re-naturalizing them through an intensification of the historical consciousness that is unique to man as man.[31] The anxiety that death and time cause, in other words, can pacified or forgotten only by bringing that very anxiety before our eyes as a magnificent, joyfully terrible, and distinctively human feature of our existence. In *HL*, Nietzsche argued that the causes of modern historical man's spiritual disorientation were the "true but deadly" doctrines of "sovereign becoming, of the fluidity of all concepts, types, and species, of the lack of any cardinal difference between human and animal."[32] In *RW*, he suggests that the artistic cultivation of the tragic disposition remedies this disorientation by vigorously embracing these very doctrines, and especially their implication that "the greatest suffering that exists for the individual [is] the lack of a knowledge shared by all human beings, the lack of certainty in ultimate insights."[33] What was said in *HL* to be a deadly truth about becoming is made life-enhancing in *RW* by means of the tragic disposition and the opportunity for creativity that follows in its wake.

The tragic art of the Greeks, and—so Nietzsche once believed—of Wagner, thus takes as its creative starting point the deadly truths that are revealed by modern historicism. In ancient Greek times, these same truths were revealed by philosophers like Heraclitus and poets like Aeschylus.[34] Nietzsche thought tragic art and drama healed the wounds caused by becoming because they doubled down on becoming and used it to cultivate what he called a "Dionysian" view of the world. Bearers of the Dionysian view derive joy instead of misery from destruction, and they embrace the fundamentally mysterious character of the constantly shifting world in which all human beings live.[35] *The Birth of Tragedy* describes the means by which the ancient Greeks created and sustained this joyfully destructive worldview, which Nietzsche said was not a "symptom of degradation, collapse, cultural decadence," but rather of its opposite.[36] Its life-promoting effects are further elucidated in section 4 of *RW*, when Nietzsche describes the way in which tragic art "simplifies" the world. Such art is indispensable for life because, like the monumental history described in *HL*, it employs "mythical fiction" to transfix and elevate the human soul.[37] According to Nietzsche, Wagner is a master "mythologist and mythic poet" whose art is needed in modern times because

> it arouses the semblance of a more simple world, of an easier solution to the riddles of life. No one who suffers from life can do without this semblance, just as no one can do without sleep. The more difficult our knowledge of the laws of life becomes, the more ardently we desire that semblance of simplification, even if only for brief moments—the greater becomes the tension between the universal knowledge of things and the intellectual-moral capacity of the individual.[38]

As human knowledge of the anxiety-inducing "laws of life" (which includes knowledge of death and the doctrines of sovereign becoming) increases, our desire intensifies for a mythical semblance or simplification of the world that incorporates these laws into itself in a way that is ennobling instead of anxiety-inducing.[39] The extraordinary geniuses who create the semblances of the simpler world we desire are the philosophers, artists, and saints described in section 5 of *SE*. In that essay, Nietzsche argued that "redeeming human beings" like Schopenhauer and Wagner redeem existence through self-expressive works art, thought, and spirit. These works help suffering human beings "understand their existence metaphysically," and, thus, come to terms with a world which does not adequately respond to their deepest longings and fears.[40] Whether philosophic, artistic, or religious, the geniuses who serve humankind do so by fashioning our mysterious and often inhospitable world into a seemingly more comprehensible and hospitable place. They simplify the world because their knowing is creating, and their creating is legislation.[41] They reach toward the future as they erect aspirational images of nature and human nature for future generations to imitate. *RW* is the sequel to *SE* because it elaborates the artistic side of these culture creators instead of the philosophic side, thereby paving the way for the ultimate union of the two natures in one towering figure. Wagner's addition to what was initially a Schopenhauerian story sets in motion the merging of philosophy and art, the amalgamation of which yields, in one word, "Nietzsche."[42]

Richard Wagner in Bayreuth is therefore a fitting, if unintentional conclusion to the *Untimely Meditations*. Readers who can see through its obsequious praise of Wagner gain access to the spiritual workshop of a highly idealized culture creator whose nature is the antithesis of the one attributed to David Strauss in the first Meditation. The defining characteristic of natures like Wagner's is that they possess "that most powerful strength, the ability to consolidate and connect, to pull together

the most distant threads."[43] This "powerful strength" is a precursor to Nietzsche's famous "will to power," and it sets Wagner worlds apart from men like Strauss whose defining characteristic is a spiritual weakness that makes them incapable of unifying a culture. Geniuses like Wagner, or rather the Nietzschean idealization of Wagner, are superior to men like Strauss because they use history artistically (instead of scientifically as Strauss did) to erect life-promoting cultural horizons that subsist on the backs of monumental or mythical characters. "As soon as [Wagner's] creative power takes possession of him," Nietzsche says, "history becomes malleable clay in his hands; then he suddenly has a different relationship with it than the scholar, one that more closely resembles the relationship the Greeks had to myth, the relationship one has to things one shapes or poeticizes."[44] All that is and has been becomes a means, an instrument, and a hammer for geniuses like Nietzsche's idealization of Wagner.[45]

Since the Wagner featured in *RW* is an idealization of the real man, the essay not only presents the nature of geniuses who create monumental and mythologized history, but it is itself an example of that kind of history. In *RW*, Nietzsche is writing the type of artistic history he ostensibly attributes to Wagner because the essay presents a mythologized biography of a monumental genius meant to inspire the geniuses of the future. Nietzsche is as much—or more—of a mythical historian than his idealized Wagner is because he too uses history, namely Wagner's life history, as "malleable clay."[46] The essay is not only a fitting response to the cultural problem presented *DS* and a compliment to the teaching of *SE*, it is also a shining example of the type of history Nietzsche urged his readers to adopt for the sake of life in *HL*.[47]

Before proceeding to our interpretation of the essay, it is worth saying a word about its unique title. A cursory reading of *Richard Wagner in Bayreuth* suggests that a more fitting title for the piece would be *The Life of Wagner*, or *Richard Wagner: His Life and Times*. The phrase "*in Bayreuth*" in the essay's title, in other words, is conspicuous for its inclusion and, therefore, highly significant. The emphasis Nietzsche places on Bayreuth suggests that he intends to draw as much attention to the cultural institution or city Wagner attempted to found as he does to the man himself. *SE* prepared the way for Nietzsche's reflections on Bayreuth as a cultural "city" because it concluded with a critique of the modern state and a praise of the Platonic city ruled by a philosophic culture creator.[48] *RW* continues the conversation begun in *SE* because it opens with the claim that a "powerful human being" needs a community like the

one Wagner attempted to build at Bayreuth if tragic art is to stand any chance of having its intended cultural effect.[49]

In Bayreuth, a Nietzschean philosopher-artist rules by means of the culture he creates, and Nietzsche may have meant to suggest that the community Wagner founded there could serve as an early blueprint for a modern revival of the ideal Platonic state.[50] He gestures in this direction in the fifth section of *RW*, when he says that those who see the tremendous potential of Bayreuth "understand as though for the first time what it means to found a state on music—something that the ancient Greeks not only understood but also demanded for themselves."[51] Those who see this potential, he adds, must "condemn the [modern] state just as unconditionally as most people already condemn the church."[52] Nietzsche judged Bayreuth to be a "true human society," and he thought Wagner was attempting to cultivate a "common people [*Volk*]" in it who were themselves poeticizing artists.[53] Although Nietzsche later rejected Wagner's politics of the *Volk* as vulgarly nationalistic and offensively anti-Semitic, the promise of the Platonic idea of Bayreuth and what it represented never left his mind.[54] In *Ecce Homo*, he confessed that part of his task in *RW* was to transform the "'idea of Bayreuth' into something that should not puzzle those who know my *Zarathustra*: into that great noon at which the most elect consecrate themselves for the greatest of all tasks."[55] Despite Bayreuth's obvious failure and philistinism, an idealized city of Bayreuth served as the cultural capital for Nietzsche's philosophy long after his break with its founder. Richard Wagner proved dispensable to Nietzsche, but Bayreuth remained "the vision of a feast that I shall yet live to see."[56]

Interpretation of *Richard Wagner in Bayreuth*

The interpretation that follows focuses primarily on the first four sections of *Richard Wagner in Bayreuth*. These sections are important for showing the unity of the *Untimely Meditations* because they present Wagner as the embodiment of the genius, whose works the previous essays have demonstrated are necessary for revitalizing modern culture. The interpretation begins with an analysis of the first section of *RW*, in which Nietzsche returns to the problem of historicism first presented in *HL*. He expresses a deep concern in this section that "the breath of history" constantly blows great events away, and that this same breath of history will make it impossible for Wagner to have a cultural effect. I argue that

the theme of the first section of *RW* is the relationship between greatness and history, which was also a major theme—if not *the* major theme—of *HL*. Monumental history cannot exert its transformative cultural effect if the breath of history, or more precisely the breath of historicism, blows what is monumental away.

Once Nietzsche has established the historical intention and framework of the essay in the first section of *RW*, he proceeds in the remaining sections to show how Wagner became the monumental culture creator he was. His broad intention in these sections is to lay bare the psychology of the artistic genius, whose world-creating works he thinks can rescue modern culture from its spiritual decline. My interpretation of section 2 of *RW* thus examines how the mature Wagner's nature emerged out of the complex psychology of Wagner the child. I argue that Wagner reached a higher level of artistic maturity when he discovered what Nietzsche calls his "ruling passion," which is the passion that dominates his mind and serves as the lens through which he artistically interprets the world. I also argue that the "ruling passion" described in *Richard Wagner in Bayreuth* is a precursor to the development of Nietzsche's famous "will to power" doctrine, and to his psychology of the "prejudices of the philosophers" featured in the first main part of *Beyond Good and Evil*.

My interpretation of the third section of the essay analyzes the intellectual instruments—namely history and philosophy—that Wagner utilized in order to become the culture creator he was destined to be. To better hone his craft, Wagner is portrayed by Nietzsche as having turned to philosophy and history in search of a new "means of learning the highest forms of culture." Unlike his contemporaries, however, Wagner did not study history and philosophy for the pleasures of contemplation, but rather because he wanted to use them for life in the manner Nietzsche argued they should be used in *HL* and *SE*. Nietzsche says that "history becomes malleable clay in [Wagner's] hands" when his "creative power" utilizes it as an artistic medium, and that Wagner is "like a philosopher" (in the Nietzschean sense) because he is an energetic and heroic creator. Wagner's ruling passion found its highest means of expression in philosophy and history because it found a new source of creative inspiration. After studying history and philosophy, Wagner created unique forms of sonic history and sonic philosophy that had the power to shape the ethical natures of his audiences.

In my interpretation of the fourth section of the essay, I address the meaning of Bayreuth. Nietzsche claims in this section that if Wagner achieves a "reformation of the theater" at Bayreuth, then "the modern human being would thereby be changed and reformed." My analysis of these statements argues that Nietzsche thinks Wagner's art has the potential to revolutionize social and political affairs on a grand scale, and that he hoped Bayreuth would serve as the cultural headquarters for this revolution. Nietzsche believed (wrongly as it turned out) that those who flocked to Bayreuth would be "prepared and dedicated spectators" who suffered gravely from present cultural and political institutions. His hope was that these spectators would be strengthened through drama to "transform and rejuvenate other areas of life." Despite the abject failure of the first Bayreuth Festival, my interpretation concludes that Nietzsche never gave up on the idea of founding an institution or community for the reformation of culture, and that Bayreuth represented for him a cultural throwing down of the gauntlet that marked the beginning of the war against power, rule of law, tradition, and convention that he would wage in his subsequent books.

The remaining six sections of *Richard Wagner in Bayreuth* are treated in summary fashion. Much of what they contain recapitulates what was said more compactly, and in less fawning language, in the first four sections of the piece.

The fifth section of the essay presents Wagner as the "simplifier of the world" alluded to in earlier sections, the sixth contains a sweeping indictment of modern culture, the seventh uses Platonic imagery to illustrate the effects of tragic art on the human soul, the eighth deepens the meaning of Bayreuth by assigning it a *Volk*, and the ninth and tenth explain the new artistic manner of thinking by means of which Wagner communicates the stylistic tradition he is attempting to propagate.

The interpretation concludes with brief remarks on the eleventh section of the essay, which is also the final section of the *Untimely Meditations*. These remarks argue that Nietzsche returns at the end of the book to the question he began exploring at the beginning: namely, the extent to which it is possible to alter human nature or *physis* through culture. I also suggest that the young Nietzsche ceased believing Wagner was an ideal culture creator long before he published *RW*, and that he hints at his disillusionment with the maestro by predicting the rise of a new generation of free spirits who are anything but Wagnerian.

Section 1: Greatness and the Problem of History

Surprisingly, the first words of *Richard Wagner in Bayreuth* are not "Richard Wagner." In fact, Wagner's name does not even appear in the first paragraph of the essay. The structure of Nietzsche's introduction to the piece seems to betray the fact that its foremost concern is not strictly with its title character. The first words of the essay are: "for an event to become great […]."[57] These words are followed by a lengthy discussion of the historical and cultural conditions required for an event to be remembered as a great event in history. Such conditions would seem to be the same as those required for an event to qualify as monumental history—the history of greatness *par excellence*—which Nietzsche prescribed in *HL* as a remedy for his hyper-historicized time.[58] In that essay, he said that monumental history brings to life great "exemplars, teachers, and comforters" whose biographies show that the "greatness that once existed was at least *possible*, and therefore that it will probably be possible once again."[59] Such histories are necessary in eras infected by historicism because they cure the paralysis induced by historical becoming. Monumental histories inspire us to act and strive, turning our gaze toward the apparent permanence of monuments to the greatness of the past. Striving for greatness means striving for permanence against a world that is hostile to greatness because history and human memory are in a constant state of flux.

Nietzsche all but confirms that *RW* is a reflection on—and an example of—monumental history when he addresses the problem of historicism in the first paragraph. The problem is discussed within the broader context of an inquiry into the possibility of greatness. First, he expresses his hope that a potentially great event (namely, the Bayreuth Festival) is on the horizon. He then observes that is difficult for potentially great events to become great in actuality because "the breath of history has blown away many such things as though they were nothing but snowflakes." The "breath of history" plays the role of villain in *RW*, just as it did in *HL*. This breath, which is the breath of becoming, is a villain because it blows greatness away by making it forgotten, or by making great men appear ordinary in the grand scope of time. The effects of the breath of history must be overcome because they undermine the possibility of human greatness, and especially the aura of permanence that greatness must acquire if it is to have an inspirational effect on human life. The flux of the breath of history threatens the emergence of the kind

of monumental history that cures the ailments caused by the flux of the breath of history. Under these circumstances, history prevents history from solving the problem of history.[60]

For a great event to be remembered as great, and hence to serve life as monumental history, Nietzsche says that the "sense [*Sinn*]" of the person responsible for the event must coincide with the sense of those who experience it. Wagner needs the spectators at Bayreuth just as much as they need him. If potential monumental men are to become actual, they must find audiences capable of perceiving their genius and venerating it. "History," Nietzsche observes, "is able to record next to nothing about events that are blunted," and nothing blunts the actions of a "powerful human being" more quickly than when his actions appear before blind eyes. It is useless to take action, or even to long for action, if there is no hope for "correspondence between action and its reception." In modern times, this is precisely the circumstance in which powerful human beings like Schopenhauer and Wagner find themselves. They take great actions, but their actions do not adequately resonate among the German people. Their attempts to cultivate a new culture and an improved *physis* are fruitless.

Their failure stems from the fact that German culture (which Nietzsche calls the culture of "the modern as such") is largely populated by the cultivated philistines described in the first Meditation on David Strauss.[61] The most salient characteristic of these philistines was their inability to distinguish a true genius from an imposter.[62] They mistake minds like Strauss's for those of Schopenhauer and Wagner. This is why Nietzsche observes in the first section of *RW* that everything Wagner does "is accessible to the 'cultivated person,' to the extent that [such a person] is wholly and completely a product of the present age, only in the form of parody." Cultivated philistines obstruct the effects of geniuses because they are neither spiritually nor intellectually sophisticated enough to appreciate any art form that does not present itself as either imitation, commentary, or criticism.[63] They prefer to ingest their supposed culture through what Nietzsche called—in the age before cable news—the "unmagical lantern of our jeering journalists." The irony and smugness that characterize the cultivated philistines of modern times stems from the fact that geniuses like Schopenhauer and Wagner have the "power" to produce great works of culture whose greatness philistines cannot see. Cultivated philistines are blind consumers, and they

prefer to consume culture "like maggots that live by destroying, admire by consuming, and worship by digesting."[64]

Nowhere is this fact more evident than in their reaction to Wagner's discovery of "art itself" in Bayreuth. After Wagner's art appeared like a mountain on the horizon of contemporary culture, "all prior modern arts […] have more or less lost all value." Wagner enacted a revaluation of all artistic values which embittered his contemporaries, and which would not have manifest itself to blind eyes if he had not created Bayreuth as a gathering place for those "untimely people" who were also consumers, but who could differentiate between spiritual wealth and spiritual poverty or parody.[65]

Bayreuth is the capital of Nietzsche's cultural project in the *Untimely Meditations* because that project stands or falls with the successful reception by a people of the works of genius. Bayreuth, as a polity devoted to culture, enables this successful reception. Wagner's poetry and Schopenhauer's philosophy cannot cultivate a new and improved human *physis* unless they are first embraced by human beings. This is why Nietzsche said in *Ecce Homo* that even after his break with Wagner, Bayreuth remained "the vision of a feast that I shall yet live to see."[66] A culture-state that puts culture above the state is a crucial ingredient for the spiritual revival of modern man.[67]

Other ingredients are equally necessary, not least of which is that a great human being "has to know his action is necessary" at "precisely the moment" he takes it. Great men must have an eye for necessity because an action not taken at the right time, even if it is taken among the right people, is destined to fail. Nietzsche says that his idealized Wagner possesses a keen eye for necessity that is rare among towering natures. What is unique about this Wagner, therefore, is that he possesses in one mind the talents needed for world cultivation that are often scattered piecemeal among great minds. One genius may have an eye for necessity but may not be able to create beautiful works, and another might be able to create beautiful works but has no means of making those works seen or heard. Wagner is worthy of a monument because he possessed every required feature of a culture creator. In the remaining sections of *Richard Wagner in Bayreuth*, Nietzsche proposes to sketch Wagner's intellectual biography in order to demonstrate "how he had become what he is, what he will be." From beginning to end, the essay shouts "*Ecce Homo*!—behold the man!"[68]

Section 2: The Ruling Passion of the Genius

Nietzsche begins his account of Wagner's becoming by showing how the mature Wagner's unified nature emerged out of the seemingly chaotic nature of Wagner the child. Wagner's youth constitutes what Nietzsche calls his "pre-dramatic phase," in which he was not yet "heralded as *himself*" and, thus, had not yet "become what he is" or what he would be.[69] Even as a child, however, Wagner's tremendous potential to become a comprehensive creator of culture was visible to those who could properly perceive it.

The first signs of his spiritual power were difficult to recognize because they could easily have been mistaken for signs of spiritual weakness. Nietzsche says that when Wagner was young, he possessed a "desultory collection of traits" whose disorder seemed on its surface to portend dilettantism instead of genius. Wagner was liberally educated. He felt "as at home in painting, poetry, acting and music as he did in being educated for a future career as a scholar." Although the young Wagner's interests appeared dilettantish, they prepared him to create a new type of art which transcended conventional art precisely because it was comprehensive. He became a redeeming human being in whom the rest of existence was justified because he was able to translate existence through a wide variety of artistic media which he unified into a comprehensive art form.[70] His dramas combined discreet forms of expression into an architectonic and world-creating enterprise that drew simultaneously on music, acting, poetry, and painting. His ample talent also had the good fortune of being combined with a "naiveté" of disposition, which Nietzsche says is rare in human beings who possess great talents. Nietzsche's idealized Wagner, and thus the culture creating genius more broadly, begins his life as a supremely capable and diversely absorbed youth whose talents are untainted by the vanity that often arises in those who are acutely aware of their gifts.

The unification of the young Wagner's diverse nature took place when he reached his "intellectual and moral manhood," and more specifically, when he discovered what Nietzsche calls his "ruling passion." An artist's ruling passion dominates his mind and serves as a lens through which he artistically interprets the world. This passion is reminiscent of the "prejudice" of the philosopher that the older Nietzsche attributed to philosophers of the past in *Beyond Good and Evil*. The prejudice of the philosopher is defined as a "desire of the heart that has been filtered and made abstract" through unconscious incorporation into the

philosopher's system.[71] A vitriolic philosopher, for example, might take revenge on the real world by erecting a philosophic system that portrays what is real as merely apparent. Another might invert moral or epistemological values in such a way that reason and dialectics are privileged above strength, tradition, or feeling as authorities or standards for wisdom.[72] In *RW*, Nietzsche says that when Wagner attained "self-awareness" of his "ruling passion" or prejudice, it took "possession of his entire being" and served as a foundation for the creation of a Wagnerian interpretation of the world through drama. Just as philosophers are said in *Beyond Good and Evil* to philosophize through a "tyrannical drive" in the form of "the most spiritual will to power, to the 'creation of the world,'" Nietzsche attributes a "tyrannical desire" to Wagner's nature which consists of a "violent will that seeks out, as it were, all paths, crevices, and ravines to bring itself to light and that desires power." The "ruling passion" described in *Richard Wagner in Bayreuth* is a precursor to the development of Nietzsche's famous "will to power" doctrine. Wagner sought artistically to tyrannize over and recreate the world and nature through a passion, just as philosophers do when they filter their passions through concepts and arguments.

A genius's ruling passion or prejudice emerges from a spiritual tension in his soul that is desperate for reconciliation.[73] Wagner's particular ruling passion emerged because his nature was "torn between two drives," namely the "limitless, tyrannical desire for power" outlined above, and a deep ethical sensitivity that manifested itself as a longing for "moral nobility." These two drives battled one another for supremacy in Wagner's soul, yet both were so dominant that neither was able to declare itself the victor. Since Wagner's lust for power could not overpower his love of morality, the two drives that characterized his nature forged a psychological alliance that manifested itself as a "ruling passion."

The directedness of this passion satisfied the two drives of which it was composed by forging the ends of both into a single artistic goal. Wagner's lust for power would be granted its wish to dominate and recreate the world, but it would be forced to do so through moral exhortations, and more precisely, through exhortations that emphasized his moral fascination with "*Fidelity* [*Treue*], *selfless Fidelity*!" Nietzsche says that "fidelity" was Wagner's "most personal and fundamental experience;" something he "venerate[d] as a religious mystery" and "never tires of projecting outside himself." Fidelity, in other words, was the prejudice, ruling passion, and lens through which Wagner reinterpreted

the world as mythological "truth". The image and problem of fidelity is "stamped on everything [Wagner] thought and wrote; in his works we find an almost complete set of all possible forms of fidelity." Audiences at Bayreuth can readily identify this obsession with fidelity when they observe in Wagner's works the

> fidelity of brother to sister, friend to friend, servant to master, Elisabeth to Tannhäuser, Senta to the Dutchman, Elsa to Lohengrin, Isolde, Kurwenal, and Marke to Tristan, Brünhillde to Wotan's innermost wish—and this is only the beginning.

Wagner acquired the power he longed for by using art to reshape the ethical nature [*sittliche Natur*] of his audience through dramatic expressions of fidelity. Stated otherwise: Wagner used art to become an improver of human nature.[74] Opera was an instrument or tool, by means of which he reforged the ethical nature of his listeners into something new and improved. In the parable that concluded *HL*, Nietzsche said that the Greeks' mastery of their own "*ethical* nature [*sittlichen Natur*]" was part of what gave them their unique ability to improve *physis*.[75] In *SE*, he clarified this statement when he observed that the nature of modern man is in danger because there are no longer any "ethical models [*sittlichen Vorbilder*]" or "visible embodiments of all creative morality [*schöpferischen Moral*] in our midst."[76] Schopenhauer was presented as a philosophic model of this creative morality in *SE*, and Wagner is presented as an artistic model of it in *RW*. His dramas wrote a new ethics of fidelity into the world, and he managed to accomplish this feat by remaining faithful to himself. When he channeled his moral fascination with fidelity through the avenues of his tyrannical desire for power, he insured "that one side of his being remained faithful to the other […], that [the] creative, innocent bright side remained faithful to the dark, uncontrollable, and tyrannical one." Nietzsche's idealized Wagner was not merely a teacher of fidelity, he was a visible embodiment of the morality of fidelity he created.

Section 3: Wagner as Monumental Historian and Creative Philosopher

The third section of *RW* describes the intellectual instruments—namely history and philosophy—that Wagner utilized in order to become the culture creator he was destined to be. After his ruling passion for fidelity

was forged in the fires of the spiritual tension of his soul, he incorporated that passion into his art with moderate success. The success he achieved during his early years would have satisfied natures less hungry for power than his, but Wagner's tyrannical nature was left deeply dissatisfied, and even frustrated, by what he perceived to be his limited means of projecting his ruling passion onto the world. In Nietzsche's telling, "the conflict between [Wagner's] desire and his usual inability or half-ability to satisfy it tortured him like thorns; provoked by continual deprivation." The hollow peace and satisfaction that came with "the modern ways of attaining pleasure and prestige" were contemptible to Wagner, yet in moments of weakness, he sometimes found them alluring. Apparently, even naïve geniuses are not immune to honor and flattery. During his occasional lapses, Wagner's tyrannical desire for power haunted him, and ultimately helped him sustain "the rage that turns against all the self-seeking contentment" that the praise of admiring critics fosters. Nothing Nietzsche's idealized Wager could create was good enough to meet his own artistic standards, and no amount of praise could quench his thirst to create a culture through art. His insatiable hunger for more effective means of expression thus led him to search for new artistic materials to work with, and new media to work in. "His life became ever more complex," Nietzsche says, "but the expedients and means for escape that he, the dramatist, discovered, were also bolder, more inventive."

Wagner's most important discovery during these developmental years was what Nietzsche calls "a *talent for learning* of a sort that is wholly extraordinary even among Germans, the true nation of learners." To better hone his craft, Wagner turned to a study of philosophy and history, acquiring thereby a new "means of learning the highest forms of culture." What separates Wagner's use of philosophy and history from that of other Germans is the fact that he used the two disciplines to inspire action instead of using them to paralyze it. Unlike his contemporaries, in other words, he used history and philosophy for life, in the same manner, Nietzsche argued they should be used in *HL* and *SE*. In the former essay, Nietzsche claimed that we need history "for action, not for the easy withdrawal from life and action."[77] In the latter, he argued that philosophy should not be something entirely contemplative, but rather something "terrible and powerful" which gives rise to "streams of heroism."[78]

Nietzsche presents Wagner as an exemplar of the uses of philosophy and history described in *RW*'s prequels when he claims, for example,

that Wagner "never learned to be placated by history and philosophy" like his contemporaries because he was never seduced by the "gentleness and resistance to action they induce." The intellectual weight of philosophy and history "did not crush [Wagner's] will to act, nor did the attractions of its individual aspects lead him astray." On the contrary, Wagner used philosophy and history to generate what Nietzsche refers to as a "tension on the arch of his ordering and dominating thought." The energy created and stored by this tension helped propel Wagner's artistic expression to the cultural heights he yearned for, but had not yet achieved despite the modest success of his works. By approaching philosophy and history as artistic means for the enrichment of life, Nietzsche's idealized Wagner became a "poetic elucidator of past views of life," a "philosopher," a "historian," and a "mythologist and mythic poet" who was "the first to draw a ring around this marvelous, ancient, enormous structure [of human learning] and carve into it the runes of his mind." His ruling passion found a more profound means of expression when it found philosophy and history because it found new wellsprings of spiritual nourishment. The proper study of philosophy and history not only inspired Wagner's own life, it permitted him to create philosophy and history that could inspire the lives of the audiences he hoped to shape. Ultimately, his discovery of the two disciplines paved the way for his realization that the runes of his mind could be carved into the minds of others through intellectual passageways typically reserved for scholars instead of artists.

Nietzsche devotes the remainder of the third section of *RW* to describing how Wagner used history and philosophy as "weapons and armor" for inspiring life through the projection of his ruling passion. His remarks in these passages are among the most important in the essay because they transplant into the nature of his idealized Wagner the teaching on history relayed in *HL*, and the teaching on philosophy relayed in *SE*. The account of Wagner's use of history and philosophy begins with the observation that "there is no more effective tool for distancing oneself from the contemporary age in its entirety than the use one makes of history and philosophy." History and philosophy properly studied and used are untimely and practical tools, just as they were portrayed in *HL* and *SE*.

Wagner's use of history is addressed in the central paragraphs of section 3 of *RW*, and his use of philosophy is addressed in the concluding paragraphs of the same section. Nietzsche begins his discussion of

Wagner's use of history by noting (as he did in *HL*) that for the past century, "the Germans have devoted themselves especially to the study of history." He also reiterates the claim he made in *HL* that the study of history is harmful to a people when pursued improperly and immoderately because such a pursuit is "a sign of enervation, of regression, and weakness." The Germans are antiquarian historians to a fault, but Wagner is unlike his countrymen in this respect because he studies and uses history in a distinctively Nietzschean way. When Wagner's "creative power takes possession of him, history becomes malleable clay in his hands." In these moments of sovereign creativity, Wagner "has a different relationship with [history] than the scholar, one that more closely resembles the relationships the Greeks had to myth, the relationship one has to things one shapes or poeticizes." Wagner is a monumental historian because he utilizes history as material to erect mythical models of moral exemplars and teachers in an age that is bereft of them on account of its historical enervation.[79] In Nietzsche's description of monumental history in *HL*, he said that there are "ages that are entirely incapable of distinguishing between a monumental past and a mythical fiction."[80] Wagner's cultural goal was to initiate precisely such an age in Germany by creating mythical fiction through drama. In *Lohengrin*, for example, medieval chivalry is said by Nietzsche to have taken on an extraordinary "body and soul" that mythologized and elevated medieval virtues to shape the morals of modern audiences. Unlike the scientific historians of the nineteenth century, Wagner wrote mythical and monumental histories that infused life with richness instead of robbing it of richness by coldly cataloguing it.

Wagner's transformation into the monumental historiographer described in *HL* becomes even clearer when Nietzsche says that he had the unique power to "poetically infuse the individual [historical] event with the typical aspects of entire ages, and thereby achieve in his representation a truth that the historian can never achieve." This remark echoes the criticism Nietzsche made of objective historians in *HL* 6, who were accused of failing to capture the truth of history because their overly accurate depictions of it overlook the life and emotion that animated the original historical actors.[81] In the same section of *HL* in which he discusses the failures of these scientific historians, Nietzsche also presents an alternative type of historian who writes history subjectively, from the perspective of the "inner being of the artist." Like the idealized Wagner in *RW*, the subjective historical artist described in *HL* presents a

version of the past that is "an aesthetically true picture, not a historically true one."[82] This is why Nietzsche maintains that a historiography could exist which "does not contain a single drop of common empirical truth, and yet could lay claim in a high degree to the predicate of 'objectivity.'"[83] In *RW*, he continues the argument about artistic history he began in *HL* by emphasizing that Wagner's approach to the creation of history "is one of love" instead of objectivity.[84] The idealized Wagner is a historiographer of creative love because his dramas capture the spirit of the past poetically, and place a higher premium on transmitting the soul of historical events than the precise details of their happening. Such history can only be written, as Nietzsche said in *HL*, by "the mind of the rarest intellects" who are themselves great men with the capacity to sympathize with and love the historical characters they describe.[85] He reiterates this same sentiment in *RW* when he says that history must be "created out of the depths of a powerful soul" like Wagner's—a soul full of "justice and passion"—instead of a sterile soul like that of the scientific or Hegelian historian.[86]

Once Nietzsche has described Wagner's method of using history mythically and poetically, he turns in the concluding paragraphs of section 3 to an account of Wagner's use of philosophy. The discussion begins with the observation that "all most people want to learn from [philosophy] is a rough—very rough!—understanding of things so that they can adapt themselves to them." Contemporary philosophy, in other words, is not taken seriously by the majority of human beings, and it is often only studied for the sake of the "tranquilizing and comforting" effect it exerts on the human mind. This is not how the idealized Wagner studied philosophy, and Nietzsche's criticisms of philosophy on this score echo those he made in *SE* 8. In the latter essay, he accused academic philosophy of making the name of philosophy shameful and synonymous with impotence. He also suggested that philosophy should work to change its reputation from that of a soporific academic discipline to "something terrible," something that "disturbs," and something whose translation into action makes it more than a "collection of platitudes."[87] People who are "destined to seek power," he said in *SE*, "ought to know what streams of heroism have their source in philosophy."[88] Although Wagner is not a philosopher in the conventional sense of the term, Nietzsche says in *RW* that he is "most like a philosopher where he is energetic and heroic." Wagner is energetic like the philosopher described in *SE* because he creates instead of merely contemplating.

Unlike academic philosophers, he studies philosophy in order to derive from it "an enhanced resolution and determinacy of will, but no sleeping potions." This is why Wagner devoted much of his later life to studying the thought of Arthur Schopenhauer.[89] Both men were heroic because both sacrificed, spent, and overspent their creative energy to cultivate and improve their fellow Germans.

What further distinguishes Wagner from a conventional philosopher or student of university philosophy is the fact that he is not merely a discoverer or investigator of human nature. On the contrary, Nietzsche suggests that Wagner turned to philosophy because he longed to re-create human nature *a posteriori* as the "new and improved *physis*" described in the last lines of *HL*. The deeper reasons behind Wagner's philosophic interests are revealed when Nietzsche announces in his own name that

> it seems to me that the most important question in all of philosophy is the extent to which things possess an unalterable nature and form, so that, once this question has been answered, we can with relentless courage set about the improvement of that aspect of the world recognized as being alterable.

Philosophy for Nietzsche and his idealized Wagner is not exclusively or even primarily concerned with knowledge of permanent things. To the extent that it is concerned with knowledge of what is permanent—if there is indeed anything permanent—such knowledge is pursued in order to obtain higher and more important knowledge of what is impermanent. Knowledge of the unalterable is pursued for the sake of knowledge of the alterable. Philosophy properly pursued is more concerned with becoming than with being. Once the alterable or impermanent things are known to the extent that they can be, extraordinary human beings like Wagner set about altering them by exercising "the sovereign power of the creative artist" to remake and improve the world. Philosophy's primary purpose is, therefore, to alter the world, not to "know" it. It is only secondarily an enterprise concerned with the pursuit of permanent truth, which, if it even exists, is only desirable because it aids in the more fundamental task of altering truth.

Nietzsche's idealized Wagner turned to Nietzschean philosophy because he saw that *physis* and truth could be made new and improved by those who wield philosophy an instrument for world legislation.[90] One could say that Nietzsche's Wagner knew that nature is not natural,

and that truth is not true. All "true philosophers," Nietzsche says, work toward "the improvement of the very alterable insights of human beings instead of keeping their wisdom to themselves." Philosophers are shapers of human insight instead of discoverers of it. Wagner was compelled to pass through "the fire of different philosophical systems" because his tyrannical side saw that philosophy could be a spiritual educator, but more importantly, that it could be a means for the projection of his ruling passion onto the alterable natures of human beings.

Section 4: Revolution at Bayreuth

The first three sections of *RW* provide an overview of the development of Wagner's intellectual and artistic capacities, first by examining his childhood, second by explaining the psychological underpinnings of his ruling passion, and third by treating the practical and artistic motivations behind his turn to philosophy and history. The purpose of these three sections is to present an idealized version of Wagner as the embodiment of the spiritual will and creative power attributed to true geniuses and redeeming human beings in *HL* and *SE*. Wagner's nature is meant to stand in contrast to the natures of pseudo-geniuses like David Strauss, whose spiritual impotence was disparaged at length in *DS*.

In the fourth section of *RW*, Nietzsche further develops his idealized Wagner's cultural prowess by showing why the mature Wagner placed his hopes for cultural renewal in the creation of an institution at Bayreuth, the purpose of which was the re-Hellenization of modern man. The opening paragraphs of the section suggest that Wagner established Bayreuth to cement his status as a "counter-Alexander" whose art could implant the "tragic disposition" of the ancient Greeks into the modern soul. In Nietzsche's view, the nineteenth century exhibited "the most immediate affinities with the Greek Alexandrian world," and these affinities indicated that "the earth once again yearns for Hellenization." [91] Among the affinities Nietzsche identified between modern Germany and ancient Greece were similarities between Kant's philosophy and that of the Eleatics, Schopenhauer's philosophy and that of Empedocles, and Wagner's dramas and those of Aeschylus. History appeared to be healing the ills of modernity by leading modern man back in the direction of a classical bloom of monumental genius.[92]

Nietzsche's claim that the modern world was ripe for a cultural re-Hellenization is likely to strike contemporary readers as odd. As noted

in the introduction to this chapter, the claim can be traced to statements he made in his first book, *The Birth of Tragedy*, which argued that Wagnerian drama must once again cultivate the tragic disposition of the ancient Greeks in the souls of modern men.[93] Such cultivation was necessary because Nietzsche thought modern scientific culture—whose origins he traced to Socratic rationalism—was rapidly collapsing beneath its own weight.[94] The reason for the collapse was that Socratic-scientific culture had been "shaken from two directions—once by the fear of its own consequences which it at length begins to surmise, and again because it no longer has its former naïve confidence in the eternal validity of its foundation."[95] Modern science could neither wholly embrace the godless and transitory universe it had discovered, nor assert with confidence the validity and permanence of its own insights into that universe. The attacks on natural science, scientific historicism, and academic philosophy featured in *DS*, *HL*, and *SE* sharpen the broader critique of scientific culture originally leveled in *The Birth of Tragedy*. Taken together, these critiques drove Nietzsche to declare in the Untimely Meditation on Wagner that the greatest source of suffering in modern life is "the lack of a knowledge shared by all human beings, the lack of certainty in ultimate insights, and the disparity in abilities." This lack of certainty and knowledge is what "makes [man] need art."

The reason art, and especially tragic art, is needed in a world in which shared knowledge and ultimate insights are unavailable is that art remedies (or at least properly medicates) the spiritual disorientation caused by modern natural science and scientific historicism, both of which have evacuated the world of permanent meaning by showing that all concepts, types, and species are in a state of constant flux.[96] In the fourth section of *RW*, Nietzsche argues that art mitigates this modern sickness because it places human beings under a "spell" in which their minds are transfixed by tragic (or monumental) heroes whose struggles with this flux present a simplified and emotionally resonant picture of what he calls the "real battles of life." Such battles consist primarily of our internal struggles with profound human questions about the meaning of life, death, love, justice, piety, and other salient themes of Greek tragedy.

Modern science misleads modern man in his struggle to find answers to these questions because it either obscures, ignores, or refuses to address them in a way that is meaningful to those who suffer under their spiritual weight. This is why modern science, as the early Nietzsche understood it, was antithetical to "life." The Socratic rationalism criticized in

The Birth of Tragedy gave rise to the crisis of human vitality detailed in the *Untimely Meditations* because it produced a modern scientific culture incapable of meaningfully addressing the kinds of questions that were of greatest concern to Socrates himself.[97] Nietzsche's diagnosis of this problem in the first three Meditations leads him to declare in the fourth that "the greatness and indispensability of art lies precisely in the fact that it arouses the semblance of a more simple world." Art like Wagner's, the aim of which is to inculcate the tragic disposition through expressions of the problem of intellectual and personal fidelity, aids those who are spiritually exhausted by modern science by helping them see that there is "something sublime and meaningful" in human life. Human beings derive salutary benefits from tragic art because it provides "abbreviations of the infinitely complicated equation of human acting and willing." Tragic art simplifies and makes beautiful the mysterious and often hostile world in which we live through the inculcation of a pessimism of strength and joy. This pessimism exuberantly acknowledges and vigorously embraces the possibilities for creativity, nobility, and heroism afforded by the fundamentally mysterious and transitory character of the world from which it arises. Modern science may occasionally acknowledge something akin to this mysterious character, but when it does so it derives spiritual weakness from this acknowledgment (as David Strauss and Eduard von Hartmann did) instead of spiritual strength from it (as Wagner and the ancient Hellenes did).

Since the introduction to the present chapter of this volume provides a thorough overview of the purpose of the tragic disposition in *Richard Wagner in Bayreuth*, there is no need to restate it at length here. Of more immediate interest for the development of Nietzsche's portrait of the cultural genius are his claims in *RW* 4 that Wagnerian drama has the potential to revolutionize human affairs on a grand scale, and that Bayreuth can serve as the cultural headquarters for this revolution. Early on in section 4, Nietzsche boldly avers that if Wagner achieves a "reformation of the theater" at Bayreuth, then "the modern human being would thereby be changed and reformed." His implication is that Wagner's art not only has the potential to reform human *physis*, but also to reform the social and political institutions that shape it and are only tangentially connected to the theater. It is "impossible," he says, to change the nature of performing art in the manner Wagner has "without at the same time introducing innovation everywhere, in mores, and government, and education, and commerce." Contemporary

readers of *RW* may find implausible the sweeping social and political power Nietzsche attributes Wagner's operas, but it is not inconceivable to surmise that art could alter institutions by reshaping culture. The century in which Nietzsche lived resembled our own century inasmuch as, in his words, "one thing is so intimately connected with another that anyone who pulls out just one nail causes the entire edifice to collapse." Trends or changes in one dimension of social and political life have profound reverberations on others because the institutions of the modern world are so tightly intertwined. Film, television, and radio can change the way consumers think about everything from politics to science. Popular music can provoke social movements, internet posts can cause global hysteria, and nations can export their clothing, car, and technology brands around the world to assert political hegemony and promote cultural values. Nietzsche knew well that popular art exists not to change the world, but rather to serve what he calls a "poorly concealed mania for amusement." But because the various institutions of the modern world are so deeply interconnected, artists like Wagner who can edify as they entertain can use their works as vehicles for upheavals that are not merely artistic.[98]

The greatest difficulty Wagner faced in revolutionizing human affairs through art was finding an audience that appreciated his work enough to take practical action on its behalf. His intention in founding a new cultural community in the old city of Bayreuth was to attract this audience. It is well-known that Nietzsche eagerly subscribed to Wagner's plan to erect a new cultural community, and he predicted (wrongly as it turned out) that those who flocked to Bayreuth would be "prepared and dedicated spectators" who suffered gravely from present cultural and political institutions. His hope was that the visitors to Bayreuth would be strengthened through drama "for further and higher aspiration," so that when they left the Wagnerian community they could "transform and rejuvenate other areas of life." If successful, the events at Bayreuth would have had the added effect of minimizing the cultural influence of the "cultivated philistines" Nietzsche denounced in *DS*.[99] He emphasizes in the fourth section of *RW* that the establishment of Bayreuth was aimed squarely at the falsely cultivated people who would suffer a profound defeat if the project accomplished its cultural goals. When Nietzsche arrived in Bayreuth, however, he was deeply disappointed to find an intensification of the cultivated philistinism he dreaded instead of a platform for its eradication.

Although Nietzsche eventually gave up on Wagner's particular vision of Bayreuth as a cultural institution, he continued believing late into his life that the *idea* of Bayreuth—as a cultural institution led by a genius—held promise. In *Ecce Homo*, he called Bayreuth the "vision of a feast that I shall yet live to see." It is illuminating to consider this remark in the context of his claim in *RW* 4 that Bayreuth "signifies the morning consecration on the day of war [*Kampfes*]."[100] This war, he says, is not "for us a matter of art alone." Bayreuth was much more than a factory for artistic "medicines and narcotics" that could heal the modern spiritual sickness Nietzsche diagnosed. Its founding represented a cultural throwing down of the gauntlet that marked the beginning of what he calls in *RW* 4 a "war [*Kampf*]" against "power, rule of law, tradition, convention, the whole order of things."

If *Richard Wagner in Bayreuth* should be read retrospectively—as Nietzsche said it should in *Ecce Homo*—under the title *Nietzsche in Bayreuth*, then the culture war he describes in *RW* 4 is not exclusively or even primarily Wagner's. His declaration in *Ecce Homo* that "the essay *Wagner in Bayreuth* is a vision of my future" finds its clearest expression in his idealized Wagner's opposition to the entire social and political framework of the modern West.[101] The war against power, rule of law, tradition, convention, and the whole order of things Nietzsche describes in the essay is a vision of his own future because it encapsulates with striking accuracy the war against modern politics, Christian morality, and Western philosophy he would wage in his subsequent books, and to which he would devote the rest of his intellectual life. This is why I have argued that the *Untimely Meditations* fire the first shot in Nietzsche's culture war.

Sections 5–10: Recapitulation of the Artistic Genius's Sonata

At this point in our interpretation of the *Untimely Meditations* we have made the case for what we initially set out to prove. The four essays in the book constitute "Nietzsche's Culture War" because they present a thoroughgoing critique of modern culture, and a plan to revitalize that culture and recultivate human nature through the thoughts and works of world-creating and *physis*-improving geniuses. This plan does not come to sight unless the essays are read as sequels and responses to one another, as they have been in the foregoing chapters.

The remaining six sections of *Richard Wagner in Bayreuth* are fascinating for their nuanced account of Wagner's creative and cultural prowess, but much of what they contain serves to elaborate and recapitulate what was said more compactly, and in slightly less obsequious language, in the first four sections of the piece. The fawning on display in sections 5–10 of the essay can verge on the cringeworthy, but is useful when reading these sections to remember Nietzsche's claim in *Ecce Homo* that he was using Wagner as "means" and "sign language" to pave the way for a higher concept of culture.[102]

The fifth section of the essay presents Wagner as the "simplifier of the world" first alluded to in the fourth. His music is credited with overcoming the limits of language and with communicating "correct feeling" to modern souls whose capacity to feel has been maimed by "the madness of general concepts" promoted by scientific culture.[103] As Nietzsche has done so often in the *Untimely Meditations*, he suggests in this section that what is true is what is felt, and not what is reasoned. He also argues in section 5 that the music of masters like Wagner constitutes a "return to nature, while at the same time it is purification and transformation of nature."[104] The view of nature presented here, as something subject to transformation by human activity, is consistent with the view of it presented in *SE* 5. In the limited sense in which the young Nietzsche thought there was such a thing as a knowable "nature," knowledge of it was not acquired exclusively through scientific or rational interrogation, but also through artistic transformations of it that privilege feeling correctly over thinking correctly.

The sixth section of *RW* contains a sweeping indictment of modern commercial culture and the modern media, both of which Nietzsche blames for engendering the "false feeling" he ascribed to modern souls in section 5. He argues that the spiritual perversion of modern times is traceable to the influence of "those who traffic in money" and are "now the dominant power in the soul of the modern human being." He also blames this spiritual perversion on the "all intrusive curiosity that has taken possession of everyone" on account of the advent of newspapers and telegraphs.[105] The modern souls in question are well aware of the fact that they have become consumers of money and media who no longer reflect on the meaning of life, love, nobility, and eternity. In Nietzsche's view, most modern people suffer from a "bad conscience" about their spiritual shallowness. We know that the purpose of our arts and amusements is "to stupefy or intoxicate" us instead of edify and

cultivate us, yet we are unable to wrest ourselves free from our idleness to contemplate our authentic human needs.[106] In order to solve this problem Nietzsche once again portrays his idealized Wagner as a "new bringer of light" whose task is to purify the sick modern soul through drama that instills the tragic disposition in viewers. Tragic drama refocuses our attention on the meaningful human questions that commercial culture and the media obscure when they portray entertainment as the highest human good. Nietzsche says that Wagner fosters this tragic disposition by leading his audience into a "cave" of images, from which they are said to emerge into daylight asking themselves: "which life is more real, which in fact is daylight and which is cave?" Unlike Plato and his Socrates, Nietzsche's creative genius leads his charges into the cave and not outside it. Inside the cave they learn "how to become nature yourselves," and they are instructed to "let yourselves be transformed with and in nature by the magic of my [i.e. the artist's] life and fire." Knowledge of nature exists inside the cave because knowledge of nature is created in the cave. What is real is what is created, and what is created becomes the world of concern to us.[107]

In the seventh section of the piece, Nietzsche again employs Platonic imagery to illustrate more clearly the effects of tragic art on the human soul. He begins by claiming that Wagner's nature is strangely contagious on account of its "transferability" to others through tragic art.[108] Viewers who attend Wagner's operas are said to feel as though they are gradually becoming as powerful as the composer himself because they receive an "outpouring and overflowing" of life from his art. This overflowing of life "suspends the resistance of reason" in the mind of the viewer, and makes "everything he has hitherto experienced appear unreasonable and incomprehensible." Wagner's art orients viewers by disorienting them. During performances, the faulty spiritual compass of reason that had previously guided them is replaced by a more reliable compass of "correct feeling" that makes the world "shine with new colors." Clarity is achieved by obstructing reason, or by inhibiting what has been traditionally assumed to be the only pathway to clarity. Nietzsche adds that when Plato banished artists and the feelings they inspire from his ideal republic, he proved that he was the only person in human history who could resist the seduction of the orienting disorientation of art. He also indicates that Plato did not derive his ability to resist art from the fact that he saw the world more clearly than other thinkers, but rather from the fact that his sight was "blind to all of Hellenic reality"

after having gazed at the "Hellenic ideal" for so long. For Plato too, then, an image or ideal became reality. He stared at the Hellenic ideal so intensely in his *Republic* that this ideal ceased being an image for him and became a reality. Despite Plato's efforts to free himself from images and art, it would seem that he was able to reject them only because he was blind to the fact that he was under their spell.

Those of us, on the other hand, who neither live in Plato's republic nor constantly behold his Hellenic ideal are said by Nietzsche to need the artists Plato banishes "precisely because we have *learned to see in the face of reality* [*Wirklichen*]." At first, this statement seems to suggest that there is a "real" or non-created world after all; a true world from which the dramatist releases us by showing us a "sublime and meaningful" lie for the precious few hours we are under his spell. Later in section 7, however, it is revealed that the world we thought was "real" prior to witnessing tragic art only "appears [*erscheint*] to be serious and necessary." The reality into whose face we stare when we are not in a tragic dream is not reality, but rather a world whose seriousness and necessity is merely apparent. When this apparently "real" world is compared to the "dream" we undergo when we witness tragic art, the "real" world becomes nothing but "strangely isolated fragments of those total experiences that we became aware of" through the wonders and terrors of tragedy. After experiencing these wonders and terrors in the tragic dream world, "we return to life in a mood of peculiar comfort, with a new sense of certainty, just as if we had returned from great perils, excesses, and ecstasies to the limitedness of home." The world we once thought was home is made bereft of meaning by tragic art. The artistic dream world created by geniuses like Wagner becomes our new home insofar as it is a world of "certainty" and meaning for us. For the early Nietzsche, there are only caves because life flourishes within the closed horizon of a cave.

Nietzsche returns to the cave at Bayreuth in the eighth section of *RW* and traces its establishment to the power-seeking drive he ascribed to his idealized Wagner's dual nature in *RW* 2. In Wagner's intermediate years, his tyrannical nature longed to exert "influence, incomparable influence by means of the theater!"[109] This drive to exert influence went unfulfilled because he had no audience of devotees. Even if he had possessed an audience of devotees, an ordinary audience would not have satisfied his tyrannical side because it was constantly searching for something more than mere devotees. What Wagner wanted was a "common people

[*Volk*]" in whom he could plant the seeds for the renewal and creation of culture. This desire led him to become a "*social revolutionary*" in Germany, who found his audience and his calling in an artistic defense of the nation's "poeticizing *Volk*."

Wagner sympathized with the German *Volk* because they were mythmakers and song writers like him, yet they had been "stripped" of their mythmaking potential by being transformed into "workers" by the capitalists of modern luxury society.[110] This "luxury society," Nietzsche says, "knew how to exploit its power in the most hardhearted and clever way in order to render those who are powerless, the *Volk*, ever more subservient, abject, and less populist." In the German *Volk* Wagner therefore found "the only spectators and audience who could possibly be worthy of and equal to the power of his work of art." When his published writings about the *Volk* were not taken seriously, however, he abandoned the idea of resurrecting them and resolved to make art only for himself. It was at this point in his development that he began to "philosophize in sound," and his sonic philosophizing eventually summoned "friends" to his cause. Nietzsche says that these friends eagerly told Wagner that "an underground movement of many hearts" was stirring in Bayreuth, and hence that he might one day possess the *Volk* he had desired for so long. Although these friends could not yet call themselves a true *Volk*, their union planted "the kernel and the first life-giving source of a true human society to be realized in a distant future." With this potential *Volk* in place the way was paved for the Wagnerian creation of a new "*stylistic tradition*," which Nietzsche says "is not inscribed in signs on paper, but rather in effects upon the human soul." Wagner intended this stylistic tradition to produce a culture, understood (as Nietzsche defined it in the first Untimely Meditation) as a "unity of artistic style that manifests itself throughout all the expressions of life of a people."[111] The last Meditation ends by gesturing in the direction of a solution to the problem with which the first began. The answer to David Strauss is the presence of Richard Wagner in Bayreuth.

In the ninth and tenth sections of *RW*, Nietzsche refines his account of the artistic manner of thinking by means of which Wagner communicates the stylistic tradition he is attempting to found. He claims that his idealized Wagner discovered a new means of "thinking" which employs neither concepts nor reason. This nonconceptual "thinking" uses "verbal expression, gesture, and music," the latter of which transmits the "fundamental internal emotions" of dramatic characters to audiences.[112]

To think in this manner means to "think mythically, just as the *Volk* have always thought." Thinking mythically is distinct from "thinking" in the traditional or rational sense because "the basis of myth is not a thought" in the old sense of that term. Myths are not vehicles for thoughts conceived outside the structure of myth itself, but rather they are themselves "a kind of thought" which transmits an "idea of the world" through a dramatic succession of events that portray human suffering. This is why Nietzsche claims that the *Ring of the Nibelungen* is an "immense system of thought without the conceptual form of thought." He further conjectures that a philosopher could create a philosophic system equivalent to the *Ring* by using rational concepts, but these concepts would speak only to "theoretical human beings" who lack the vitality of the *Volk*. It is only when we relinquish the conceptual thinking of theoretical human beings and allow ourselves to think mythically, in the manner of Wagner, that "thinking" becomes synonymous with "feeling, seeing, and hearing."

Wagner's ability to communicate his stylistic tradition through a new mode of thought compels his audiences to "adopt a new mode of understanding and experience" when they attend his dramas. In *RW* 10, Nietzsche therefore poses the question of whether Wagner's stylistic tradition can continue to exert influence after his death given the fact that it relies on a means of thinking and communicating that are unique to him. Unlike philosophers, whose works are easily transmitted by the pen, the artist's work "cannot be transported in the ship of written records as the work of the philosopher can [because] art requires *skilled people* as its transmitters, not letters and notations."[113] Wagner needs Bayreuth because he needs an institution in which skilled transmitters can be trained to continue his cultural task. As Nietzsche puts it, his idealized Wagner needs "human souls as the mediators to the future" and "public institutions as guarantors of the future" if he is to become an artist not just for the German people, but for the "*human beings of the future*."[114]

Section 11: The Conclusion of Nietzsche's Culture War

The final section of *Richard Wagner in Bayreuth* is also the final section of the *Untimely Meditations*. It is fitting, then, that Nietzsche returns at the end of the book to the question with which he began: the extent to which it is possible to alter human nature or *physis* through culture and art. Section 11 opens with a warning to readers. We must be sure, Nietzsche says, to let "good sense preserve us from the belief that

someday or other humanity will discover an ultimate, ideal order and that then happiness will shine down with constant intensity upon the people ordered in this way."[115] The utopian vision of Bayreuth presented in the preceding sections of the essay could easily be mistaken for an ideal order, and prudent readers must remind themselves that Bayreuth's cultural effectiveness is limited by the many obstacles to its creation. At the conclusion of a book that is in many respects rhetorically immoderate, and that features vivid descriptions of ideal philosophers, artists, and cultural institutions, Nietzsche urges moderation. Bayreuth is not Plato's republic, and Wagner—or rather Nietzsche—"is no utopian."

But even if good sense prevents us from hoping that the perfect cultural institution can completely redeem the modern soul, this same good sense indicates that there are reasons to be optimistic about the spiritual future of modern man. Nietzsche quickly amends his call for moderation with the claim that his idealized Wagner—and hence that Nietzsche and his readers—"cannot [entirely] dispense with belief in the future." The fact that there are obstacles to the perfect realization of Bayreuth does not mean that mankind is doomed to cultivated philistinism. The source of hope for our future lies not in the practical success or failure of Bayreuth, but rather in the theoretical insight it stands for. This theoretical insight maintains that there are

> qualities in contemporary human beings that do not belong to the unalterable character and bone structure of human nature, but instead are changeable, indeed, transitory, and that it is precisely *due to these qualities* that art must be homeless and [Wagner] himself the messenger of another age.

Nietzsche and his idealized Wagner are homeless messengers for a future age in which modern human beings will finally possess altered and improved natures. It is not yet clear which qualities of human nature belong to its "unalterable" bone structure and which are alterable, but Nietzsche's surprising declaration that there is or might be an unalterable "bone structure" of human nature indicates that "nature" remains both a self-conscious theoretical problem and a promising practical solution for his early cultural quandary. The problematic aspects of nature arise from the fact that its limits—and, therefore, its very existence—are not known and are perhaps unknowable. Nietzsche admitted as much in the third section of *RW* when he said that "it seems to me that the most important

question in all of philosophy is the extent to which things possess an unalterable nature and form." If this question could be answered, however, then "nature" would offer a promising practical solution to the problem of reshaping the modern soul because the limits or lack of limits to the humanly directed cultivation of nature would be revealed. A culture that is the pure product of the genius's spirit could shape and improve human nature in extraordinary ways.[116] Under these circumstances, the future of humanity would depend more on limitless creativity than on limited knowledge. Our salvation would lie not in knowing, but in creating.[117]

The very last sentence of *RW*—which is also the last sentence of the *Untimely Meditations*—reiterates the tantalizing prospect of a humanly created and improved human nature. Nietzsche predicts in this sentence that a *Volk* will arise in the future who will be able "to read its own history in the signs of Wagner's art." This *Volk* will see Wagner "not as the prophet of the future, as he might appear to us, but rather the interpreter and transfigurer of the past." The last sentence of *RW* thus marks a return to, and restatement of, the most important insight in *HL*. The latter essay argued that using history properly meant interpreting and transfiguring it artistically, monumentally, and even mythically to create *a posterori* a "new past from which we would prefer to be descended."[118] In *RW* 11, Nietzsche announces that Wagner's mythical dramas provide the human beings of the future with just such a past. These future human beings will receive Wagner's created past as the true past, and will strive for greater spiritual heights beneath the life-promoting historical horizon he creates. A "second nature" will be fostered by his created past which will gradually replace in the next generation the defective first nature of the first generation who created it.[119] According to Nietzsche, it is not the "burial of their [own] generation" that drives onward a first generation that creates a second nature through the creation of a new past, but rather "the founding of a new [generation]" which "coming generations will know only as the firstborn."[120]

Nietzsche's teaching in *HL* about the relationship between first and second pasts, first and second generations, and first and second natures clarifies the reason he predicts the arrival of a new generation in the final section of *RW*. Although this coming generation is said to be the one that will follow in the wake of Wagner's artistic transformation of human nature, it is difficult to see them as anything other than the Nietzschean generation of "free spirits" to whom the three books that follow the *Untimely Meditations* are addressed.[121] This coming generation is

described at the end of *RW* as being "on the whole even more evil than the present one" and "*more open*, in evil as in good." One could say this new generation stands beyond good and evil. They judge that "passion is better than stoicism and hypocrisy; that being honest, even where evil is concerned, is better than losing oneself to traditional morality; [and] that the free human being can be both good and evil." They do not seek their edification through tragic art, but rather through a daring moral experimentation that welcomes the spiritual tensions and anxieties that tragic art is supposed to anesthetize.[122]

It is well-known that Nietzsche explicitly broke with Wagner in *Human, All Too Human*, the book that immediately followed the *Untimely Meditations*. There is ample reason to suspect, however, that he had already seen a new cultural vision—a "vision of my future"—while he was describing the future generation of free spirits, and the cultural genius who would cultivate them, in *Richard Wagner in Bayreuth*.[123]

Notes

1. See *RW* 3 for the most salient example.
2. *RW* 3 contains sections in which Nietzsche calls Wagner a philosopher. He also compares Wagner to great poets like Aeschylus in *RW* 4, among other places.
3. *RW* 9.
4. Nietzsche also seemed to have learned this from the Pre-Platonic Greeks. These lectures have been translated into English in Nietzsche (2006), and the lecture on Empedocles is particularly helpful.
5. *EH*, Books, Untimelies 1.
6. See Berger (2016); Georg and Reschke (2016); Blue (2016); Prange (2013); Franco (2011); Cate (2005); Köhler and Taylor (1998); Parkes (1994); Pletsch (1991); Westerhagen (1978); and Abraham (1932). Also see the Nietzsche-Wagner Correspondence in Nietzsche (1949).
7. See Large (2012, 100); Gray (1995, 405–406); Shaburg (1995, 46–51); and Brown (1990, 229–239) for accounts of the publication history of *RW*.
8. Brown (1990, 230) observes that Nietzsche had been reluctant to publish *RW* because of his ambivalence toward Wagner at the time he was writing it. Also see the first section of the preface to *HA II*, in which Nietzsche claims that *RW* was "in its background an expression of homage and gratitude toward a piece of my past, toward the most beautiful, also the most dangerous calmness of my sea voyage, …and actually a setting loose, a taking leave."

9. The notes for this Meditation have been translated by William Arrowsmith in (Nietzsche 1990).
10. Gast's real name was Heinrich Köselitz.
11. Brown (1990, 230–231); Gray (1995, 405–406).
12. Brown (1990, 229). See *RW* 1 for an account of Nietzsche's (misplaced) hopes for the spectators at Bayreuth.
13. Ibid.
14. Gray (1990, 406–407) observes: "Instead of constituting a forceful counterblow that would send German philistinism reeling, Bayreuth itself had become the expression of just this pseudoculture."
15. *HA*, Preface sec. 1.
16. *EH*, Books, Untimelies 1–3.
17. Ibid, 3. Franco (2011, 10) and Breazeale (1998, 7) agree that Nietzsche's claim that *RW* is a vision of his future is "not altogether off the mark."
18. See the title of the final section of *EH*.
19. *EH*, Books, BT 4. Brown (1990, 230) argues that Nietzsche's ambivalence toward Wagner at the time he was writing *RW* makes the essay rewarding, if only for the way it clarifies Nietzsche's own cultural task. This in contrast to Large (2012, 102) who says that the text's main interest "now lies in its historical importance rather than in what it has to say about the subject matter itself."
20. Nietzsche notes in *EH*, Books, BT 4 that sections 1, 4, 6, and 9 of the essay are especially instructive when read this way.
21. *EH*, Books, BT 4.
22. *DS* 1; *HL* 4.
23. *HL* 10.
24. *RW* 4.
25. Ibid. Franco (2011, 3) observes that "Schopenhauer attributed the highest degree of aesthetic objectivity to tragedy, which describes the 'unspeakable pain, the wretchedness and misery of mankind' and thus attains 'complete knowledge of the real nature of the world.'" Wagner was heavily influenced by Schopenhauer.
26. *RW* 4.
27. *BT*, Attempt at Self-Criticism 2. Soll (2016) argues that the origin of this metaphysics is Schopenhauerian.
28. In my view, the will to power doctrine could be said to provide a physiological (and hence physical) account of the philosophic creation of the world—a kind of artist's physics. In the first main part of *BGE*, for example, Nietzsche's criticism of philosophers is that they are all advocates for their physiological prejudices who interpret those prejudices into the world through their philosophies. He may be guilty of doing

the same, albeit self-consciously. Consider *BGE* aphs. 3, 6, and the relationship between 8 and 9.

29. *HL* 8.
30. *RW* 4.
31. See the opening paragraph of *Homer's Contest* (trans. Grenke 2005): "If one speaks of *humanity*, thus at bottom lies the idea that wants to be that which *separates* and distinguishes the human being from nature. But in reality there is no such separation: the things named 'natural' qualities and those named genuinely 'human' have inseparably grown together. The human being, in his highest and noblest forces, is wholly nature and carries her uncanny double character in himself. His fearsome capacities, held as they are as inhuman, are perhaps even the fruitful soil out of which alone all humanity can grow forth into emotions, deeds, and works."
32. *HL* 9.
33. *RW* 4.
34. See Nietzsche's remark in *HL* 1 that "a human being who does not possess the power to forget, who is damned to see becoming everywhere, [would] no longer believe in his own being, would no longer believe in himself, would see everything flow apart in turbulent particles, and would lose himself in this stream of becoming; like the true student of Heraclitus, in the end he would hardly even dare to lift a finger." Also see Nietzsche's reference to Heraclitus in *EH*, Books, BT 3.
35. See *EH*, Books, *BT* 3 where Nietzsche says that the psychology of the Dionysian allows one to "be oneself the eternal joy of becoming, beyond all terror and pity—that joy which includes even joy in destroying."
36. Nietzsche's "Attempt at Self-Criticism," which was appended to *BT* in 1886, contains a compressed explication of the Hellenistic pessimism of strength and life that he attempted to portray in the book. The quotation in this sentence is taken from section 4. Soll (2016) has helpfully shown the Schopenhauerian origins of the "Dionysian" in Nietzsche.
37. *HL* 2.
38. *RW* 4. Nietzsche calls Wagner a mythic poet in *RW* 3.
39. Nietzsche observes in his description of monumental history in *HL* 2 that it simplifies history because it does not provide "absolute iconic veracity […], with every fact depicted in all its peculiarity and uniqueness."
40. *SE* 5.
41. *BGE* 211.
42. *EH*, Books, Untimelies.
43. *RW* 4.

44. *RW* 3.
45. *BGE* 211.
46. Duncan Large (2012, 101) has rightly called *Richard Wagner in Bayreuth* "monumental history in action."
47. See sections 2 and 6 of *HL*, and my interpretations of these sections in Chap. 3 of this volume.
48. *SE* 8. For an account of the complex political background of the Bayreuth Festival, see David Large (1978).
49. Cf. *SE* 8 and *RW* 1. In the last lines of *The Greek State*, Nietzsche forgives Plato for having shut the artist out of his state and its peak. He does the same thing in *RW* 7.
50. *SE* 8.
51. *RW* 5.
52. Ibid.
53. *RW* 8.
54. Large (2012, 102); Brown (1990; 246–248). Also see *EH*, Books, HA 2.
55. *EH*, Books, BT 4.
56. Ibid. In first section of his late preface to *HA*, Nietzsche said that "Bayreuth signifies the greatest triumph that an artist has ever attained."
57. All quotations in this section appear in *RW* 1 unless otherwise noted.
58. See *HL* 2 and my interpretation of this section in the third chapter of this volume.
59. *HL* 2.
60. Cf. *HL* 9.
61. *DS* 1–2.
62. *DS* 2.
63. *DS* 4.
64. *DS* 6.
65. As noted in the introduction to this chapter, Nietzsche was disappointed to find Bayreuth populated by the cultivated philistines he dreaded.
66. *EH*, Books BT 4. Also see the preface to *HA II* in which Nietzsche claims that "Bayreuth signifies the greatest triumph an artist has ever attained—a work that bears the strongest *appearance* of 'actuality'".
67. Cf. *TI*, Germans 4.
68. The subtitle of Nietzsche's famous autobiography by this same title is "How One Becomes What One Is." This subtitle bears more than a passing resemblance to his claim in *RW* that the essay is meant to show "how [Wagner] had become what he is." If *RW* is "a vision of my future," as Nietzsche claimed in *Ecce Homo*, then it is because the essay shows how Nietzsche became the culture creator he was by illustrating a similar process of becoming in his idealized Wagner. Apparently, becoming is not always Nietzsche's antagonist. It may lie at the root of human

suffering, but we must behold a great man's becoming if we wish to "understand the greatness of his deed, and with this understanding vouch for its fruitfulness." The same becoming that destroys culture also illustrates the means by which culture can be saved.

69. All quotations in this section appear in *RW* 2 unless otherwise noted.
70. *BGE* 207.
71. *BGE* 5.
72. See *TI*, Problem of Socrates 3–5; *GM* Essay 1; *D* 68; *BGE* 6–13.
73. See *TI*, Problem of Socrates 3–4.
74. Cf. *HL* 10.
75. *HL* 10.
76. The word "*schöpferischen"* in the "phrase *schöpferischen Moral*" may be a play on Schopenhauer's name.
77. *HL*, Foreword.
78. *SE* 8.
79. Cf. *HL* 2.
80. *HL* 2.
81. *HL* 6.
82. Ibid.
83. Ibid.
84. Cf. *HL* 7.
85. *HL* 6.
86. Cf. *HL* 6, 8.
87. *SE* 8.
88. Ibid.
89. For an account of Wagner's relationship to Schopenhauer, see Janaway (1998, 17–18).
90. *HL* 10. Also consider the portrayal of the philosopher in *BGE*, We Scholars.
91. All quotations in this section appear in *RW* 4 unless otherwise noted.
92. *HL* 9.
93. See especially *BT* 19–25.
94. *BT* 12–18. Franco (2011, 3) observes that Nietzsche attributed the destruction of myth and the corruption of modern culture to "Socratism, science, and especially the modern historical sense."
95. *BT* 18.
96. *HL* 9.
97. See *BT* 12–15 for Nietzsche's account of Socrates's relationship to modern science.
98. Nietzsche also attributed this power to philosophy. See the final paragraphs of *SE* 8.
99. *DS* 2.

100. *EH*, Books, BT 4.
101. *EH*, Books, Untimelies 3.
102. *EH*, Books, Untimelies 1–3.
103. All quotations in this paragraph appear in *RW* 5.
104. Also see Nietzsche's claim in *RW* 9 that Wagner's art "has the effect of nature, of produced, rediscovered nature."
105. All quotations in this paragraph appear in *RW* 6. In our time, one might add television and the internet to this list without altering Nietzsche's point.
106. The mature Nietzsche would eventually accuse Wagner's art of being guilty of these same crimes. See *The Case of Wagner*.
107. Cf. *BGE* 34.
108. All quotations in this paragraph appear in *RW* 7 unless otherwise noted.
109. All quotations in this paragraph appear in *RW* 8 unless otherwise noted.
110. Wagner's realization that the poeticizing *Volk* were being oppressed marked his turn to socialism, and would eventually lead to a contemptible embrace of vulgar nationalism and anti-Semitism in his later years. See Katz (1986) and Rose (1992) for accounts of Wagner's complex relationship to Judaism and German nationalism.
111. *DS* 1.
112. All quotations in this paragraph appear in *RW* 9-10.
113. *RW* 10.
114. Ibid.
115. All quotations in this section appear in *RW* 11 unless otherwise noted.
116. Cf. Strauss (2007, 88–90).
117. *UPW* 42, *KSA* 19 [125].
118. *HL* 3.
119. *HL* 3, 10. See my interpretation of *HL* 2–3 for an account of why Nietzsche thought monumental history provided a solution to the cultural ills of his time.
120. *HL* 8.
121. See the back cover of the 1882 edition of *The Gay Science*, on which Nietzsche announced that "this book marks the conclusion of a series of writings by Friedrich Nietzsche whose common goal is to erect *a new image and ideal of the free spirit*." The books that belong to this series were *HA*, *D*, and *GS*. See the 1886 preface to the first volume of *HA* for a description of the free spirit.
122. See Nietzsche's letter to Louise Ott, cited in Franco (2011, 7) in which Nietzsche says that the free spirit is someone who "wants nothing more than to lose some comforting belief on a daily basis."
123. See *EH*, Books Untimelies 3. Paul Franco (2011, ix–xv, 1–12) has argued that Nietzsche began to have deep reservations about Wagner's

cultural project well before he finished *Richard Wagner in Bayreuth*. As early as 1874, passages appear in Nietzsche's notebooks which accuse Wagner of being an "actor" whose art was "extremely crude" and "lacking in restraint and moderation." Two years before *RW* was published, he wrote in his notebooks that "there is something in Wagner's art that resembles flight from this world; it negates the world, it does not transfigure it. That is why it has no direct moral effect, but only indirectly a quietistic one…Improvement of the real no longer is the goal, but rather destruction of or delusion about the real." Nietzsche was aware long before he wrote *RW* that there were serious problems with his attempt to use art to solve the problem of modern culture. Franco has also shown that Nietzsche once intended to write a fifth Untimely Meditation entitled "The Free Spirit," which would have followed *RW*. This project eventually became *Human, All Too Human*, the book in which Nietzsche explicitly rejected the artistic romanticism of Wagner and Schopenhauer, and endorsed his onetime antagonists—science and reason—as pathways to founding and enriching a new modern culture. Although the Nietzsche of the *Untimely Meditations* had once written in his notebooks that it is "impossible to erect a culture on knowledge," the Nietzsche of *Human, All Too Human*, *Dawn*, and *The Gay Science* attempted to do precisely this. Readers of *Nietzsche's Culture War* interested in an account of the Nietzsche's rejection of the cultural plan featured in *The Untimely Meditations* and *The Birth of Tragedy* are encouraged to consult Franco's excellent book on Nietzsche's middle period, *Nietzsche's Enlightenment*.

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