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## ***Growing out of Schopenhauer***

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Abstract: Contemptuous of the self congratulation and cultural triumphalism that followed Prussia's victory in the Franco Prussian war, Nietzsche in his *Thoughts out of Season* was far from simply preferring French culture to German. The cultural philistine is present in every era, or at least every democratically minded one. Baudelaire had been vitriolic about the coarseness of his own epoch. In this book Nietzsche's remedy for the faults in the *Zeitgeist* are Schopenhauer's philosophy and Wagner's music. Untimely men resist received wisdom. In modern circumstances any higher culture must be unseasonable in this sense. In the chapter on Strauss, Nietzsche hones in on the suggestion that culture philistinism can be identified with weakness, a seminal idea that lent itself to further development. Commonly the philistine was thought of as a being of rude health and strength, compared to the delicate and sickly artistic personality, here the tragic soul. Did Nietzsche's eventual rejection of the Schopenhauerian aesthetic really come from greater understanding? How much did he retain of his earlier views in his mature philosophy of beauty and art? In his later work Nietzsche describes a chain of misunderstandings. Kant misunderstood the aesthetic experience, Schopenhauer misunderstood Kant's teaching, and Wagner misunderstood Schopenhauer's. Nietzsche came to see that he himself had strictly speaking misrepresented both Schopenhauer and Wagner. When talking of both these untimely figures he had really been talking about himself. I shall argue his mature view was the product of growing older, but not inevitably wiser, and that all these so called misunderstandings were in their own way legitimate. Nietzsche's later perspective was just more appropriate to a different period of life. Instead of the appreciation of art, the focus of his later aesthetics is on its creation. This approach raises the question of why producer's viewpoint should be considered better than the consumer's. Is not consumption the ultimate purpose of production?

**Keywords:** *Nietzsche, Schopenhauer, Wagner, Kant, Untimely*

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Contemptuous of the self congratulation and cultural triumphalism that followed Prussia's victory in the Franco Prussian war, Nietzsche in his *Thoughts out of Season* was far from simply preferring French culture to German. The cultural philistine is present in every era, or at least every democratically minded one. Baudelaire had been vitriolic about the coarseness of his own epoch. In this book Nietzsche's remedy for the faults in the *zeitgeist* are Schopenhauer's philosophy and Wagner's music. Untimely men resist received wisdom. In modern circumstances any higher culture must be unseasonable in this sense. In the chapter on Strauss, Nietzsche hones in on the suggestion that culture philistinism can be identified with weakness, a seminal idea that lent itself to further development. Commonly the philistine was thought of as a being of rude health and strength, compared to the delicate and sickly artistic personality, here the tragic soul.

«If only these weak were not in possession of the power!»<sup>1</sup> - he writes.

Did Nietzsche's eventual rejection of the Schopenhauerian aesthetic really come from greater understanding? How much did he retain of his earlier views in his mature philosophy of beauty and art? In his later work Nietzsche describes a chain of misunderstandings. Kant misunderstood the aesthetic experience, Schopenhauer misunderstood Kant's teaching, and Wagner misunderstood Schopenhauer's. Nietzsche came to see that he himself had strictly speaking misrepresented both Schopenhauer and Wagner. When talking of both these untimely figures he had really been talking about himself. I shall argue his mature view was the product of growing older, but not inevitably

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<sup>1</sup> F. Nietzsche, *UM (Untimely Meditations)*, p. 13.

wiser, and that all these so called misunderstandings were in their own way legitimate. Nietzsche's later perspective was just more appropriate to a different period of life.

To develop these points:

- *Nietzsche considered Kant misunderstood aesthetic experience.*

As he writes in *The Genealogy of Morals*:

«'That is beautiful,' Kant proclaims, 'which gives us disinterested pleasure.' Disinterested! <sup>2</sup> ».

Nietzsche scorns the suggestion that: *the spell of beauty enables us to view even nude female statues 'disinterestedly.'*

Kenneth Clark in his celebrated book *The Nude* also takes issue with this received idea.

'If the nude, says Professor Alexander, is so treated that it raises in the spectator ideas or desires appropriate to the material subject, it is false art, and bad morals.' This high-minded theory is contrary to experience. In the mixture of memories and sensations aroused by Rubens' Andromeda or Renoir's Bather are many that are 'appropriate to the material subject.' And since these words of a famous philosopher are often quoted, it is necessary to labour the obvious and say that no nude, however abstract, should fail to arouse in the spectator some vestige of erotic feeling, even though it be only the faintest shadow — and if it does not do so, it is bad art and false morals.<sup>3</sup>

Professor Alexander appears to have taken Kant's thought and made it ridiculous. However there is a distinction to be made, however inadequately expressed, or there would be no difference between art and pornography, or ballet and striptease.

- Schopenhauer reinterpreted Kant:

Schopenhauer has made use of the Kantian treatment of the aesthetic problem—though he certainly did not look upon it with the eyes of Kant.... Schopenhauer, who was so much closer to the arts than Kant, but who yet could not escape from the spell of Kant's definition... interpreted the term 'disinterested' in a wholly personal way, basing it on an experience he must have had quite regularly. There are few things about which he speaks with such assurance as the effect of aesthetic contemplation. He claims that it counteracts the sexual 'interest, (like lupulin and camphor) and he never tires of glorifying this release from the will as the great boon of the aesthetic condition.<sup>4</sup>

- Then Wagner misunderstood, or at least altered, Schopenhauer, whose philosophy he claimed to follow:

it will remain true that nothing is more counter to Schopenhauer's spirit than the essentially Wagnerian element in Wagner's heroes: I mean the innocence of the supremest selfishness, the belief in strong passion as the good in itself, in a word, the Siegfried trait in the countenances of his heroes.<sup>5</sup>

In *Tristan und Isolde* Wagner identifies the denial of the will to live with sexual release. That is definitely not Schopenhauer, but an adaptation for Wagner's own aesthetic purpose. *Tristan* was a work Nietzsche continued to admire.

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<sup>2</sup> Nietzsche, *Genealogy of Morals* III §6.

<sup>3</sup> Clark p. 6.

<sup>4</sup> Nietzsche, *Genealogy of Morals* III §6.

<sup>5</sup> Nietzsche, *Joyful Wisdom* §99.

In *The Ring* a Schopenhauerian framework was added to an originally Hegelian conception. As Nietzsche tells us: «*Brunhilde was initially supposed to take her farewell with a song in honour of free love*<sup>6</sup>»

Sexualising and modifying him, Wagner was hardly a faithful disciple of Schopenhauer.

Then Nietzsche had misrepresented them both. In *Ecce Homo* he says that when he wrote the *Untimely Meditations*, he had treated Wagner and Schopenhauer as Plato treated Socrates, as a cipher for himself<sup>7</sup>. But what he meant by untimeliness still stood. He also says that when he wrote the *Birth of Tragedy* he was himself an untimely man, by which he did not mean a prophetic one. The book was conceived when a battle was raging and he was working as a medical orderly outside the walls of Metz. Rather than ahead of its time it was actually well behind it. That is why he says it smells offensively Hegelian<sup>8</sup>. Nevertheless his unfashionable opinions served to challenge the clichés of the age.

At the beginning of *Schopenhauer as Educator* he wrote:

Certainly there may be other means of finding oneself, of coming to oneself out of the bewilderment in which one usually wanders as in a dark cloud, but I know of none better than to think on one's true educators and cultivators. And so today I shall remember one of the teachers and taskmasters of whom I can boast, Arthur Schopenhauer- and later on I shall recall others.<sup>9</sup>

Schopenhauer and Wagner, even Nietzsche himself, had ideas we may see as misrepresentation. They all modify the views of their predecessors to express visions and ideas of their own, to describe the art and the experience with which they are involved. These interpretations were all meaningful. Even Kant had a point. All these intellectual ideas are associated with different experiences of art, either as creators or consumers. They are ways of clarifying feeling.

In his most conventionally rationalist work *Human all too Human* Nietzsche rejects Schopenhauer, treating him as an obscurantist force:

But in our century, too, Schopenhauer's metaphysic proved that the scientific spirit is not yet strong enough. Thus, in Schopenhauer's teaching the whole mediaeval Christian world view and feeling of man could again celebrate a resurrection, despite the defeat, long since achieved, of all Christian dogmas.<sup>10</sup>

Yet asserts his value for a scientific outlook:

I believe that without Schopenhauer's aid, no one today could so easily do justice to Christianity and its Asian cousins; to attempt to do so based on the Christianity still existing today is impossible. Only after this great achievement of justice, only after we have corrected in such an essential point the historical way of thinking, that the enlightenment brought with it, may we once again carry onward the banner of the Enlightenment, the banner with the three names: Petrarch, Erasmus, Voltaire. Out of reaction we have taken a step forward.<sup>11</sup>

Rejecting Schopenhauer left a gap. Lange's *History of Materialism* was Nietzsche's much studied source for the history of philosophy. We don't need to think of Nietzsche as committed to neo-Kantianism, but giving up Schopenhauer and unconvinced by Hegel's logic, Kant might easily seem as far as professional philosophy had got, and he followed Lange's take on it. Much of Nietzsche's material about art as illusion is Lange's Kant rather

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<sup>6</sup> Nietzsche, *Case of Wagner* §4.

<sup>7</sup> Nietzsche, *Ecce Homo*, *Untimely Meditations* §3.

<sup>8</sup> Nietzsche, *Ecce Homo*, *The Birth of Tragedy* §31.

<sup>9</sup> Nietzsche, *Untimely Meditations*, p. 130.

<sup>10</sup> Nietzsche, *Human all too Human* aph.26.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*

than an original Nietzschean insight into the nature of truth. Some look for Nietzsche's greatest originality in such speculations, as if something very difficult and interesting is being said about art and truth, whereas put in context it is really rather ordinary. The real originality elsewhere.

A later, more interesting, and possibly his final view of the role of art was expressed in some of the notes posthumously collected in the *Will to Power*. As he writes: «Our religion, morality, and philosophy are decadent human institutions. The counter-agent: Art.<sup>12</sup>»

Wagner had now become for him the symbol of what art was trying to get away from. Nietzsche's considered objection to Wagner is that he is not untimely, that he flatters the age, becomes a mere entertainer, considering no problem other than those that preoccupy '*the little decadents of Paris*'<sup>13</sup>. We note that by little decadents he is thinking of frivolous Emma Bovary types, not Baudelaire. Madame Bovary had been corrupted by cheap novels.

To the mature Nietzsche, Wagner was the times, his own antipodes. The remedy was true art.

Instead of the appreciation of art, the focus of his later aesthetics is on its creation. This approach raises the question of why the producer's viewpoint should be considered better than the consumer's. Is not consumption the ultimate purpose of production?

Nietzsche says Schopenhauer misunderstood Kant, but he certainly didn't think Kant got the aesthetic experience right. The suggestion of Stendhal's that he opposes to Kant, in *the Genealogy of Morals* seems scarcely adequate. To take beauty as '*the promise of happiness*' could never have spoken to someone in Schopenhauer's condition, nor is it obviously compatible with the description of hope as the worst of all evils in *Human all too Human*<sup>14</sup>.

In understanding the development of Nietzsche's aesthetics the Stendhal quote<sup>15</sup> is not helpful, except as illustrating a flat contradiction of Kant by a practising artist. Schopenhauer's aesthetic, on the other hand, was something in which the young Nietzsche was deeply involved, which once seemed to him to solved the riddle of existence, even if he was already beginning to grow out of it by the time he published the *Birth of Tragedy*.

Schopenhauer is a philosopher for young men, speaking to a time of life when sexual desire can be so intense as to be painful. The experience of art is of release from that torment in contemplation. It is not freedom from all desire but only from that 'torture'. Thus it succeeds in satisfying. It is to be presumed Nietzsche himself once felt something like that. In later life one will probably experience art differently. Schopenhauer was congenitally obstinate, and stuck with his ideas throughout his life.

Life brings you a lot of disorderly experience, of which in youth you had no notion. Focus shifts, new tensions are discovered. Received wisdom counsels submission to a mass of alien will. Art provides a counter movement. The solution is still the untimely man, but not Schopenhauer, far less Wagner.

Nietzsche's later view of art was not a sea change, but neither is there the continuity suggested in *Ecce Homo*. He has no comprehensive theory to replace Schopenhauerian metaphysics, but he is more conscious of the specific resistances that demand his attention. Philistines are weaklings who don't even try to resist the pressures the strong will work to overcome. The creative artist is our guide, shaping an alternative vision to the frustrating order in which we are expected to acquiesce. We should not presume to characterise in advance the nature or quality of his achievement.

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<sup>12</sup> Nietzsche, *Will to Power*, aph. 764.

<sup>13</sup> Nietzsche, *The Case of Wagner*, §9.

<sup>14</sup> Nietzsche, *Human all too Human*, §71.

<sup>15</sup> *Genealogy of Morals*, III §6.

Though pointing out how Wagner's sexualisation of Schopenhauer's Buddhistic vision takes its dishonesty even further, Nietzsche himself can hardly claim, nor did he, to have been a faithful follower of Schopenhauer's asceticism.

Even more than *The World as Will and Idea*, *The Birth of Tragedy* is a young man's book. It is a happy, cheerful read, no more pessimistic than Wagner himself. Even today, it is understood or misunderstood by young people who may relate it to the Dionysian enthusiasm of a rock festival. This is something one may usually grow out of. In any Dionysian feeling of oneness there is inevitably a measure of illusion. The sense that each understand each other does not bear the test of experience. Rock music lends itself to a musical cult like Wagnerism, as indeed did jazz. The loss of individuality, submergence in mass feeling continues to be of interest of philosophers.

Later came more penetrating thoughts about what was wrong with the culture around him, or more generally with western civilisation altogether. Finding the solutions required more work.

What was in Nietzsche's mind when he wrote about the future of Europe? He has faced accusations of irresponsibility, and with making some bad things happen. People with strong political convictions, even when they absolve him of direct responsibility for that, often blame him for his detachment. A philosopher, it is claimed, ought to be politically involved, taking the right side in class and other conflicts. This supposedly conflicts with what Nietzsche expects of his readers when he says: «One must be accustomed to living on mountains - to seeing the wretched ephemeral chatter of politics and national egoism beneath one.<sup>16</sup>»

Effectively he is accused of fiddling while Rome burns.

Nietzsche was neither committed to permanent detachment nor to its opposite. He was open to shifts of perspective, when he might will different things. We can point to a few of these.

Extrapolating from contemporary trends, Nietzsche had some thoughts about what was likely to happen to western society over the next few decades. Given a rough sketch of a likely future we can identify at least three or four different perspectives on it.

For perspective one, he could place himself in the future as pure spectator, observing what happens and taking it in, trying to understand, even enjoy it, like a tourist visiting a foreign land.

On perspective two he is someone who wishes to use what possibilities it offers for his own creative work. This was not escapism or self indulgence. The participation in and creation of a higher culture was his remedy for decadence.

On perspective three he may act as a concerned citizen and apply his insight to discovering a few reforms that might be feasible. For example he wrote about *What the Germans lack* in *Twilight of the Idols*. He also attacks movements like political antisemitism. Nevertheless, much imperfection is to be taken as given. Nietzsche was not concerned to cancel out that.

A fourth perspective would involve a picture of what he might take to be an ideal society or utopia. For an amusing diversion one might wonder how one might use the power of some absolute despot like a Chinese Emperor. Of course Nietzsche would have his own preferences, but so would anyone else. He was not demanding of others the sort of subjection to his personal vision of which he accused Wagner.

Nietzsche accepted many liberal ideas; he was on the whole comfortable with the freedom and humanity of advanced western societies. We need not interpret him as a revolutionary rethinking the whole basis of the political order, however dissatisfied some of his readers may be with the omission.

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<sup>16</sup> Nietzsche, *Antichrist- Foreword*.

In a world you cannot control you imagine what creative opportunities might be open to you. Nietzsche had his own projects. Transport him a few years into the Europe that actually came about, no further than the Weimar republic in twentieth century Germany. Imagine his being placed in 1920s Berlin, without preconceptions, taking it for what it was, contemplating and exploring what possibilities it offered. Compare what he wanted with what happened. Many of his own ideas were becoming influential by then. Naturally he would have wanted success for his own ideas. That would not necessarily have amounted to a vision of the future.

By then Nietzsche's reputation had well taken off. Rather than just battling for recognition he could concern himself with creativity and focus on the opportunities for that.

Kaufmann quotes the expressionist poet Gottfried Benn, writing in 1950: « Virtually everything my generation discussed, tried to think through -one might say, suffered; one might also say, spun out -had long been expressed and exhausted by Nietzsche, who had found definitive formulations; the rest was exegesis.<sup>17</sup>».

This does not mean Nietzsche had become in tune with the times or vice versa. His followers were still dissidents, trying to resist the main tendencies of the age. Nor was there as such any coherent Nietzschean movement.

Contrast this forward vision with looking back a few centuries to dream about the magnificent and unstable culture of renaissance Italy. You might enjoy the imagined future, as you enjoy the past, given you can see inspiring possibilities in it. Unlike looking ahead, looking back is necessarily on a world on which you can have no influence.

As Nietzsche wrote of this era:

It was the Golden Age of the last thousand years, in spite of all its blemishes and vices.<sup>18</sup>

There is nothing better than what is good-- and good is having some ability and using that to create, Tüchtigkeit or virtu in the Italian Renaissance sense.<sup>19</sup>

Nietzsche dwelt much on this period. If we are to criticise him for irresponsibility about the future we might say as much for his feeling about the past, for admiring the Italian renaissance. Bertrand Russell said Nietzsche's doctrine might be stated 'more simply and honestly' in one sentence: «I wish I had lived in the Athens of Pericles or the Florence of the Medici.»<sup>20</sup> The suggestion is that he was a hopeless dreamer. Untimeliness is taken to mean irrelevance; but he is involved, he contributes and is creative. His aesthetic response and his creativity come out of his resistance to what he experiences as wrong with the present. This is all of course only his own point of view. Deference to the feelings of others was far from his strongest value. It is compassion or pity that tie you to the conventional values, to the forces he criticises, like coercive morality. Pity can be a trap.

A recent book, Tobias Churton's *The Beast in Berlin*, describes the two years English Nietzschean Aleister Crowley spent in Berlin, from 1930-32. Crowley met creative people of whose inspiration he could approve, communists on whom he would inform, Nazis who threatened and eventually ended his sojourn. Unlike with his experience of New York, here Crowley felt creative possibilities. Instead of frustration at the pain and oppression of decadence, there were exciting opportunities. No longer did everything seem misdirected or wrong.

Such responses to Germany can illuminate Nietzsche's hopes for Europe. You will feel some detachment if somewhere is not your own country. Taking a state of affairs as given,

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<sup>17</sup> Kaufmann, postscript.

<sup>18</sup> Nietzsche, *Human all too Human* aph. 237

<sup>19</sup> Nietzsche, *Will to Power*, aph. 75

<sup>20</sup> Russell, p. 695.

you may enjoy it for and despite all the forces at play. In Berlin Jews confronted antisemites, communists fought nationalists. People struggled to establish and further their own ideas, artistic, scientific, social. We see how this dynamic might be enjoyed.

Crowley spent his time there trying to promote his ideas and setting up an exhibition as an expressionist painter. Weimar Germany was a very creative mixed culture, gentile and Jewish. He could take this for what it was, without militancy, or imagining how it could be different. Not only was it unstable but we know it was doomed. Yet within it there were great cultural opportunities. Crowley won some surprising sympathisers, like the psychologist Alfred Adler. He corresponded with Einstein. There was instability and threat, much as there were in renaissance Italy. He could observe how people try to realise very different values. Radically different visions struggled for supremacy. He was free to take it in, accept or reject it.

Our institutions may all be decadent but that does not mean that no value can be realised until that is put right. What Nietzsche wanted for Europe, the thriving culture he would have wanted to see required a struggle of ideas. He envisaged hard fought battles in the near future. Detached as much as he wished to be, he might see himself as taking or not taking sides. The values he would want to realise amid this drew inspiration from times in the past, like imperial Rome or renaissance Italy.

Nietzsche's untimely man has a clear political dimension. What he wanted for European society, was a higher culture, alongside whatever everyday one was going to emerge. The opposing force to all the discontents with the society and culture around him, he says, is art.

In the third and fourth untimely ones two images of the hardest self love, self discipline are put up against all this, as pointers to a higher concept of culture, to restore the concept culture- untimely types par excellence, full of sovereign contempt for everything around them that was called "Empire", "culture" "Christianity" Bismarck" "success"- Schopenhauer and Wagner or in one word Nietzsche. <sup>21</sup>

Nietzschean perspectives on his own society ranged from the observer and the tourist, through the creative artist, to someone trying to put the whole society right. He was not obsessed with the last one. Nevertheless it would be the ultimate political objective. It is hoped it will take effect one day, perhaps not in his lifetime, some time in the distant future.

Independent values, involving '*the hardest self love*' and '*self discipline*', alien to the principles which currently infect all our institutions, come to form antibodies. From a will to defy those principles we get the possibility of higher culture

Art offers cure but not for everything. Mediocrity has its place, obviously. On one level the unsatisfactory is inevitable. Most people are mediocre, almost by definition. Nietzsche's solution of higher culture offers an inspiration for any time, including, in his own phrase, '*the day after tomorrow*'<sup>22</sup>, which is now.

Nietzsche diagnosed some specific evils, far from all of those his contemporaries faced. Though he was not a politician, the evils he diagnoses have significant political implications. His is not an ivory tower aestheticism. One way of reading his criticism of Wagner is as an attack on proto fascism, and as the key to a rationalistic and individualistic understanding of society and culture.

The Nazi philosopher Alfred Bauemler put the same material to opposite ends. For him in Bismarck's Germany the spirit of commerce had *choked every virile will to guidance*

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<sup>21</sup> Nietzsche, *Ecce Homo*, The Untimely Ones §1

<sup>22</sup> Nietzsche, *Antichrist*, Foreword

*and mastery*. For Bauemler, unlike for other Nazis, Wagner just taught escapism, and according to him Nietzsche opposed power to Wagner's *world redeeming love*.<sup>23</sup>

We see the German youth marching under the sign of the swastika, our minds go back to Nietzsche's *Thoughts out of Season*, in which this youth was invoked for the first time. And when we call out to this youth 'Heil Hitler' we greet at the same time, with the same cry Friedrich Nietzsche.<sup>24</sup>

This should not pass as an acceptable interpretation of Nietzsche, nor should it be put on the same level as the other misrepresentations and misinterpretations of philosophers. It is not just bad because Nazism was bad. It would rob Nietzsche of all his subtlety and on that basis we can dismiss it. The same objection would apply to the attempt to recruit him to any modern ideology. To do so would entail the assumption that untimeliness had now become irrelevant, now that we are, all, for example, socialists or Christians, and need to go along with that. It would mean putting Nietzsche into someone else's system and subordinating his thought to someone else's.

Famously Nietzsche compared the philosophers' objective of truth to a woman, and upbraids them for their clumsy approaches. Yet elsewhere he says that a philosopher does not pursue women. Instead they come to him.

A philosopher is recognised by the fact that he shuns three brilliant and noisy things— fame, princes, and women: which is not to say that they do not come to him. He shuns every glaring light: therefore he shuns his time and its "daylight." Therein he is as a shadow; the deeper sinks the sun, the greater grows the shadow.<sup>25</sup>

Princes may not count for much these days, but we have their equivalent. The true philosopher according to Nietzsche is indeed untimely. Like Chuang Tsu's sage he rejects the position and status that are the rewards of conformity and are supposed to compensate for the subordination of personal judgement to the demands of society.

The philosopher does not directly seek fame or women. He does not try to make himself into the sort of being that he calculates will please the world or the opposite sex. By resisting that he consolidates his strength, and perhaps then the world and women will therefore come to him.

Nietzsche came to express some contempt for university philosophy. By a philosopher he means what Plato meant by a lover of wisdom, or what the old Chinese meant by a sage.

«I separate my concept of 'the philosopher' miles and miles from a concept which still includes even a Kant, not to speak of academic 'ruminants' and other professors of philosophy: (Ecce Homo)<sup>26</sup>»

The true philosopher does not accommodate himself to fashionable ideas. He does not adapt himself to other people, shaping himself to further his career or to please others. Following his own inspiration he may eventually become something which attracts without having directly worked to do so. He cultivates his strength, forming himself into something that expresses what he wants, and may thus become of deep interest to those who seek redemption from the demands that jar on them too.

Nietzsche's philosopher and his artist have much in common, whether or not there is a tension between the idea of the philosopher, shunning fame, and the creative artist, taking what opportunities he can what he can, within a society whose flaws do not need to obsess him.

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<sup>23</sup> Newman p. 529.

<sup>24</sup> Ivi, p. 530.

<sup>25</sup> Nietzsche, *Genealogy of Morals* III 8

<sup>26</sup> Nietzsche, *Ecce Homo* - The Untimely Ones §3



The untimely man is to a degree a contrarian, sometimes a paradoxicalist. Being a contrarian is not enough to make an artist. Much strength is needed. Nietzsche did not automatically admire eccentricity, but he respected the strength of character and individuality to be found in the lower ranks of society.

From *Will to Power*:

Where the strongest natures are to be sought. The ruin and degeneration of the solitary species is much greater and more terrible: they have the instincts of the herd, and the tradition of values, against them; their weapons of defence, their instincts of self preservation, are from the beginning insufficiently strong and reliable - fortune must be peculiarly favourable to them if they are to prosper (they prosper best in the lowest ranks and dregs of society; if ye are seeking personalities it is there that ye will find them with much greater certainty than in the middle classes.<sup>27</sup>

For mediocre minds the authority of received opinion works as a powerful argument in its own right and it is very hard to shake.

I began by saying Nietzsche did not simply want to replace German culture with French. In *The Future Of Our Educational Institutions* he said that Germany should not try to imitate France, but assert its own perspective as formed by the Reformation.<sup>28</sup> He appears to have changed his mind about the Reformation. Some have taken this to mean he lost his Protestant prejudice and became more sympathetic to Catholicism. The proffered model of an untimely man was still a German, namely Nietzsche himself. Nevertheless some French writers had a strong talent for untimeliness. To come back to a figure who impressed Nietzsche, Baudelaire's *Mon Coeur mis a Nu*, was written in 1864 though not published till 1887. Apparently Nietzsche read it avidly. A background of Catholicism seemed to allow for some brilliantly perverse flights of imagination. Nietzsche said little about Baudelaire in his published work, praising his critical intelligence, but grouping him with Schopenhauer as prolonging Christianity with his denunciation of voluptuousness. Despite, if not because of, his affinities to Schopenhauer and Wagner, Baudelaire surely meets most of Nietzsche's criteria for a genuine artist.

If there is no resistance there is no art. The timely man is adapted to his time, he believes that current morality is enlightened and progressive. In our day he accepts the doctrine of equality. A successful artistic culture is in opposition to the prevailing orthodoxy.

Applying this to our own age, Nietzsche accepted some liberal ideas, but not all of them. He accepts as much of liberalism as he thinks right. Modern Europe has its own problems. To some, but not to others, these present threats as serious as those that are now recent history. To a detached observer this disagreement might pose interesting questions of moral philosophy.

Acknowledging the decadence Nietzsche identifies in our society, a higher culture, is created by those untimely ones who are «full of sovereign contempt for everything around them that was called 'Empire', 'culture', 'Christianity', 'Bismarck'...<sup>29</sup>».

We may take all these terms as having their modern equivalents. It is best not to be too specific. The way forward as Nietzsche conceives it is not direct political resistance. As individuals we need the strength to swim against the current of what we are told and expected to think. We also require a measure of reserve, what may even be sometimes called hypocrisy. To accept what we are told to accept would be to abandon trust in our own judgement. Even when paying lip service to modern morality, inwardly we keep our own counsel and cultivate private sources of creative energy.

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<sup>27</sup> Nietzsche, *Will to Power* aph. 887

<sup>28</sup> Nietzsche, *The Future of our Educational Institutions*, p. 67.

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