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'Holding on to the Sublime': On Nietzsche's Early 'Unfashionable' Project

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Abstract and Keywords

This article analyses Nietzsche's commitment to the sublime. Focusing on his early writings, it demonstrates how the sublime informs both Nietzsche's conception of philosophy and his ideas for cultural revitalization. His appreciation of the sublime is embedded in four contexts and problems: his exploration of what philosophy is in its beginnings; his attack on D. F. Strauss and cultural philistinism; his conception of culture as transfigured *physis*; and the critique of the science of history. Nietzsche is committed to the sublime because it captures how humans transcend certain limits.

Keywords: Friedrich Nietzsche, sublime, philosophy, D. F. Strauss, cultural philistinism, cultural revitalization, science of history

The four *Untimelies* are thoroughly warlike. They prove that I was no daydreamer with his head in the clouds...(Nietzsche, *Ecce Homo*).

Introduction: Sublime Nietzsche

In this essay I aim to present a new argument about the early Nietzsche and focus largely on his *Unfashionable Observations*. I believe there is a neglected unifying theme to them and wish to claim that this centres on Nietzsche's commitment to the sublime. For Nietzsche it is imperative that we 'hold on to the sublime', and my essay is an exploration of just what he means by this. The concept of the sublime occupies a significant role in Nietzsche's thinking. It is surprising, therefore, that the topic, with the obvious exception of *The Birth of Tragedy*, has received scant treatment in the literature.² In this paper my focus is on Nietzsche's project in his early writings, which is a much wider project than simply *BT*, and I want to show how the sublime informs both Nietzsche's conception of philosophy and his ideas for cultural revitalization. I will illuminate how an appreciation of the sublime on Nietzsche's part is embedded in four contexts and problems: his exploration of what philosophy is in its beginnings; his attack on D. F. Strauss and cultural philistinism; his conception of culture (p. 227) as transfigured *physis*; and the critique of the science of history. Although Nietzsche is not, I think, saying anything especially new about the sublime, it is an important notion for him; what is novel in his early writings is his adoption of it as a category to define the very practice of philosophy and the way he employs it to set new horizons for life and culture. Nietzsche is attached to the sublime, I suggest, because it is the notion that best captures how we are able in human experience to push beyond certain limits. In Nietzsche the limits to be transcended are manifold and I highlight a number of them in what follows. They include: the limits of ordinary experience and understanding; the limits of reason; the limits of social conformism and conservatism; and the limits of scholarship and scholasticism. Indeed, his concern with the sublime manifests itself in the title of his early project where the chief task is to be 'unfashionable': the genuine thinker for Nietzsche is one who is able to go beyond the limits, both fashionable and timely, of his own time.

Unfashionable Nietzsche

Nietzsche published his four unfashionable observations between August 1873 and July 1876. Although each text was published as an independent treatise, Nietzsche indicated their interrelatedness by loosely joining them together under a collective title (Gray 1995 : 395). At one time the ambition was for a much longer set of 'observations' (one plan gives thirteen titles; see *KSA* 7: 19 [330]). In part they were written as vehicles by which Nietzsche could expel everything that was polemically negative and rebellious inside him, but they should not be written off as mere negative polemics.³ As Nietzsche later noted, in them he was making promises or pledges to himself concerning his future tasks and projects.⁴

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In the four observations Nietzsche directs his gaze, as well as his polemical ire, at German culture, civilization, science, and art in the wake of the Prussian victory over France in 1871 which resulted in German political unification and the rule of *Realpolitik* under Bismarck. Until quite recently, and as a result of adopting an argument of Walter Kaufmann's, the four pieces of writing have been known in English as the 'untimely meditations' (Kaufmann 1974 : 35). More recent scholarship has favoured the more literal 'observations' for *Betrachtungen* over the figurative 'meditations', and either 'unfashionable' or 'unmodern' for *unzeitgemässe*.⁵ They contain an explicit disavowal of the age (*die Zeit*), above all the now or the present. They are not untimely in sense of inopportune or unseasonable but rather defiantly unfashionable. Neither are they reactionary or merely anti-modern: 'They aim at transcending the present, at superseding conventional notions (p. 228) of past, present, and future' (Arrowsmith 1990 : xi). *Betrachten* means to look at, observe, or view, and only by extension to consider, meditate, or reflect: 'What Nietzsche intends by *Betrachtungen* is a persuasively discursive account of what he has *seen* and *considered*...' (Arrowsmith 1990 : xi) Nietzsche's essays are an exercise in cultural criticism in which 'observation' is directed at the cultural and sociopolitical world. The focus of his attack is the German cultural elite—the cultural philistines, in Nietzsche's memorable phrase—and the adjective *unzeitgemäss* indicates that Nietzsche sees himself as belonging to an isolated critical minority that dares to attack the idols of the day. Nietzsche's antipathy is towards the cult of the present day or 'the modern', and one commentator has suggested that he is intensifying Schopenhauer's scathing attack on *Jetztzeit*, the 'Today' (Gray 1995 : 397). At this point in time Nietzsche is influenced by Schopenhauer's concern over the allure of the temporal and of becoming.

Although the translation of 'untimely' has the merit of retaining the stem word 'time' (*Zeit*) from which the adjective Nietzsche uses derives, it 'implies something inept and inappropriate, something that occurs at the wrong time and hence is either premature or belated' (Gray 1995 : 399). And yet, what motivates the kind of intellectual praxis Nietzsche carries out in the four observations is the need to speak the truth no matter how unpleasant it might be, and for Nietzsche this is an exercise that could not be more urgent or necessary. This commitment requires a careful calculation of the moment when one's interventions and actions will have their most profound and far-reaching impact (Gray 1995 : 399), and is a feature of all of Nietzsche's polemics be they from his early period or from his late period, such as *GM* and *TI*. In some key respects the later writings represent a return to the early Nietzsche of the *Observations*, being polemical and unmodern. In the *Observations* Nietzsche's untimeliness consists in not paying obeisance to the sovereignty of popular opinion as an arbiter of taste, valuation, and truth. He who follows public opinion is always timely.⁶ Nietzsche coins the term *Bildungsphilister* to describe the self-satisfied newspaper readers and consumers of culture. The 'cultivated philistine' is described in the second unfashionable observation on history as, 'the quickly dated up-to-date babbler about the state, the church, and art'

and who has an insatiable stomach but knows little of genuine hunger and thirst (*UM* II: 10). The appreciator of genuine culture is unfashionable.

Today the observations are among Nietzsche's most neglected works and yet they are key documents for a proper understanding of his development. It is typically assumed that their ostensible subjects are so diverse that they seem to be connected by little beyond their collective title and common form (the traditional polemical essay divided into numbered, untitled sections). As Breazeale points out, a closer examination reveals a thematic unity that is not always evident at first. They contain important early treatments of essential Nietzschean topics such as the relationship between life, art, and philosophy, the cultivation of the true self, education, and the difference between genuine wisdom and mere knowledge or 'science' (Breazeale 1997 : vii). To this I wish to add the claim that what unifies Nietzsche's early project, so strongly evident in the observations, is a commitment to the sublime.

(p. 229) Introduction to the Sublime

The word 'sublime' is derived from the Latin 'sublimis', which is a combination of 'sub' (under), and 'limen' (a lintel or the top piece of a door, suggesting threshold); thus, in the *OED* the sublime is defined as 'set high up or raised aloft'. The treatise by Longinus, of uncertain date but typically ascribed to the first century CE, *Peri Hypsous*, translated as *On the Sublime*, *On Greatness*, or *On Eloquence* literally means 'On the Height', and the text is concerned with showing how our natural gifts can be led to states of elevation. The 'true sublime', says Longinus, which is to be found in 'the grand style' of poetry and literature, 'uplifts our souls', filling us with 'proud exaltation' and a sense of 'vaunting joy' (Longinus 1965 : 107). The main German word for the sublime, '*das Erhabene*', linked to the adverb '*erhaben*' (raised, elevated), captures well this sense of elevation beyond the ordinary and the familiar.

Since the concept was introduced in the text attributed to Longinus, the sublime has stood for several things: the effect of grandeur or the grand style in speech and poetry; a sense of the divine or transcendent; the contrast between the limitations of human perception and the overwhelming majesty of nature; as evidence of the triumph of reason over nature and the imagination; and, most recently, as a signifier for that which exceeds the grasp of reason. As Philip Shaw notes in his guide to the subject, common to all these definitions is a preoccupation with struggle, so for Longinus the discourse of the sublime, be it in political oratory or epic verse, works to overcome the rational powers of its audience in an effort to persuade them of the efficacy of an idea by means of its sheer rhetorical force. We are ravished, as he notes, by the power of words (Shaw 2006 : 18).

The word has multiple applications: a building or a mountain can be called sublime, as can a thought, some heroic deed, or a mode of expression. These are value judgements, though the sublime is not restricted to this, since it also describes a state of mind.

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Something majestic, such as the interior of a great cathedral, can fill us with awe. The sublime speaks of greatness or grandeur and sometimes we are literally lost for words in its presence. The failure of thought or words to capture the experience can often testify to its reality: a certain *je ne sais quois* or the ineffable is at work. Often, and as noted, the word has the meaning of being lifted above or elevated, but the effect of the sublime can also be overwhelming and engulfing, something we find hard to resist. One writer, James Usher, writing in the nineteenth century, speaks of the power of the sublime in terms of taking possession of our attention and faculties, absorbing them in astonishment (Shaw 2006 : 2). As Shaw notes, we have recourse to the feeling or experience of the sublime whenever our experience slips out of conventional understanding and the power of an object or event is such that words fail and points of comparison disappear. It thus marks the *limits* of reason and expression together with an indication of what might lie beyond these limits. It often has associations with the ultimate, the transcendent, the infinite, and descriptive failure raises a negative, even painful, presentation of the ineffable. Sublimity, therefore, refers to a moment when the ability to apprehend, to know, and to express a thought or sensation is defeated. In Kant the struggle at work in the experience of the sublime is between the evidence of the senses and the supersensible power of reason: the sublime ultimately involves for Kant the ascendancy of the rational over the real; the mind of man proves itself to be greater than anything we (p. 230) encounter or discover in nature. With Kant the emphasis shifts in thinking about the sublime away from empiricist and naturalistic theories, towards conceiving sublimity as a special mode of consciousness: through it, our higher vocation and human dignity are revealed to us (Kant 1790/1987 : sections 23–9).

In her recent study *The Sublime, Terror and Human Difference* (2007), Christine Battersby maintains that: 'Nietzsche spent much of his philosophical career engaging with and seeking to resist the seductions of the sublime, and ended by reconfiguring sublimity in ways that are also radical and profound' (Battersby 2007 : 160). For Battersby, Nietzsche provides us with a reconfigured 'bodily' sublime that gives depth to surfaces and to the moment. I wish to canvas two main insights so far as his early project is concerned: (a) The early Nietzsche does not resist the sublime but positively embraces it and becomes an advocate of it; (b) To properly grasp what this entails and means we need to read beyond *BT* and pay attention to the project of the Basel years as a whole. This would include materials such as the uncompleted and massively ambitious *Philosophenbuch*⁷, *Philosophy in the Tragic Age of the Greeks* (prepared for publication but not actually published during Nietzsche's lifetime), essays such as 'On the Relation of Schopenhauer's Philosophy to German Culture', and the published *Unfashionable Observations*. When we do this, we find that the sublime and the exhortation to hold on to it define Nietzsche's early project. That's in essence what it is. This is not visible if we focus solely, as has been done to date in treatments on Nietzsche and the sublime, on *BT*. *BT* is an important part of the story, but it's only a part, and not I believe the most revealing.⁸

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Nietzsche’s deployment of the sublime harks back to Longinus and shares some of the classical features of the sublime from Longinus to Kant. In accordance with the tradition Nietzsche employs the sublime in connection with notions of elevation, exaltation, loftiness, ennoblement and the attainment of heights of experience. Nietzsche often follows the Longinian tradition in his thinking on the sublime, and it is in play in *EH* when he declares himself to be an artist of the grand rhythm and grand style.⁹ As noted, a concern with the sublime also indicates a focus on the experience of awe, feelings of admiration, reverence, and astonishment, the expansion of our mental powers of comprehension, respect for our higher vocation (human-superhuman), and so on, and as we shall see, much of this is at work in Nietzsche’s early thinking and his valuation of greatness. For Nietzsche it’s not so much a question of the sublime providing us with access to some ideal of a rational and universal moral humanity, as it is in Kant and Schiller (Kant 1790/1987 ; Schiller 2001), but more that certain privileged and superior insights, perceptions, and moments become available to us. Ultimately, the importance of the sublime for the early Nietzsche is that it provides us with a mode of access into questions of value, enabling us to cultivate an appreciation of (p. 231) what is important and significant and this resides in according positive value to what is rare, abnormal, and extraordinary. In essence, then, the sublime is being used by Nietzsche to indicate a dedication to that which is truly important and significant over the fleeting and fashionable. It also entails, as we shall see, valuing those instances of existence where the human being transcends the level of the animal.

The Sublime contra Philistine *Gemüthlichkeit*

In some of his early writings Nietzsche appeals to the sublime as a way of drawing attention to the narrowness of life, of the discerning and judging that prevail in German scholarship, including its reliance on domestic and homely virtues, and he contrasts the elevation to greatness afforded by the sublime with what he calls ‘Philistine homeliness’. This latter contrast is taken from the completed but unpublished short essay of 1872, and one of the five prefaces to five unwritten books sent as a Christmas gift to Cosima Wagner, entitled ‘The Relation of Schopenhauer’s Philosophy to a German Culture’. This unpublished essay of 1872 is important for anticipating in outline the three unfashionable observations Nietzsche will go on to write on Strauss and the cultural philistine, on the dangers of the historical fever, and on Schopenhauer as our educator, and for clearly indicating the extent to which Nietzsche relies upon a notion of the sublime to carry out his unfashionable critique of the present.

In this unpublished essay Nietzsche tells the Germans that they have their philosopher—Schopenhauer—and the task is to now search for and create the culture (*Kultur*) that is proper to him. Nietzsche begins the essay by warning his readers of the dangers of a fashionable and philistine relation to actuality and appeals directly to the sublime (he

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uses the word '*Grosse*' in this passage but '*Erhabene*' throughout the rest of the essay). Let me cite the opening of the essay in full in order to gauge its proper effect:

In dear vile Germany culture (*Bildung*) now lies so decayed in the streets, jealousy of all that is great rules so shamelessly, the general tumult of those who race for 'fortune' resounds so deafeningly, that one must have a strong faith, almost in the sense of *credo quia absurdum est*, in order to hope still for a growing culture (*Kultur*), and above all—in opposition to the press with her 'public opinion'—to be able to work by public teaching. With violence (*Gewalt*) must those, in whose hearts lie the immortal care for the people (*Volk*), free themselves from all the inrushing impressions of that which is just now actual (*Gegenwärtigen*) and valid, and evoke the appearance of reckoning them indifferent things. They must appear so, because they want to think, and because a loathsome sight and a confused noise, perhaps even mixed with the trumpet-flourishes of war-glory, disturb their thinking, and above all, because they want to *believe* in the German character and because with this faith they would lose their strength (*Kraft*). Do not find fault with these believers if they look from their distant aloofness and from the heights towards their Promised Land! They fear those experiences, to which the kindly disposed foreigner surrenders himself, when he lives among the Germans, and must be surprised how little German life corresponds to those great individuals, works and actions, which, in his kind disposition he has learned to revere as the true German character. Where the German cannot lift himself into the sublime (*nicht in's Grosse erheben kann*) he makes an impression less than mediocre. (Nietzsche 1911 : 65–6; KSA 1: 778–9) (p. 232)

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The concern, then, is with greatness. As noted, the basic contrast Nietzsche is developing in this essay is between Philistine homeliness (*Gemüthlichkeit*) and the sublime (*das Erhabene*). German scholarship, Nietzsche argues, can be characterized in terms of a display of ‘domestic and homely’ virtues, such as industry, moderation, cleanliness, self-restriction, and so on. We can identify an unlimited knowledge drive at work in the practice of this scholarship, but when looked at closely it shows itself to be ‘more like a defect, a gap, than an abundance of forces’, the consequence of a ‘needy, formless atrophied life’ (1911: 66, 779). Even more damning, Nietzsche says that the Germans, as the ‘true virtuosi of philistinism’, are at home in life’s narrowness, in narrow discerning and judging, with a submersion into detail, the minute, and the nearest. The contrast is clearly with the wide and the expansive, with the lofty and open horizon that Nietzsche associates with the sublime. If any scholars do manage to carry themselves into the sublime they make themselves as heavy as lead and ‘as such lead-weights they hang to their truly great human beings, in order to pull them down out of the ether to the level of their own necessitous indigence’ (1911: 66, 779). This attachment to ‘Philistine homeliness’, Nietzsche notes, is what is now supposed to guide the composition of poetry, the making of painting and music, and even philosophy. Today’s educated person (*der Gebildete*) is to be educated historically (*historisch*), and ‘by his historical consciousness he saves himself from the sublime in which the Philistine succeeds by his “homeliness”’ (1911: 67, 780). The enthusiasm (*Enthusiasmus*) that history might inspire—for example, the lessons of great deeds and works—is to be blunted. Nietzsche protests that history (*Geschichte*) will disclose to us only those confessions which we are worthy to receive, and that the world has at all times been full of trivialities and nonentities (*Nichtigkeiten*), so that our hankering after history will reveal or unveil to us only these things and will become the enemy of the sublime, that is, of all that is great.

Let me now show how an appreciation of the sublime informs his early appreciation and conception of philosophy. I will then move on to discussing salient aspects of each of the first three unfashionable observations.¹⁰

Nietzsche on Philosophy: Origins and Tasks

The early Nietzsche has a fairly specific conception of what philosophy is in its origins. It is captured in some quite striking formulations. Philosophy for Nietzsche is bound up with the legislation of greatness, conceived as a ‘name-giving’ that elevates (*erhebt*) the human being, and has its origins in the legislation of morality (*Gesetzgebung der Moral*) (KSA 7: 19 [83]). The fact that the philosopher enjoys only a chance-like existence is the more reason to value this existence: ‘The philosopher is the rarest form of greatness because human beings arrived at knowledge only by coincidence, not as an original endowment. But for this reason, also the highest type of greatness’ ([195]). Philosophy is doing many things and has (p. 233) multiple tasks to perform, but one thing philosophy does for Nietzsche, and which makes it different from, say, science (*Wissenschaft*), is to lift or elevate us above the ordinary and the contingently empirical—the domains of the factual and actual—and show us things that are magnificent, stupendous, remarkable, abnormal, rare, and extraordinary. For Nietzsche the earliest philosophers, such as Heraclitus and Empedocles, are magnificent ‘superhuman’ types who come up with

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intuitions about existence that fill us with awe. Our confrontation with the Heraclitean insight into 'eternal becoming', for example, has something that is both terrifying and uncanny: 'the strongest comparison is to the sensation whereby someone in the middle of the ocean or during an earthquake, observes all things in motion'. Nietzsche then notes that it requires an 'astonishing power to transmit the effects of the sublime (*des Erhabenen*) and joyful awe to those confronting it' (*KGW IV.2: 272*). Heraclitus comes up with a sublime image (*erhabenes Gleichniss*) to do just this: 'only in the play of the child (or that of the artist) does there exist a Becoming and Passing Away without any moralistic calculations' (*KGW IV.2: 278*). Here we have philosophers who transcend the limits of experience through some profound intuition and arrive at sublime insights and disclose them for us.¹¹

In the lecture course on the pre-Platonic philosophers he gave several times during his tenure at Basel, Nietzsche sought to resolve the riddle of defining the philosopher. Drawing on Aristotle's distinction between *phronesis* (prudence) and *sophia* (wisdom) in the *Ethics*, in which the former is concerned with common human goods and the latter with knowledge of what is most precious, Nietzsche points out to his students that the Greek word *sophos* does not simply denote 'wise' in the usual sense but is related etymologically to *sapio*, to taste. Suggesting nothing of quietude or asceticism, the 'wise' human being is the one who has 'sharp taste' as a 'sharp knowledge'; the aim is not to know how conclusions follow from principles but which branches and modes of knowledge contain those principles most worthy of knowledge (*KGW II.4: 217-18; PPP 8*).¹² For Nietzsche, this suggests the need for a discriminating taste, and his argument is that whilst philosophical thinking is of the same kind as scientific thinking, it differs from it in that it directs itself 'toward *great* things (p. 234) and possibilities'. He duly notes that the concept of greatness is amorphous, being partly aesthetic and partly moral.¹³ For Nietzsche, the great is that which departs from the normal and the familiar: 'We venerate what is *great*. To be sure, that is also the *abnormal*' (*KSA 7: 19 [80]*). Humanity, he further states, can only grow through admiration for what is rare and great in life and culture, and this is the domain of the sublime. For Nietzsche what is sublime is anything that lifts us beyond the everyday, the commonplace, the banal, the familiar, and the customary.

For Nietzsche, the most powerful and fruitful era for thinkers of ancient Greece is the time before and during the Persian wars (499-448 BC). This is the period when, he says, 'possibilities of life' are discovered, a time when philosophers appear who do not resemble deformed and ruined figures, scrawny desert hermits, theologizing counterfeits, or depressed and pale scholars (*KSA 8: 6 [48]*). The 'tragic age' is thus something of a golden or flourishing and vital age for Nietzsche, with the Greeks on the point of discovering a type of human being higher than any previous type. According to Nietzsche, the early Greek philosophers had a degree of confidence in knowledge that will never be seen again. He calls this knowledge 'ultimate knowledge' and holds that the early Greeks at least believed they possessed it (*KSA 8: 6 [7]*). The early philosophers are not confronted with the danger and difficulty of knowing, which are later developments and shape the present day (Kant, for example). For them, the task is to free oneself from the power of myth and then to endure the darkness one falls into. One option is to

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embrace science (*Wissenschaft*) and to gradually augment knowledge; the other option is offered by philosophy and the 'ultimate knowledge' (*letzte Erkenntniss*). Nietzsche doesn't spell out what this consists in but I think we can take it to refer to 'decisive' knowledge on the most important matters, matters of value for example. According to Nietzsche's conception, the early Greek philosophers understood that the philosopher's right to existence is revealed when he gives focus to the limitless knowledge drive and controls it by giving it a unity.

A chief task for Nietzsche, then, is to determine the value and goal of the knowing of science (*Wissenschaft*). This is to be taken in the much wider sense than we conceive it in English as denoting the practice of rigorous, disciplined, and systematic inquiry, and as bound up with the so-called scholarly virtues of being value-free and objective. Nietzsche argues that the difference between the effect of philosophy and that of science, as well as their different genesis (*Entstehung*), must be made clear (KSA 8: 19 [23]). Science is dependent upon philosophical questions for all its goals and methods, though it easily forgets this (19 [24]). He poses the question: is philosophy an art or science? His answer is that in its aims and results philosophy is an art, but that it uses the same means as science (conceptual representation). He writes: 'Philosophy is a form of poetic artistry' (*Dichtkunst*). In fact, philosophy cannot be categorized, so it is necessary to invent and characterize a species for it (19 [62]). Philosophy has no common denominator, it is sometimes art and sometimes science (23 [8]). He commits himself to certain key positions, such as that philosophy is invention (*Dichtung*) beyond the limits of experience. Nietzsche does not mean this in a Kantian sense, although he has taken cognizance of Kant's transcendental turn by this point and accepted large parts of it. For Kant, although all our knowledge must have reference to (p. 235) experience it does not follow that all of it arises out of experience. Something else is at stake for Nietzsche. The word Nietzsche uses is poetry or invention (*Dichtung*) and what he is getting at is the fact that philosophy continues and sublimates the impulse or drive (*Trieb*) of the mythic. The philosopher knows (*erkennt*) insofar as he invents or poeticizes (*dichtet*), and he invents insofar as he knows. There is, then, a union of poetry and knowledge in the philosopher (19 [62]). It is the continuation and refinement of the mythical drive and is essentially pictorial (thinking in terms of concrete images).

What does Nietzsche mean here when he credits philosophical thinking with 'poetry'? On one level he simply means that it makes imaginative and illogical leaps, which are also evident in science, for example in the form of conjectures ('Philosophical thinking can be detected at the core of all scientific thought'). This 'flight of imagination'—Nietzsche uses the word *die Phantasie*—involves leaping from possibility to possibility, with some possibilities being taken temporarily as certainties (19 [75]). This kind of 'possibility' is something like a sudden intuition ('it might perhaps...', for example), and this gives rise to a process of amplification. This leads Nietzsche to ask whether philosophical and scientific thinking are to be distinguished by their dosage or by their domain. Philosophy is close to art but it cannot exist without science: 'there is *no distinct philosophy separated from science*'. But then he argues: 'the reason why *indemonstrable* philosophizing retains a higher value than a scientific proposition lies in the aesthetic

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value of such philosophizing, in its beauty and sublimity (*Erhabenheit*)' (19 [76]). His idea is that a construction of philosophy cannot prove itself in the same way a scientific construction can. Such constructions of philosophy are best approached in terms of aesthetic considerations to do with artistic value. Heraclitus can thus never be obsolete.

Philosophy's value lies in its purifying tasks, such as cleansing muddled and superstitious ideas. To this extent it is a science, but to the extent that it is at the same time anti-scientific—for example in opposing scientific dogmatism (what today we would call scientism)—it is 'religious-obscurantist' (23 [10]). Nietzsche gives the example of Kant's discrediting of the theory of the soul and rational theology. Philosophy opposes the fixed value of ethical concepts and the hatred of the body. It shows us what is anthropomorphic: the translation of the world into the care or concern of the human being. Philosophy is harmful since it dissolves instinct, cultures, and customary moralities. In terms of the present, philosophy encounters the absence of a popular ethic, the absence of any sense of the importance of discriminating, a mania for history, and so on. The sciences are studied without practical application, whilst classical antiquity is studied in a way that fails to relate it to any practical attempt to learn from it. In the case of the philosopher we have a physician—the physician of culture—who must heal himself (29 [213]). This is because, according to Nietzsche, the philosopher must first become a thinker for himself before he can educate others. Schopenhauer provides the lesson needed here: the need to achieve genuine independence in relation to the present age. Nietzsche thinks this is an especially pressing task for the thinker today that is faced with the claims of a 'new age' (*Neuzeit*) (see *UM* II: 8).¹⁴ So here a different limit is being transcended, namely, the limit of the prevailing world view. (p. 236) Schopenhauer's greatness consists in the fact that he deals with the picture of life as a whole and interprets it as a whole. Moreover, he does so without letting himself become entangled in a web of conceptual scholasticisms. The problem with the present is that it is importunate (*zudringlich*), being something that is always unintentionally overvalued. This is especially felt by the philosopher, says Nietzsche, whose peculiar task is to be the lawgiver of 'the measure, mint, and weight of things' (*UM* III: 3).

In relation to science, philosophy draws attention to its 'barbarizing effects', that is, the fact that it so easily loses itself in the service of immediate practical interests. This is another 'limit' that philosophy goes beyond. The *laissez aller* (let it go) attitude of modern science resembles the dogmas of political economy: it has a naïve faith in an absolutely beneficial result. The primary concern of philosophy is with the question of the value of existence, with what is to be revered. 'For science there is nothing great and nothing small—but for philosophy! The value of science is measured in terms of this statement' (*KSA* 7: 19 [33]). And then, he adds: '*Holding onto what is sublime! (Das Festhalten des Erhabenen!)*' (see also 19 [22]). For Nietzsche, the sublime refers to the (aesthetic) concept of greatness, and the task of philosophy is to educate people to this concept. To hold on to it is to keep in one's view, as a kind of superior perception or

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vision, the ‘spiritual mountain range’ that stretches across the centuries and thus to the ‘eternal fruitfulness of everything that is great’ (19 [33]).

In a later notebook from 1875 on the struggle between science and wisdom, Nietzsche claims that whilst science can probe the processes of nature it can never ‘command’ human beings: ‘science knows nothing of taste, love, pleasure, displeasure, exaltation or exhaustion. Man must in some way interpret, and thereby, evaluate, what he lives through and experiences’ (KSA 8: 6 [41]). Nietzsche claims that the sciences—natural science and history—explain but do not command; or where they do command it is always in the name of utility. By contrast, ‘every religion and every philosophy has somewhere within it...a sublime (*erhabene*) breach with nature, a striking uselessness’ (KSA 7: 29 [197]). He then asks whether this is all that there is to it. In short, how can value be given to that which exists outside of utility? Nietzsche considers this question in the context of several notes that bear the title ‘The Afflictions of Philosophy (*Die Bedrängniss der Philosophie*)’. These ‘afflictions’ are both external (natural science and history) and internal (the courage to live according to a philosophy is breaking down). Nietzsche notes that the demands made on philosophy in the present age are greater than ever, and so are the attacks; and yet philosophers find themselves weaker than ever (29 [198]).

Nietzsche holds that philosophy is one of the preservatives of value and discrimination, but it has no specific existence of its own. With regards to the culture of his people, the philosopher seems to be an indifferent hermit, a teacher to a few select spiritual and abstract minds, or a destroyer of popular culture (KSA 7: 28 [2]). He is a hermit, or this is his appearance, owing to the fact that there is a lack of purposiveness in nature (he is not predestined to be). His work, however, remains for later ages. It is not that there is no purposiveness in nature, only a lack or deficit of it; nature cannot be relied upon as a result. It ruins countless seeds but also manages to produce a few great examples, such as Kant and Schopenhauer (the step from the one to the other, Nietzsche says, is a step towards a freer culture). Nature, Nietzsche says, is wasteful not out of extravagance but out of lack of experience (KSA 7: 29 [223]; see also *UM* III: 7). Thus, the artists and the philosopher both bear witness against teleology. Nevertheless, Nietzsche thinks it is legitimate for us to conceive of the philosopher as a kind of self-revelation of nature’s workshop (19 [17]). (p. 237)

For Nietzsche philosophy is in search of a new ‘people’ and has the task of cultivating one that is equal to the concept of greatness or the sublime. But how can philosophy and the philosopher connect with a people—are not a people by definition something contingent and accidental (for example, when it finds itself in an accidental political situation)? Nietzsche’s claim is that the people finds its uniqueness in this superior individual who, although he or she appears, is in fact ‘timeless’, not merely an accidental ‘wanderer’. The philosopher exists in order to harness the ‘unselective knowledge drive’ by setting goals, determining measure, and making value judgements concerning existence (for example, defining what is great, rare, singular, even though these are mutable). Perhaps under modern conditions it is the philosopher’s fate to be a wanderer that is looking for a people that is missing (this appears to be the narrative of *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*). If

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today there is an absence of noble popular philosophy, Nietzsche thinks this is because we have no noble concept of the people as a *publicum*; rather, our popular philosophy is for the *peuple*, not for the public (KSA 7: 19 [26]). The contrast being drawn here is between an indifferent and merely ordinary or everyday collective and a collective united and elevated by higher goals (perhaps between a mob and a genuine 'public'). In *BT* Nietzsche notes that 'public' (*publicum*) is merely a word that cannot be taken to denote a uniform and constant entity (*BT* 11). What he is resisting is the view that the artist and genuine philosopher should accommodate themselves to a force or power that is strong simply by virtue of its numbers or the loudness of its opinions. Public opinion should not be pandered to; rather, the task is to raise the public to a higher level of insight and being: 'Create for yourselves the concept of a "people" [*Volk*]: you can never conceive it to be noble and lofty enough' (*UM* II: 7). This idea that the public should be elevated in this way is an essential part of Nietzsche's early teaching on the sublime.

The Case of Strauss

Let me now turn attention to examining how the sublime is put to work in the *Unfashionable Observations*, beginning with the first one on David Friedrich Strauss. In this observation Nietzsche aims to present a twofold challenge: first, a challenge to public opinion in Germany which equates victory over France in the war with the success of German culture; and second, to contest the idea that culture is the same as 'cultivatedness' (*Gebildetheit*). The need has arisen to distinguish between this and true cultivation. Nietzsche is here concerned with overcoming a different set of 'limits': not so much those of reason or experience, but rather the limits of social conservatism and conformism. Cultural philistinism is to be taken to task for Nietzsche because it stifles the appreciation of truly sublime art and culture.

For Nietzsche, a great victory is also a great danger. The delusion that German culture has also been victorious is a pernicious one, not simply, he stresses, because it is a delusion since delusions can be of the most salutary nature. It is rather that it has the potential to turn a victory into a defeat: 'the *extirpation...of the German spirit for the sake of the "German Reich"*' (*UM* I: 1). Germany has won the war not on account of the superiority of its culture but rather through its stricter military discipline, natural courage and perseverance, superior leadership, their more scientific conduct of war, and so on. None of this might matter except for the delusion that the finest seeds of culture have been sown in Germany: (p. 238)

I perceive this delirium and this joy in the incomparably confident behaviour both of German journalists and of our fabricators of novels, tragedies, poems, and histories, for they obviously constitute a homogeneous group of people who seem to have conspired to take control of the modern human being's hours of idleness

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and meditation—that is, of his 'cultured moments'—and to drug him by means of the printed word. (*UM I*: 1)

Nietzsche claims that 'the pure concept of culture [*Kultur*] has been lost' (*UM I*: 1). What is culture for him? He provides one definition in the opening section of the text when he states that culture 'is a unity of artistic style that manifests itself throughout all the vital self-expressions of a people [*Lebensäusserungen eines Volkes*]' (*UM I*: 1). The appropriate contrast to be made is with 'barbarism', defined as the absence of style or the chaotic hodgepodge of all styles. His contention is that it is this hodgepodge in which the contemporary German dwells:

The German amasses around himself all the forms, colours, products, and curiosities of all ages and climes and thereby produces that modern carnival motley which his scholars then can explore and define as 'the modern as such' (*UM I*: 1)

The Germans have an imitative culture, rather than a genuinely productive one (as the French have, Nietzsche claims). They have copied the French but for the most part without any great skill: '...up to the present day there has never been an original German culture' (*UM I*: 1).¹⁵ For Nietzsche a culture will show that what is great in a people does not appear among them as a hermit or exile (*KSA 7*: 19 [37]). Its goal is not the greatest possible happiness of a people or the unhindered development of all its talents; rather, it should reveal itself in the correct proportion of these developments; its aim is the production of 'great works' and as such it points beyond mere worldly happiness. A 'mastering unity' needs to show itself among the drives (e.g. 'the Hellenic will'), and the attempt is made to construct a world from these drives: philosophy masters the knowledge drive, art controls ecstasy, and *agape* controls *eros* (*KSA 7*: 19 [41]). The Germans live, then, under the illusion that they have a genuine culture, and Nietzsche's attack is focused on the contentment that so-called cultivated Germans feel about their situation. This is a contentment that since the war has repeatedly broken out in 'arrogant jubilation'. It is only the rare few, including Nietzsche himself, who notice the incongruity between the triumphant faith and the defect such jubilation conceals. For those who prefer to opine with public opinion such an incongruity ought not to exist. Nietzsche asks after the 'species' (*Gattung*) of human being that has risen to power in Germany that they feel themselves able to forbid, or at least prevent, the expression of such a concern, and he gives them the name of 'cultivated philistines' (*Bildungsphilister*). As Michael Bell notes, in contrast to the English term 'philistine' derived from the poet, Oxford professor of (p. 239) poetry, and cultural critic Matthew Arnold (1822–88), which denotes a condition hostile to humane culture, Nietzsche's coinage 'culture philistine' denotes a decadent and banal spirit produced from within the circle of cultural knowledge (Bell 2007 : 133). Nietzsche himself points out that it is well known that the word 'philistine', drawn from the vocabulary of university students, signifies in its popular sense the opposite of the son of the muses, the artist, and genuinely educated or cultured person. The cultivated philistine, however, takes himself to be the son of the muses and a cultured person. There is thus within such a person a total failure of self-knowledge and he is encouraged in this by public institutions and institutes of schooling, art, and education.

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The cultivated philistine turns the genuine seekers of culture—those who created new vocabularies for art, literature, and music—into actual 'finders' and in the process reifies their creative quest, for example, by turning them into 'classical authors': 'We do indeed have a culture, they then claim, for after all, we have our "classical authors"; not only is the foundation there, but the entire edifice already stands erected upon it—we ourselves are this edifice' (*UM I: 2*). Nietzsche contends that there is only one authentic way of honouring the great artists of the past, which is to continue the search. What is wrong and misguided is:

Merely to attach to them the provocative appellation 'classical', by contrast, and to feel 'edified' from time to time by their works—that is, to abandon oneself to those jaded and egoistic sensations that awaits each paying visitor at our concert halls and theaters, and to dedicate statues and initiate festivals and societies in their names—all this is only a small payment with which the cultivated philistine settles accounts with the classical authors so that in all the rest he no longer needs them, and above all so that he need not follow them and seek further. For the watchword of the philistine is: 'We should seek no further.' (*UM I: 2*)

In the early part of the century, Nietzsche notes, such a watchword made a certain sense. This was a time of romanticism and revolution with so much confused seeking, hoping, experimenting, and destroying that the German middle class was perhaps justified in fearing for itself. It thus rejected the 'brew of fantastic and language-perverting philosophies, that fanatical purposive view of history (Hegelianism), that carnival of all gods and myths that the Romantics put together, as well as those poetic fashions and insanities born out of intoxication' (*UM I: 2*). What this led to, however, was a general suspicion of the act of searching as such and a stress on having found culture: 'The joys of philistinism unfolded before his eyes: he fled from all that wild experimentation into the idyllic', opposing to the unsettlingly creative drive a contentedness with his own narrowness and limited intelligence (*UM I: 2*). As a way of reaching a compromise agreement with the troublesome 'classical authors' and their demand to search in art and greatness, this species of human invent the concept of 'the age of epigones' as a way of securing some peace for themselves, 'and so that they would be prepared to pass the impugning verdict "the work of an epigone" upon everything that was disquietingly modern' (*UM I: 2*). They also take control, Nietzsche observes, of the discipline of history (*Geschichte*), transforming fields of study, such as philosophy and classical philology, from which disruptions of contentedness can be expected, into historical disciplines (*historische Disciplinen*). The *raison d'être* given to this process was that of saving culture from the spirit of fanaticism. The attempt is made to understand everything historically so as to 'numb' the spirit and bring it back from the excesses of culture and the fostering of intolerance. For Nietzsche this is mere pretence: '...what they really hated was domineering genius and the tyranny of true cultural demands...' (*UM I: 2*).

(p. 240)

The philistine expects no 'sublime masterworks' but rather only two things in art and culture: 'either imitation of reality to the point of apishly reproducing it in idylls or gently humoristic satires, or free imitations of the most recognized and famous works of the classical authors...' (*UM I: 3*) What the philistine values, then, is epigone-like imitation or iconic true portraiture of the present. From the latter he gains an exaltation that enhances his feeling of contentedness with the real, whilst the former is harmless and benefits his reputation as a classical judge of taste. Finally, Nietzsche notes, the philistine

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devises for his general taste, that is, his various likes and dislikes, a universally effective formula of 'healthiness' which serves to 'eliminate every disruptive troublemaker with the insinuation of being sick and eccentric' (*UM* I: 3). What gets Nietzsche's goat is the way in which Strauss, 'a true *satisfait* with the state of our culture and a typical philistine', approaches Schopenhauer's philosophy as unhealthy and unprofitable. Let me now turn to examining Nietzsche's early estimation of Schopenhauer in his (third) unfashionable observation on Schopenhauer as educator.

The Perfection of *Physis* and the Redemption of the Animal

For Nietzsche, Schopenhauer is the significant figure in modern philosophy after Kant because he sweeps away scholasticism and unlearns pure science. This is one 'limit' he transcends and that Nietzsche admires him for. The task is to employ his worldly wisdom for practical matters and thus fight for an improved *physis*. Schopenhauer has restored the antique conception of philosophy as the art of living.¹⁶ In part he has done this by setting up a picture of life as a whole; because he has this picture he was able to regulate the sciences for himself and avoid becoming enmeshed in abstract scholasticism. The challenge of every great philosophy, Nietzsche says, is to provide a picture of life from which one can learn the meaning of one's own existence. A process of learning is at work here for Nietzsche: firstly, the individual gains insight into its own limited nature (its empirical limitedness, governed as it is by wants and the misery involved in their satisfaction); secondly, insight into this misery encourages the sacrifice of the ego and submission to the noblest ends such as justice and compassion. We are able to distinguish between those things that genuinely promote human happiness or fulfilment and those that only appear to do this such as honours, riches, and even erudition (what the ancient Stoics called 'external goods'). None of these can lift us out of the deep depression we feel in the face of the worthless character of our individual, empirical existence. Our striving after things can only acquire a meaning once they are subjected to a larger transfiguring goal. We should acquire power so as to aid the evolution of *physis*; for a while we feel we are capable of correcting its follies and basic ineptness. Initially this process concerns the individual itself but eventually it is for the benefit for everyone.

(p. 241)

Although Nietzsche expresses his admiration for Schopenhauer there is no indication that in this early period he subscribes to his doctrine on the denial of the will to life. Schopenhauer purified himself of the opinions and valuations of his age, making himself unfashionable (*UM* III: 3). He can serve as a model (*Vorbild*) in spite of all his scars and flaws. The fact that the greatest human being can be dwarfed by his ideal does not serve to devalue it. Nietzsche astutely addresses the dangers of Schopenhauer's philosophizing, which consist in his pessimism and his disgust with becoming. What in fact interests Nietzsche about Schopenhauer is not his system or metaphysics but the man or the person. We profit from a philosopher insofar as they are able to provide an example, and this is proved by their visible life and not through their books. What distinguishes a genuine philosopher from a mere university professor is that the former attempts to live by his own philosophy. However, Nietzsche's conception of the task of the philosopher represents a departure from Schopenhauer: although Nietzsche follows Schopenhauer in construing the philosopher as a member of a trinity of genius, including the artist and the saint, the function assigned by him to such geniuses has a cultural and social dimension lacking in Schopenhauer (Breazeale 1998 : 9). Although the task is said to be one of

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'redeeming' nature this is not by raising self-knowledge to the point where the will to live is extinguished, but rather by holding up a picture of life as a whole, by giving us a new image of human being and by showing us 'possibilities of life'. The philosopher has a cultural role, even mission, to fulfil: he provides us with (a) an ideal image of existence itself and a new goal for humanity; (b) a table of values for judging the worth of specific forms of life and cultural ideals; (c) a critique of our age and cultural institutions in which the task is to be an unfashionable one (Breazeale 1998 : 10).

Nietzsche notes that the powerful promoter of life longs for release from his own exhausted age and for a culture (transfigured *physis*); but this longing can result in disaffection and disappointment, encouraging the philosopher to become the judge of life who condemns it as unworthy of our attachment. The Greek philosophers had life before them in 'sumptuous perfection'; the same cannot be said of us moderns, where our sensibility is caught between the desire for freedom, beauty, and greatness of life and the drive for truth that asks only, 'Of what value is existence (*das Dasein*) at all?' (UM III: 3) In short, our danger is pessimism. Schopenhauer lacked belief in the future since it would bring only the eternal return of the same. For him, then, 'eternal becoming is a deceitful puppet play over which human beings forget themselves' and for whom the 'heroism of truthfulness consists in one day ceasing to be its plaything' (UM III: 4). If everything that 'is' finds itself caught up in the process of becoming, and this becoming is 'empty, deceitful, flat', worthy only of our lofty contempt, then the riddle presented to the human being to solve can be solved only in being (UM III: 4).

Given that Nietzsche also aspires to be unfashionable, to not be a thinker of his time, and given that meaning and value are not to be located for him in a process of history or evolution, how will he avoid the temptation of being and Schopenhauer's solution to the problem of existence? We tend to conceive this in terms of Nietzsche expressing an affirmation of life, and such an affirmation is indeed signalled in UM III as something 'metaphysical'. This is used not in a pejorative sense by Nietzsche (rightly so, I would maintain), but indicates the fact that the affirmation which is 'profound' is 'of another, higher life' and at the cost of the 'destruction and violation of the laws of this life': only in this way can the affirmation be unfashionable (UM III: 4). (p. 242)

Nietzsche recognizes that it is necessary to show how the Schopenhauerean-inspired ideal of the philosopher—the ideal that encourages purification and liberation from the fashions and idols of one's time—can educate and a new set of duties be derived from it (UM III: 5). Failure to do this leaves us only with a vision that enraptures and intoxicates. The 'lofty goal' of the philosopher must be brought near to us so that will educate us and draw us upward (UM III: 5). The challenge is this: how can the loftiness and dignity of the Schopenhauerean human being transport us beyond ourselves but not, in so doing, take us outside a community of active people in which the coherence of duties and the stream of life would vanish? Nietzsche's answer is the 'fundamental thought of *culture* [*der Grundgedanke der Kultur*]'. The new duties cannot be those of the solitary individual and they must enable us to get beyond the hatred that is at the root of Schopenhauer's

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pessimism, including the hatred of individuality and its limitations (*UM* III: 5). Let me show how he argues for this idea.

Nietzsche develops his thought of culture in the context of a discussion of the ends of nature and culture which seeks to contest rival conceptions of them that predominate in the modern period. The fundamental task for Nietzsche is the perfection of nature. What unites individuals and can hold them together in a community is the idea of culture conceived as the transfiguration of *physis*. The perfection of nature through culture entails fostering the production of philosophers, artists, and saints ‘*within us and around us*’. These three types or modes of being constitute a ‘most sublime [*erhabensten*] order’ (*UM* III: 5). Why is this to perfect nature? The philosopher bestows upon nature the idea of a ‘metaphysical purpose’, whilst the artist enables nature to attain ‘self-enlightenment’ by presenting an image in which it can recognize itself and which in the normal course of things—what Nietzsche calls ‘the tumultuousness [*Unruhe*] of its own becoming’—it never has the opportunity to do (*UM* III: 5).

Nietzsche, then, is inviting us to value the rare and the unique, in which humanity works towards the production of great individual human beings as its most essential task (*UM* III: 6). We can reflect on species of animal and plant life and understand that what matters is the superior individual specimen—‘the more unusual, more powerful, more complex, more fruitful specimen [*Exemplar*]’ (*UM* III: 5).¹⁷ Evolution, then, is to be valued in terms of an aesthetic judgment understood as a superior kind of perception of nature and its products: ‘...the point at which it [evolution] reaches its limit and begins the transition to a higher species’ (*UM* III: 5). The goal is neither a large number of specimens and their well-being nor those specimens that are the last to evolve. Rather, it is ‘those scattered and random existences that arise here and there under favourable conditions’ (*UM* III: 5). Great human beings ‘redeem’ nature and evolution. Life, including an individual’s life, can obtain the highest value and deepest significance ‘by living for the benefit of the rarest and most valuable specimens, not for the benefit of the majority...’ (*UM* III: 5). The individual may be a ‘miscarried work of nature’, but it can also bear ‘testimony to the greatest and most amazing intentions of this artist’ (*UM* III: 5). When thinking about individuals and the role they play in the ‘circle of culture’, Nietzsche’s focus is on the longing for the ‘whole’ (*UM* (p. 243) III: 5). Our longing cannot simply be for our personal redemption but needs to turn outward in order to rediscover in the world the desire for culture which demands of us not only inner experiences, or even an assessment of the external world that surrounds us, but ‘ultimately and primarily action; that is, it demands he fight for culture and oppose those influences, habits, laws, and institutions in which he does not recognize his goal: the production of genius’ (*UM* III: 5).

Whilst there may be an ‘unconscious purposiveness’ at work in nature, the production of redeeming human beings cannot be left to chance and accident, to what Nietzsche at this time calls ‘the dark drive [*jenes ‘dunklen Drangs’*]’ but must be replaced with a ‘conscious intention’ (*UM* III: 5). This is on account of the fact that today we are ruled by a culture of power (Nietzsche refers to ‘the cultured state [*Kulturstaat*]’ that misuses and

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exploits culture for perverted ends. The public, civil, or social life of the present age amounts to nothing more than equilibrium of self-interests. It does well what it does, namely, answering the question of how to achieve a mediocre existence that lacks any power of love, and it does this simply through the prudence of the self-interests involved. The present is an age that hates art and hates religion: it wants neither the beyond nor the transfiguration of the world of art (*KSA* 7: 19 [69]). Science has become a source of nourishment for egoism and state and society have drafted it into their service in order to exploit it for their purposes. In order to promote a new seriousness in the face of these lamentable developments Nietzsche states the need for a fundamental alteration of the world through ‘images’ that will make us shudder. The object of attack is ‘the perversity of contemporary human nature’ and its subjection to misguided notions such as “‘progress,” “general education,” “nationalism,” “modern state,” “cultural struggle”” (*UM* III: 7).

Nietzsche comes up with a deeper explanation for this idea of a ‘metaphysical’ completion of nature, which centres on how we can think the human in its relation to the animal. On the one hand, the human feeds productively on the animal and its own animality (for example, animal vigour and the power of forgetting); on the other hand, it enjoys a supreme advantage over the animal in that it is able to understand its existence metaphysically. The animal by contrast is the site of ‘senseless suffering’ since it is subject to hunger and desires without having any insight into the nature of this mode of life:

To cling so blindly and madly to life, for no higher reward, far from knowing that one is punished or why one is punished in this way, but instead to thirst with the inanity of a horrible desire for precisely this punishment as though it were happiness—that is what it means to be an animal. (*UM* III: 5)

Although it is a speculative claim to make, we can say that the human animal represents, at least potentially, the salvation of animal existence in which life itself *appears* ‘in its metaphysical meaninglessness’ (*UM* III: 5). Of course, in actuality it is difficult to know where the animal ceases and where the human begins, and many human beings do not transcend, for whatever reason, an animal existence. The salvation of the animal is also the salvation of the human animal. Nietzsche readily acknowledges that for the greatest part of our lives most of us live the way of the animal, desiring with more awareness what the animal craves out of blind instinct (we call this a life of ‘happiness’). In a superior moment of perception or vision we witness the elevation of the human beyond the merely animal, when life rises itself up through the conquering and overcoming of need and makes ‘the leap of joy’ (*UM* III: 5). As he puts it in *UM* III:

(p. 244)

...there are moments *when we understand [begreifen] this*; then the clouds break and we perceive how we, along with all of nature, are pressing onward toward the human being as toward something that stands high above us. (*UM* III: 5)

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By contrast, in ordinary time and becoming, or what Nietzsche calls the 'tremendous mobility of human beings on the great earthly desert', which consists in the waging of wars, a ceaseless gathering and dispersing, an imitation of one another, as well as a mutual outwitting and trampling underfoot, we find only 'a continuation of animality', as if we were being cheated out of our metaphysical disposition and made to regress to the unconsciousness of pure animal instinct (*UM III*: 5).

It is a sublime vision of the human being, in the sense just outlined, that Nietzsche offers in contrast to other images of the human we find in modernity, such as the image that glorifies its descent into bestiality or the image that seeks to tell us that nothing more or other is operating in the human being than a robotic automatism (*UM III*: 4).

Nietzsche on History

A similar lesson on the sublime and the moment is provided by Nietzsche in the unfashionable observation on history entitled 'On the Utility and Liability of History for Life'. Unless history is given the grand treatment it will only create slaves, Nietzsche says, being nothing more than a fatal curiosity. Not every form of life or society that comes into existence can be considered worthy of existence, and yet the tendency of history is to make everything that does come into existence appear rational and purposive. History should speak of what is great and unique, of the exemplary model (KSA 7: 19 [10]). The current practice of history is part of our modern indiscriminate drive for knowledge and like all things that are unable or fail to discriminate, it is vulgar (19 [11]). In the realms of history and mathematics, Nietzsche notes, the most trivial matter is to count as more valuable than all the ideas of metaphysics taken together. The sole attachment, as that which determines value, is to the degree of certainty that can be acquired. Our attachment is to ever smaller objects of inquiry, focus, and value (19 [37]). In short, in this 'domesticated' form of history we become narrowly focused and lose sight of the sublime and the concern with higher vistas; so, here, we clearly see the key motif running through the different observations and that links them together.

As his plans show, Nietzsche had a clear idea of what he wished to demonstrate in the meditation (30 [1-2]). His starting point is to be a simple one: history (*Historie*) has its uses but it can also be detrimental. Nietzsche notes that it is possible for us to perish from any hypertrophied virtue (30 [2]). History can serve life in the three forms of the monumental, the antiquarian, and the critical. History is hostile to life when it has its source in a cult of inwardness, has a supposition of justice and claim to objectivity (for Nietzsche we only get the appearance of justice through the study of history), invites us to think of ourselves as mere latecomers (epigones), and places the meaning of individual existence within a world process. The remedies to the historical malady include the study of Plato (in which we find no history), and the powers of the ahistorical and the suprahistorical, including writing (p. 245) in 'praise of art' on account of its power to create atmospheres (29 [162]). The ahistorical (*unhistorischen*) refers to powers such as forgetfulness and illusion (*Wahn*). The suprahistorical (*überhistorischen*) refers to art and religion but also to nature, compassion (*Mitleid*), and philosophy (29 [194]). Art and religion are esteemed by Nietzsche as important instruments by which we can take possession of ourselves and organize the 'chaos' we are, so discovering what our genuine needs are. The aim is to do this in a way which does not make us fear cultivation or respond to the summons to become what are in a brooding manner: religion 'provides love for the human being', art the 'love for existence' (29 [192]).¹⁸

The power of forgetting, associated with the animal and named as part of the ahistorical, is what enables us to have confidence in our own being by limiting our horizon and without which we would be condemned to see everywhere in all things only a becoming (*Werden*), losing ourselves in the stream of becoming like pupils of Heraclitus (*UM II: 1*).

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This aspect of Nietzsche’s argument has been well understood and is often emphasized. However, his argument on the role of the suprahistorical is of equal importance: not only is there the animal grace of forgetting, there is also a superior perception and a superior power of memory capable of inspiring human action and the task of becoming what one is. In *UM III* Nietzsche notes that haste is universal in modern times with people seeking to flee from themselves in order to avoid the confrontation with voices and demons that wish to speak to them and make them still. We live in a state of ‘fear of memory [*Erinnerung*]’ (*UM III*: 5): ‘When we are quiet and alone we are afraid that something will be whispered into our ear, and hence we despise quiet and drug ourselves with sociability’ (*UM III*: 5).

In essence, the suprahistorical is the attitude which holds that the past and the present are one and the same, and this means that history teaches us nothing new but only gives us the appearance of difference (*KSA 7*: 30 [2]). It is this attitude we find expressed in Schopenhauer’s reflections on history.¹⁹ Nietzsche, however, draws a different lesson from the suprahistorical from the one taught by his educator. In the meditation Nietzsche refers to the suprahistorical in two sections, in the opening section and then again in the essay’s final section. The meaning he ascribes to it seems to change in the course of the essay. In section 1 it refers to a negating attitude to life that reflects a world-weariness and deep disgust; in section 10 it refers to ‘eternalizing powers’ that provide us with a point of stability and anchorage (*UM II*: 10). The key to understanding this shift in Nietzsche’s argument, whereby he is able to make productive use of the suprahistorical, consists in appreciating the difference between the ahistorical and the suprahistorical: the former has the character of grace, but the latter, if it is to be temporally effective (as Nietzsche desires), must be made to work as part of cultural training. Together the ahistorical and the suprahistorical enable us to divert our gaze from what is in the process of becoming and solely of empirical or natural value.

The history Nietzsche is keen to promote is that which requires the active human being and is written by the person with the richest experience:

Only from the highest power [Kraft] of the present can you interpret the past...

The voice of the past is always the voice of an oracle; only if you are seers into the future and familiar with the (p. 246) present will you be able to interpret the oracular voice of the past (*KSA 7*, 29 [96]; see also *UM II*: 6).

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What is the future Nietzsche has belief in? It is a belief in the idea of the (eternal) return of the *possibilities* of life.²⁰ In section two of the meditation Nietzsche refers to the belief of the Pythagoreans that when the constellation of the heavenly bodies repeats itself so must the same events, down to the smallest, on earth. Nietzsche is not taking this as true, it should be noted, and so no licence can be given to the attempt to construct monumental history in the manner of an icon-like veracity. This will only happen, he notes, when astronomers once again become astrologers. Until this day comes history of this type must have recourse to artistic powers. In fact, Nietzsche says that the historian of the monumental will not examine the causes of what comes into being but rather focus exclusively on 'effects', that is, events (think of what a popular festival or a military anniversary does). An examination of the historical connexion of causes and effects would only demonstrate that the dice game of chance and the future 'would never again produce something wholly identical to what it produced in the past' (*UM* II: 2).

It is the task of the monumental or exemplary to occupy itself with the search for greatness and for these 'possibilities' of life; here the task is to study the sublime as it were. The great moments in the struggle of the human individual constitute a chain and this chain can unite humanity across the millennia 'like a range of mountain peaks'. It thus gives expression to a certain faith in humanity, the faith in the best and the highest exemplars. This provides the human being with a unique kind of memory. In his notes for the meditation Nietzsche insists that these individuals do not form and are not part of a process; instead, 'they live conjointly and concurrently, thanks to history, which permits such a collaboration' (*KSA* 7: 29 [52]). If the goal of humankind is not to be located in its end stage, but only in the highest specimens, those 'dispersed throughout millennia, conjointly represent all the supreme powers that are buried in humanity' (*KSA* 7: 29 [52]). It is this elevated conception of humanity that brings the monumental into conflict with another fundamental faith that dominates most easily and is the most widespread, namely the apathetic habit, everything that is base and petty and that says 'no' to the claims of the monumental. Life cannot be so extravagant, superfluous; rather, life has to be justified at its basest and lowest points only (the need for comfort and security, the need for the satisfaction of our basic animality at the expense of everything else, etc.). It is this base attachment to life that the exceptional or extraordinary human being treats with Olympian laughter and sublime derision (*erhabenen Hohne*; *UM* II: 2); they even descend to their grave with an ironic smile because they know that there is in fact nothing of them left to bury other than the dross, refuse, vanity, and animality that had always weighed them down whilst alive. What lives on is the signature of their most authentic being, such as a work, an act, or a creation. Fame denotes not the (p. 247) tastiest morsel of our egoism, as Schopenhauer thought, but the belief in the solidarity and continuity of the greatness of the ages and a protest against the passing away of the generations and the ephemeral quality of existence.

In the observation on history Nietzsche introduces the idea of the sublime in the context of a treatment of the problem of the 'weak personality' which refers to a human being that has developed the habit of no longer taking real things seriously.²¹ What is real and existent makes only a slight impression on such a personality who becomes more and more negligent and indolent with respect to outward things. It is content so long as its memory is repeatedly stimulated anew, 'as long as new things worthy of knowing, which

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can be neatly placed in the pigeonholes of that memory, keep streaming in' (*UM II: 5*). The human being becomes a strolling spectator of life living in the midst of a cosmopolitan carnival of gods, arts, and customs. Great wars and revolutions can hardly detain such a human for more than a fleeting moment. Moreover, war seems to only exist for the sake of history and the journalism that consumes it. We want only more history and never real events. Nietzsche expresses it morally (*moralisch*): we are no longer capable of *holding onto the sublime* (*das Erhabene festzuhalten*) because our deeds are merely sudden claps (*Schläge*) of thunder and not *rolling* thunder. What is the point he is making in this lesson on the sublime?

I think it is the following: when we allow our deeds to become concealed or cloaked with the canopy of history we are unable to see ourselves as we should—with distance, delay, and echo and resonance—and art takes flight. We do not comprehend ourselves in our originality which can only take the form of the prolonged awe associated with the sublime conceived as the domain of the incomprehensible.²² Nietzsche argues that whilst it is perfectly rational to assume we can comprehend and calculate in a moment (*Augenblick*), this is in fact short-sighted since under such conditions we in fact fail to see and hear many things. The rational person:

...fails to see some things that even a child sees; he fails to hear some things that even a child hears. And it is precisely these things that are important. Because he does not understand this, his understanding is more childish than a child, simpler than simple-mindedness—in spite of the many clever wrinkles in his parchment-like features and the virtuosity of his fingers when it comes to untangling what is entangled. (*UM II: 5*)

Nietzsche appeals to the 'incomprehensible' not only in order to indicate that something ineffable is at play, but also as a way of showing that the self we need to disclose to ourselves is quite different from the ordinary, habitual comprehension of ourselves produced for us by a false historical cultivation. Under modern conditions of cultivation and 'bourgeois universality' the individual sees itself not as an agent but as an actor:²³ (p. 248)

The individual...can no longer believe in himself; he sinks into himself, into his interior, which in this case means into nothing but the cumulative jumble of acquired knowledge that has no outward effect, of learning that fails to become life. If we take a look at the exterior, we notice how the expulsion of the instincts by means of history has nearly transformed human beings into mere abstractions and shadows: no one runs the risk of baring his own person, but instead disguises himself behind the mask of the cultivated man, the scholar, the poet, the politician. (*UM II: 5*)

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What would it mean to comprehend ourselves? For Nietzsche this takes place in a special kind of moment. The moment is, for him, the site of a contestation by the different forces or powers of life (base and noble, inferior and superior).²⁴ In *UM III*, for example, Nietzsche draws our attention to the haste and 'breathless seizing of the moment' (*Augenblick*) that characterizes the modern (the fashionable), namely, 'the rat race and chasing that now cuts furrows into people's faces and places its tattoo, as it were, upon everything they do' (*UM III*: 6). We moderns are becoming the 'tortured slaves' of three M's: moment [*Moment*], majority opinion, and modishness (*UM III*: 6). In *UM IV* Nietzsche says that we are 'mindlessly contemporary', 'spurred onward by the whip of the moment [*Augenblick*]!' (*UM IV*: 5) The other moment Nietzsche appeals to is the one where we hear something unfashionable about ourselves and communicate with ourselves in an untimely fashion. It is the moment where we seek to discover our genuine needs and give expression to a superior want, will, or desire. This is echoed in *Zarathustra*: 'If you believed in life more, you would throw yourselves away less on the moment' (*Z I*: 'On the Preachers of Death'). At present we are in the grip of a spurious cultivation in which the moment is caught up in a predatory striving, an insatiable acquisition, and a selfish and shameless enjoyment (*UM III*: 6). One kind of moment is overestimated whilst another kind is concealed from us.

Conclusion

In this essay I have attempted to demonstrate that the notion of the sublime is crucial for a full appreciation of Nietzsche's early project and as especially evident in the unfashionable observations. What happens in his thinking on the sublime after this point is another story. In addition to its essential sense of 'greatness', the sublime has other different senses and sometimes the later Nietzsche is a critic of our attachment to the sublime—for example, as a longing for transcendence and the otherworldly infinite or as an irrational desire for the overwhelming and the so-called profound (which in his late writings he locates in the music of Wagner)²⁵—and at other times he can be an advocate of it and readily employ the different (p. 249) German words for it.²⁶ The different contexts in which Nietzsche criticizes and employs the sublime have to be examined carefully in each case. Still, it cannot be doubted that Nietzsche continues to be preoccupied throughout his intellectual life with the question of greatness. Moreover, for the late Nietzsche philosophy is 'spiritual perception' (or vision) (*BGE* 252), that is, 'the power [*Macht*] of philosophical vision [*Blick*]' that is able to judge in all the most important matters and does not hide under the mask of 'objectivity' (*TI*: 'Skirmishes of an Untimely Man' 3). In *BGE* Nietzsche is concerned with how the enhancement or elevation of the human animal can best be secured, and he defines the philosopher as the one 'who is constantly experiencing, seeing, hearing, suspecting, hoping, dreaming extraordinary things' (*BGE* 292). Nietzsche also continues to be concerned with offering what he calls 'ecstasies of learning' in his later writing, and his thinking abounds with new images and new concepts designed to shock, disturb, and provoke us in our thinking, away from the habitual, the customary, and the conventional. One example is his conception of 'the Roman Caesar with the soul of Christ' (*KSA* 11: 27 [60]; *WP* 983), which, one might suggest, operates in the element of the incomprehensible—difficult to recognize—he is after with the sublime. The task is not only to elevate the human being but to do so in way that genuinely stretches human comprehension. This is why Nietzsche insists that thinking should not aim at a picturesque effect and 'beautiful feelings' cannot constitute an argument (*A* 12).²⁷

So far as the early Nietzsche is concerned I think it is clear that he is working with a distinction between the merely empirical and the elevated supra-empirical, and as a thinker of the sublime this makes sense since the aim is to elevate us to superior vistas and to our higher, nobler self. I don't think this means we have to map onto Nietzsche Kant's problematic distinction between the sensibly conditioned self and the free and moral supersensible person since the conceptions of sublime 'morality' at work in the two cases are quite different, with Nietzsche, in contrast to Kant, advocating, and against the claims of moral conformism, what he calls 'immoral Epicureanism' (that is, a concern with one's noble self beyond the intrusions of the herd and moralistic humanity). I concur with James Conant who argues, contra the reading of Nietzsche as an aestheticist, that Nietzsche is seeking to transform our understanding of the categories 'aesthetic' and 'ethical', including our conception of them as resting upon distinct and mutually

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independent kinds of valuation (Conant 2000 : 221-2). Indeed, we have seen that Nietzsche holds the category of greatness or the sublime to be an amorphous one, being partly aesthetic and partly moral.

Finally, the question arises: to what extent can this noble or aristocratic conception of philosophy inspire us today? It lies beyond the scope of this essay to address this issue but it can be noted that it does have a presence in contemporary philosophy. Deleuze and Guattari, for example, argue that the specific task of philosophy, as distinct from art and from science, is to *create* concepts and to concern itself not with truth, but with the singular, the remarkable, the extraordinary, and also that it is not populist writers who lay claim to this future of a new people and new earth but the most aristocratic ones (Deleuze and Guattari 1994 : 108). And the work of Jean-Francois Lyotard on the sublime has, I believe, many resonances with (p. 250) Nietzsche's valuation of it. For Lyotard the sublime is part of an avant-garde committed to its destabilizing power, its non-conformism, and with showing us the power and shock of the event (that there is something new or unrepresentable) (Lyotard 1991).

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BT The Birth of Tragedy, trans. Ronald Speirs. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999.

EH Ecce Homo, trans. Duncan Large. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007.

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Notes:

(1) This essay is a thoroughly revised and modified version of an essay first published as "'Holding on to the Sublime": Nietzsche on Philosophy's Perception and Search for Greatness', in Herman Siemens and Vasti Roodt (eds), *Nietzsche, Power, and Politics* (Berlin and New York: Walter de Gruyter, 2008), 767–99. I am grateful to Christine Battersby and John Richardson for their helpful comments on earlier drafts of this essay and that have helped me to improve it.

(2) For treatments of the sublime in *BT* see Battersby 2007 , Nabais 2006 , and Ramplsey 2000 .

(3) Gray 1995 : 410; see also Breazeale 1997 : xxv.

(4) See letters to Georg Brandes dated 19 February and 10 April 1888 in Brandes 2002 : 107–9 and 119–20 (cited in Breazeale 1997 : xxvii). In the letter of 10 April 1888 Nietzsche writes: 'What you say about *Schopenhauer as Educator* gives me great pleasure. This little work serves me as a touchstone; he to whom it says nothing *personal*

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has probably nothing to do with me either. In reality it contains the whole plan according to which I have hitherto lived; it is a rigorous *promise*' (120).

(5) The first use in Nietzsche of the adjective '*unzeitgemass*' occurs in a letter to Erwin Rohde of 17 August 1869 and is specifically applied to Wagner. Wagner is said to stand above everything 'ephemeral'; he is 'unfashionable in the most beautiful sense of that word'.

(6) See Breazeale 1997 : lxxv-lxxvi.

(7) For insight into the history of 'The Philosophers' Book' see Breazeale 1979 : xviii-xxiii.

(8) In *BT* Nietzsche works with a 'tragic sublime, in which nauseous thoughts about the dreadful and absurd character of existence, as human beings encounter it, are transformed into mental images with which it is possible to live, and in which the sublime represents the artistic taming of the dreadful and the ridiculous or the comic the artistic discharge of the dreadful.

(9) We typically construe Nietzsche as a philosopher of the tragic. Indeed, in *EH* Nietzsche says of himself that he is the *first* tragic philosopher (*EH*: 'The Birth of Tragedy' 3). However, in *EH* Nietzsche also reveals that 'The art of *grand* rhythm, the *grand style* of phrasing, as the expression of a tremendous rise and fall of sublime (*sublimier*), of superhuman (*Übermenschlicher*) passion, was first discovered by me...' (*EH* 'Why I Write Such Good Books' 4)

(10) Nietzsche, of course, also employs the sublime in the fourth untimely on Wagner in Bayreuth, but an analysis of this deployment lies beyond the scope of the present essay. See *UM* IV: 2, 3, 4, 7, and 9.

(11) In *Philosophy in the Tragic Age of the Greeks* Nietzsche interprets Heraclitus as having an 'intuition' (*Intuition*) leading to two negations: first, a denial of the duality of two diverse worlds such as the physical and the metaphysical, one a realm of definite individuated qualities, the other a world of the indefinite that cannot as such be defined; second there is an even more bold negation, which is to deny 'being' (*Sein*) altogether. For Nietzsche, Heraclitus is a regal thinker who has the extraordinary power to think intuitively and who is hostile to reason or thinking in terms of concepts and logical combinations (Nietzsche notes that Aristotle accused him of sinning against the law of contradiction). Nevertheless, he defends Heraclitus' intuitive mode of thinking which embraces two things: one, the multicoloured changing world that crowds in upon us in all our experiences, and, two, the conditions that make our experience of the world possible (Heraclitus is a Kantian!). The fundamental conditions are time and space, including the pure, empty form of time: 'For they may be perceived intuitively, even without a definite content, independent of all experience, purely in themselves'. See *PTG* 5.

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(12) Compare Aristotle, *Ethics*, book 6, vii: 'The wise men, then, must not only know all that follows from first principles, but must also have a true understanding of those principles'. Nietzsche repeats this lesson on taste in *HAH II*: 170 where he argues that taste makes one not only 'blessed' but also 'wise': 'which is why the Greeks, who were very subtle in such things, designated the wise man with a word that signifies the *man of taste*, and called wisdom, artistic and practical as well as theoretical and intellectual, simply "taste" (*Sophia*)'. See also *Z II*: 'On Those Who Are Sublime': '...all of life is a dispute over taste and tasting'.

(13) Two important sources for Nietzsche's appreciation of 'greatness' are Schopenhauer (*The World as Will and Representation*, 1966, volume II, chapter 31) and Burckhardt's *Reflections on World History* (translated into English as *Force and Freedom* (New York: Meridian Books, 1955), 269-70.)

(14) The composite concept *Neuzeit* was first used by the German poet Ferdinand Freiligrath (1810-76) in 1870, that is, around the time Nietzsche produces his reflections on history in the second untimely meditation, which commence in fact with *BT*. It can denote the 'modern' or the contemporary *Zeit* in the sense 'of today', and it can also assert a qualitative claim, such as being new, even better, than what has gone before, so attributing to the new an epochal character. Nietzsche has registered these meanings and is taking to task the pretensions of the modern to be something new, better, and epochal. For further insight into the concept of *Neuzeit* see Koselleck 1985 : chapter 13 .

(15) Nietzsche offers a number of definitions of culture in his early writings, including: 'Culture [*Cultur*] as a new and improved *physis*, without inner and outer, without dissimulation [*Verstellung*] and convention, culture as a unanimity of life, thought, appearance [*Schein*], and will' (*UM II*: 10); 'The culture of a people...defined as unity of artistic style in all the expressions of the life of a people...a people to whom one attributes a culture has to be in all reality a single living unity and not fall wretchedly apart into inner and outer, content and form' (*UM II*: 4); 'A single temperament and key composed of many originally hostile forces that now make it possible to play a melody' (*KSA 7*: 29 [205]); and, finally, as 'The aesthetic concept of greatness and sublimity: the task is to educate people to this concept. Culture depends upon the way in which one defines what is "great"' (*PT* 156).

(16) This may be more evident if one focuses on *Parerga and Paralipomena* rather than *The World as Will and Representation*.

(17) James Conant has argued against translating *Exemplar* as 'specimen' and seeks to show that Nietzsche's argument is, in fact, about the nature of exemplarity and what it means for Nietzsche to be an exemplar. However, it is quite clear that 'specimen' is correct when one looks at the whole context of Nietzsche's treatment which is centred on a consideration of the evolution of species and on how we might plausibly construe the *significance* of evolution. See Conant 2000 : 191-2.

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(18) This should not be taken to mean Nietzsche does not entertain suspicions about art and religion at this time. In one sketch he notes that they stem from the desire to leap ‘beyond this world by condemning it wholesale’ and want only ‘the peace of the One’ (KSA 7: 29 [224]).

(19) See Schopenhauer 1966 : vol. II, 439–47.

(20) This phrase ‘possibilities of life’ is used by Nietzsche with references to the modes of being introduced by the earliest Greek philosophers, such as Heraclitus and Empedocles. These ‘possibilities of life’ are not just of any kind. We encounter a rare and impressive resourcefulness, a daring that is both desperate and hopeful, and witness life pushing itself further and further upwards and more encompassing, as if the thinker possessed the spirit of one of the globe’s great circumnavigators. This is what the great thinker is for Nietzsche, a circumnavigator of ‘life’s most remote and dangerous regions’, KSA 8: 6 [48]. See also the posthumously published text of 1873, *PTG*, and *HAH* I: 261.

(21) Nietzsche borrows the notion of ‘weak personality’ from the Austrian dramatist and critic Franz Grillparzer (1791–1872) (see KSA 7: 29 [68]). He continues to deal with it in his late writings; see, for example, *GS* 365 and KSA 12: 10 [59] and 10 [145] (*WP* 886, *WP* 1009).

(22) See also KSA 8: 6[48]: ‘I never tire of placing before my mind a series of thinkers in which each individual has within himself that incomprehensibility [*Unbegreiflichkeit*] which forces us to wonder just how he discovered this possibility of life’.

(23) The problem of the actor continues to occupy Nietzsche in his later writings. See, for example, from 1887, *GS* 36, 99, 356, 361, 368, *TI*: ‘Maxims and Barbs’ 38, *CW* 8, and *WP* 1009. See also *Z* I: ‘On the Flies of the Market-Place’: ‘Little do the people comprehend what is great, which is: the creative. But they do have a sense for all showmen and play-actors of great matters’.

(24) See KSA 7: 19 [196]: ‘We should learn in the same way that the Greeks learned from their past and their neighbours—for *life*, that is, being highly selective and immediately using all that has been learned as a pole on which one can vault high—and higher than all one’s neighbours. Thus, not in a scholarly way! Anything not fit for life is not true history. To be sure it depends on how high or how base you take this *life* to be...’

(25) See *CW* Postscript and 6.

(26) Some important references to the sublime in the later Nietzsche include: *HAH* I: 130, 217; *D* 33, 45, 130, 169, 192, 210, 423, 427, 435, 449, 459, 461, 542, 553, 570; *GS* 290, 313; *BGE* 62, 229, 230; *GM* Preface 5, I: 8, 13, II: 24, III: 14, 21; *CW* 6.

(27) See *EH*: ‘Why I Am So Clever’ 10: ‘Beware of all picturesque people!’

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