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Jeffrey Church

Nietzsche's

*Unfashionable  
Observations*

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# **Nietzsche's *Unfashionable Observations***

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**A Critical Introduction  
and Guide**

**Jeffrey Church**

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# Chronology

- 1844      Nietzsche is born on 15 October in the small village of Röcken in the Prussian province of Saxony, the son and grandson of Protestant clergymen.
- 1849      Nietzsche's father dies.
- 1858–64    He attends the Gymnasium Schulpforta, one of the most famous boarding schools in Germany.
- 1864      Begins study at the University of Bonn in theology and classical philology.
- 1865      Transfers to Leipzig University, following his philology professor F. W. Ritschl. He first reads Schopenhauer's *The World as Will and Representation*.
- 1866      First reads Lange's *History of Materialism*.
- 1868      Meets Richard Wagner for the first time.
- 1869      With the support of Ritschl, Nietzsche appointed Extraordinary Professor of Classical Philology at the University of Basel without yet earning his doctorate. Begins frequent visits to the Wagners at Tribschen, on Lake Lucerne.
- 1870      Volunteers as a medical orderly in the Franco-Prussian War, but contracts severe illnesses and returns to Basel within two months.
- 1872      Publishes his first book, *The Birth of Tragedy Out of the Spirit of Music*, which is sharply criticised by other philologists.

- 1873–74 Publishes the first three *Unfashionable Observations*, which mark Nietzsche's increased movement away from his philological training. Relationship with Wagner begins to sour.
- 1876 Publication of the final *Observation*, 'Richard Wagner in Bayreuth', timed to coincide with the Bayreuth Festival. Nietzsche attends the Festival and is disgusted by it.
- 1878 Volume 1 of *Human, All Too Human* appears, beginning what scholars consider to be Nietzsche's middle period, influenced by Voltaire. Friendship with Wagner ends.
- 1879 Publishes volume 2, part 1 of *Human, All Too Human: Assorted Opinions and Maxims*. Health problems force Nietzsche to resign from Basel (with a pension), and he spends the next ten years in Swiss and Italian boarding houses.
- 1880 Volume 2, part 2 of *Human, All Too Human: The Wanderer and his Shadow* appears.
- 1881 Publication of *Dawn: Thoughts on the Presumptions of Morality*.
- 1882 Publishes *The Gay Science*, books 1–4. In April travels to Rome, meets Lou Salomé, and proposes marriage to her. She declines and the relationship ends badly.
- 1883 Writes and publishes the first and second parts of *Thus Spoke Zarathustra: A Book for All and None*. Wagner dies.
- 1884 Completion of third part of *Zarathustra*. Breaks with his sister Elizabeth over her fiancé's anti-Semitism.
- 1885 Final part of *Zarathustra* circulated privately.
- 1886 Publishes *Beyond Good and Evil: Prelude to a Philosophy of the Future*. New publisher reissues *Birth of Tragedy* and *Human, All Too Human*, with new prefaces by Nietzsche.
- 1887 Publishes *On the Genealogy of Morality: A Polemic*. Also reissues *Daybreak* and publishes expanded edition of *The Gay Science*.



- 1888 Publishes *The Case of Wagner* and writes his final four short books: *Twilight of the Idols*, *The Antichrist*, *Ecce Homo* and *Nietzsche contra Wagner*.
- 1889 Suffers a physical and mental collapse in Turin and never recovers. After being briefly institutionalised, he spends the remaining years of his life in his mother's and sister's care.
- 1894 Elizabeth founds the Nietzsche Archive, which is eventually moved to Weimar.
- 1900 Dies on 25 August in Weimar.

# Abbreviations

Kant

- CJ            *Critique of Judgment*, Kant 2000  
I             ‘Idea for a Universal History with a Cosmopolitan Aim’, in Kant 2007  
WIE          ‘What is Enlightenment?’, in Kant 1996

Nietzsche

- BGE          *Beyond Good and Evil*, Nietzsche 2002  
BT           *The Birth of Tragedy*, Nietzsche 1999a  
EH           *Ecce Homo*, in Nietzsche 2005  
GM           *On the Genealogy of Morality*, Nietzsche 1994  
HAH2        Unpublished fragments from *Human All Too Human II*,  
                 in Nietzsche 2013  
KGB          *Sämtliche Briefe*, Nietzsche 1986  
KSA          *Kritische Studienausgabe*, Nietzsche 1999b  
PPP          *The Pre-Platonic Philosophers*, Nietzsche 2001a  
TL           ‘On Truth and Lies in an Extra-Moral Sense’, in  
                 Nietzsche 2009  
UW           *Unpublished Writings from the Period of Unfashionable  
                 Observations*, Nietzsche 1995b  
WC           ‘We Classicists’, in Nietzsche 1990  
WEN         *Writings from the Early Notebooks*, Nietzsche 2009

# Introduction

*Unfashionable Observations* was Nietzsche's second published work of philosophy, written in four 'pieces' [*Stücke*] between 1873 and 1876 as he was struggling as a university professor and as a friend to Richard Wagner. Scholars classify it as an early period work, coming after his first book, *The Birth of Tragedy*, and just before the beginning of his middle period with *Human, All Too Human*. As a work of Nietzsche's youth, it is one of his most under-studied books.<sup>1</sup> The essay 'On the Utility and Liability of History for Life' has received a great deal of scholarly attention, but the other essays that comprise the book have been widely neglected. Most importantly, readers have tended not to treat the book as a unified whole, neither identifying the overall argument nor detailing how the different parts execute that argument.<sup>2</sup> This Guide aims to rectify this neglect by discerning the unifying structure of the *Observations* and by offering a section-by-section commentary on each essay.

The *Observations*' overall argument is that modern life is dehumanising, and that we must create a new form of culture that will foster the best or most exemplary life for human beings. The argument is reflected in the book's structure, the two halves of which mirror one another. In the first, critical half of the book, Nietzsche decries the dehumanised individual in his first essay on David Strauss, and then the corrupting modern culture in the

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<sup>1</sup> I discuss much of the literature on the particular essays below. The most important work on the *Observations* is Zuckert 1976, to which this book is heavily indebted.

<sup>2</sup> For an important exception, see Brooks 2018. In his 'Translator's Afterword', Gray enumerates several common themes that tie the essays together (1995: 410–11).

second essay on history. In the second, positive half, Nietzsche sketches a plan for a healthy, productive modern culture in his third essay on Schopenhauer, and presents an exemplary individual in his fourth essay on Wagner.<sup>3</sup> Or, more straightforwardly, the book moves from the dehumanised individual to the corrupt culture that gave rise to him. It then shifts to a healthy culture and then finally to an exemplary individual who could be the fruit of that community.

This early work is significant for two reasons. First, it is an important work for understanding Nietzsche's development. It introduces two positive ideals that would animate his philosophical project for the rest of his career: the exemplary individual and culture. In his major mature works, Nietzsche celebrates a variety of higher individuals: the *Übermensch* (*Thus Spoke Zarathustra*), the philosopher of the future (*Beyond Good and Evil*) and the sovereign individual (*The Genealogy of Morality*).<sup>4</sup> In many ways, these exemplars of humanity represent the ultimate aim of his philosophy. Accordingly, attending to their first appearance in his corpus can shed light on Nietzsche's view of human excellence. Throughout his career, Nietzsche also examines the cultural preconditions for the emergence of genius. Although he famously lauds Apollinian and Dionysian Greek culture and castigates modern culture in *The Birth of Tragedy*, the *Observations* develops a theory of culture and extends his cultural critique of modernity to its economic and political conditions. The critique of the scholar and the state in this work, for instance, remain important in Nietzsche's late reflections on the preconditions for the higher human being.

The *Observations* is significant for a second reason: it is itself an important, under-appreciated work of philosophy, particularly in its ethics. Nietzsche's ethics of the *Übermensch* is often regarded as a philosophical embarrassment.<sup>5</sup> It is regarded in this way because

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<sup>3</sup> See Nietzsche's own gloss on the structure of the book in *Ecce Homo* – he groups the first two *Observations* as critical, while the latter two 'point to a higher concept of culture, to reestablish the concept of "culture"' (EH 'Why I Write', 'The Untimely Ones', 1).

<sup>4</sup> There is an ongoing scholarly debate about whether the sovereign individual is in fact a Nietzschean ideal. See, for instance, Janaway 2006; Leiter 2010; Acampora 2006.

<sup>5</sup> See Detwiler on its 'odious' character (1990: 5).

many readers understand it to be a form of social Darwinism. Yet the *Observations* offers a considerably more sophisticated account of the nature and justification of the exemplary human being. For Nietzsche, following Schopenhauer, natural existence is irrational and valueless. Unlike Schopenhauer and like Kant, however, Nietzsche argues that we can confer value on our existence by realising our distinctively human freedom. Unlike Kant, Nietzsche holds that the achievement of freedom comes not at the end of history, but in the peaks of human excellence. This excellence is spiritual in nature and so takes cultural form in art, religion and philosophy. Culture shapes the life of a community, giving it a meaning and purpose it otherwise lacks.

This work, then, reveals Nietzsche at his most idealistic, in contrast to the naturalism often attributed to him in the works of his later period.<sup>6</sup> Idealism and naturalism are complicated and contested terms in the history of philosophy, and especially so in the context of Nietzsche scholarship. By *naturalism*, Nietzsche scholars generally mean the position or belief that our biology does and should determine and guide our lives. By *idealism*, I mean to invoke the philosophical tradition inspired by Kant and followed by Schopenhauer and Lange, among others. Again, in broad strokes, this view holds that our self-determined ideals and identities should determine and guide our lives.<sup>7</sup> The *Observations* also highlights Nietzsche's fundamental commitment to freedom. In this early work, natural inequalities do not determine our fate and our moral status; rather, Nietzsche insists that we are able to shape our life in our own image.<sup>8</sup> This work uncovers the basic communal nature of his ethics: individuals do not gain value by themselves, at the expense of others, but only in concert with others for the benefit of all.<sup>9</sup> All these philosophical claims are to my mind quite compelling. They reveal that Nietzsche had a deeper and more complicated relationship with his philosophical

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<sup>6</sup> On Nietzsche's mature period naturalism, see Emden 2014; Leiter 2013.

<sup>7</sup> See recent work on Nietzsche's early idealism: Havas 2000; Church 2016.

<sup>8</sup> A good deal of recent work on Nietzsche's view of freedom has been published. See, for instance, the essays collected in Gemes and May 2009.

<sup>9</sup> See recent work on Nietzsche's valuing of community, for instance Young 2006; 2014.

predecessors than previously considered. As such, they portray a Nietzsche unfamiliar to many readers, casual and scholarly alike.

The aim of this book, then, is to reconstruct the overall argument of *Unfashionable Observations*. To do so, I will discuss in the remainder of this Introduction the genesis and composition of this work in the context of Nietzsche's life. In the first chapter, I will then situate the overall argument of the work in the debates of late modern philosophy, in particular comparing and contrasting Nietzsche with Kant and Schopenhauer. Chapters 2–5 then present Nietzsche's argument through an introductory section that discusses the argument as a whole, a structural overview, and then a section-by-section commentary on the essays. Chapter 6 concludes with a brief discussion of Nietzsche's own mature views of this early work.

This book is intended as a guide for students reading the *Observations*. It is most profitably read all the way through, alongside Nietzsche's text, since later essays refer back to claims in earlier essays. However, readers interested in only one essay, or even a few paragraphs of one essay, may benefit from consulting my running commentary on these portions of the text. This book also aims to contribute to Nietzsche scholarship, both on the *Observations* – in my interpretation of the whole and its parts – and on Nietzsche's early practical philosophy.

## Chronology of life and work

In April 1873, when Nietzsche began work on the *Observations*, he was still lecturing at the University of Basel as a professor of philology. He maintained a close relationship with Cosima and Richard Wagner, and still saw Wagner as the last living hope for the renewal of German culture. In the previous few years he had written a number of works that departed strikingly from his philological training, works that dealt with grand philosophical and cultural themes. He had published *The Birth of Tragedy* (January 1872), held a popular lecture series *On the Future of Our Educational Institutions* (January–March 1872) and composed an unpublished essay on *Philosophy in the Tragic Age of the Greeks* (April 1873). After the classicist Ulrich von Wilamowitz-Möllendorf published his scathing review

of *The Birth of Tragedy* in 1873 – and Wagner and Nietzsche’s friend Erwin Rohde launched counter-attacks – Nietzsche delved further into philosophy and culture, penning a series of notes on the nature and significance of the philosopher (sometimes referred to as Nietzsche’s *Philosophenbuch*).

What motivated him to write the *Observations* in particular? Nietzsche himself offers an answer in an unpublished note from 1875, which was intended to contribute to an envisioned introduction to a collected edition of all the ‘Unfashionables’ [*Unzeitgemässen*]. The ‘genesis’ [*Entstehung*] of the work was due to three causes: first, his ‘desperation’ at seeing Wagner’s project in Bayreuth decline into debt in 1873, after the auspicious cultural event a year before at the groundbreaking ceremony for Wagner’s opera house (KSA 8.5[98]). In the first appearances of the *Observations* in Nietzsche’s notebooks, he originally entitled the book ‘Bayreuth Horizon Observations’ (KSA 7.19[303]), in an effort to provide philosophical support for the endeavour.

Second, Nietzsche ‘discovered’ in his own ‘deep reflections’ the ‘most fundamental problem of all culture’ (KSA 8.5[98]). His lectures on educational institutions and his *Philosophenbuch* were concerned deeply with the decline of culture in modernity, and how to arrest or reverse this trend. In 1872 Nietzsche even went so far as to compose a memo ‘to submit as a question to the Reichsrat’, purporting to demonstrate that it had ‘missed a gigantic opportunity of founding an authentic German educational establishment for the regeneration of ... “culture”’ (Hayman 1980: 152). The *Observations*, then, is devoted to identifying this fundamental problem of culture – as well as a distinctive solution to it – which we will explore in the next chapter.

Finally, Nietzsche traced the triggering cause of the work to a conversation with Wagner in April 1873, in which Wagner complained to him about David Strauss’s recently published book, *The Old Faith and the New*. Nietzsche read Strauss’s book, and he began work immediately on his first *Observation*, which was a vicious critique of the work. He completed it on 25 June 1873, a mere two months after his conversation with Wagner, despite being nearly blind for several weeks because of treatment with ‘atropine (deadly nightshade)’ (Hayman 1980: 162).

The four essays composing the *Observations* were published separately as free-standing essays from 1873 to 1876. As a result, scholars have tended to treat the essays separately, that is, as stand-alone works. From the very inception of the project, however, Nietzsche conceived of the essays not as free-standing, but as parts of a unified whole. Each essay was published as part of a whole work that Nietzsche entitled *Unfashionable Observations*. Although, as we will see, he sketched many different plans for the series, the *Observations* were unified by their respective treatments of the thematic concerns discussed above: the notion of the exemplar and the political and cultural preconditions for its genesis. One of the main aims of this Guide is to counter the tendency of the scholarship and to disclose the overall argument that animates and structures the work's different parts. By understanding the *Observations* as a whole book, we can profitably compare its overall argument to that of *The Birth of Tragedy* before it, and the 'Free Spirit Trilogy' (*Human, All Too Human*, *Daybreak* and *The Gay Science*) that follows it.

The book's title in German is *Unzeitgemässe Betrachtungen*, which is difficult to translate into English, and has led to a wide variety of translations. *Unzeitgemäss* means literally *not [un] in accordance [gemäß] with the times [zeit]*. This could mean 'old-fashioned' or 'unmodern', as one translation has it. As we will see, however, Nietzsche does not aim to turn back the clock to pre-modern culture, but rather to improve the corrupt conditions of modern culture for a better future. The term has been most commonly translated as 'untimely', which renders the German with a literal English analogue. Yet the English word presupposes that there is an appropriate time that Nietzsche has failed to find. A more positive term – though less literal – is 'unfashionable', which is preferred in the Stanford University Press translation that I cite throughout this book. This translation captures Nietzsche's insistence throughout the work that he fights against the superficial fashions of the times in an effort to improve culture.<sup>10</sup> However, even this translation misses some of the subtlety in the German. Most importantly, *gemäß* is related to *Mass* in German, which refers to a standard or measure for evaluation.

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<sup>10</sup> See Schaberg (1995: 31n) and Arrowsmith (1990: xi) for more support on this point.



The title, then, announces this dual project of the book: Nietzsche develops a standard (*Mass*) from within and against the age, but also aspires for that standard to be timeless (*unzeit*).

The word *Betrachtung* means an ‘observation’ or an ‘examination’ – that is, a concrete activity of regarding or looking closely at something. However, the word also can mean a (metaphorical) ‘reconsideration’ or ‘reflection’ or ‘meditation’, in the sense that we observe or examine the contents of our own minds. A popular translation has been ‘meditation’, which connects Nietzsche’s work to that of Descartes, but, as several commentators have remarked, there is little evidence that Nietzsche intended this connection.<sup>11</sup> More likely, Nietzsche employed the term because of its scientific connotations, since he was steeped in reading neo-Kantian scientific treatises, beginning in the early 1870s.<sup>12</sup> As such, ‘observations’ seems the better translation.

The style of the work marks a departure from the dense Schopenhauerian philosophical prose of *The Birth of Tragedy*, and it anticipates the light, aphoristic style that Nietzsche would develop just after the *Observations*. Nietzsche’s style is ‘timelier’ inasmuch as he adopts the traditional essay genre in an attempt to reach a broader public audience. In contrast to his works before and after, Nietzsche develops a sustained line of argument across the 40–50 pages of each essay, although with many digressions and repetitions. As others have noted, the influence of Ralph Waldo Emerson’s essays is evident here.<sup>13</sup> The essay form allows us to discern the structure of argument in each, which I outline at the beginning of each chapter.

The first *Unfashionable Observation*, his critique of David Strauss and of the ‘philistine’ culture he represented, was published in August 1873. Due to its polemical broadside against contemporary writers, it received a great deal of attention and critical scrutiny, with over nineteen reviews in just a year after publication (Reich 2012: 276–412). In a letter to Wagner in September 1873, Nietzsche brags that his essay has had an ‘indescribable effect’,

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<sup>11</sup> Gray 1995: 396; Zuckert 1976.

<sup>12</sup> See *Nietzsche Wörterbuch* entry on *Betrachtung* (Nietzsche Research Group 2004: esp. 294, 312f.).

<sup>13</sup> See Cavell 1990; Stack 1993.

and that a 'tremendously hostile literature has emerged against [him]' (Reich 2012: 311). The elderly Strauss was puzzled that a young academic would attack him so vociferously. Unrelated to Nietzsche's essay, Strauss died not long after its publication. Nietzsche reported feeling guilty, thinking he was partly responsible for Strauss's death (Young 2010: 171).

In July 1873 Nietzsche proceeded to dictate an essay that he would not bring to publication, 'On Truth and Lies in an Extra-Moral Sense'. However, the themes and concepts of this important work reappear in the *Observations* in ways that we will examine below. In the second half of 1873 Nietzsche sketched several plans for the *Observations*. Initially, and indeed through 1876, he conceived of the book as comprising twelve or thirteen essays, an ambitious project that would have required him to adhere to a 'publishing schedule of one *Observation* every six months' (Schaberg 1995: 40). The proposed topics included art, religion, science, philosophy, the university, scholars, journalists, history, the military, nationalism and language, all of which were to be discussed in the context of the corruption of modern culture and the possibilities for its renewal (Reich 2012: 311; KSA 7.19[255], 19[274], 19[330], 29[163–4], 30[38], 32[4]; KSA 8.1[3–4], 16[10]).

After composing an 'Exhortation to the German People' in the autumn of 1873, in support of Wagner's Bayreuth project, Nietzsche continued to work on the second *Observation* in November and December of that year. The essay 'On the Utility and Liability of History for Life' has been the most important of all the *Observations* for later critics, but it was received rather unfavourably by his friends, most notably the Wagners, but also Erwin Rohde (Reich 2012: 457).<sup>14</sup> Cosima Wagner described it as 'very unripe', criticising Nietzsche for failing to use examples and for not providing a clear structure for his discussion (Reich 2012: 458). The immediate critical reception of this essay was also quite muted, as it garnered only four reviews (Reich 2012: 458–79). The 'David Strauss' essay sold poorly – just over 500 copies out of the

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<sup>14</sup> See Jensen (2016: ch. 1) for a wealth of information on the title and genesis of this work.

original 1,000 printed – but the ‘History’ essay fared even worse. Just over 200 copies were sold (Schaberg 1995: 205–6).

The third *Observation*, ‘Schopenhauer as Educator’, took Nietzsche a bit longer to write than the previous two. He sent his completed draft to his new publisher in August 1874, and it appeared in print on his thirtieth birthday, 15 October 1874 (Young 2010: 195). This essay begins the positive or constructive task of the *Observations*, as Nietzsche himself ‘promised’ in a letter to Emma Guerrieri-Gonzaga, an admirer who was enthralled with Nietzsche’s criticisms of culture but who also longed for his vision of the ‘future religion’ (KGB 4.370). The Wagners’ reception of this essay was warmer, with Cosima writing, ‘This is my Unfashionable [*Unzeitgemässe*], in part because it reminded her of the ‘Birth of Tragedy’ (Reich 2012: 482). As Julian Young reports, one of the more amusing reactions to the work was an anonymous telegram that read, ‘You are like the spirit that you can understand, but you are not like me. [Signed] Schopenhauer’ (Young 2010: 199). Schopenhauer had died in 1860.

In the first half of 1875 Nietzsche began work on a fourth *Observation*, ‘We Philologists’, but abandoned it in its early stages. The notes for this essay are collected in KSA 8, notebooks 1–5. In these notes, Nietzsche continues his examination of the ‘meaning of life’ [*Sinne des Lebens*] and the ‘vale of life’ [*Wert des Lebens*]. He argues that the modern philologist ‘kills off his own existence’ by making himself ‘wholly the product of preceding generations’, and by generating labour ‘exclusively with a view to posterity’. The philologist does not live for himself, but in his ‘ant-like labor’ he lives for others (KSA 8.3[63], WC 340). He does not have a ‘calling’ to exist for himself, but always for others (KSA 8.3[64], WC 341). The Greeks, by contrast, provide an alternative model of living in naïve freedom for themselves (KSA 8.3[55], WC 338), a model that is misunderstood and distorted by modern philologists. At the same time, Nietzsche does not advocate a simple return to the ancients, but sees in the universality and self-reflection of the modern age an opportunity to ‘educate the great individual in a wholly different and better way than by leaving his education to chance, which has been the case until now’ (KSA 8.5[11], WC 348).

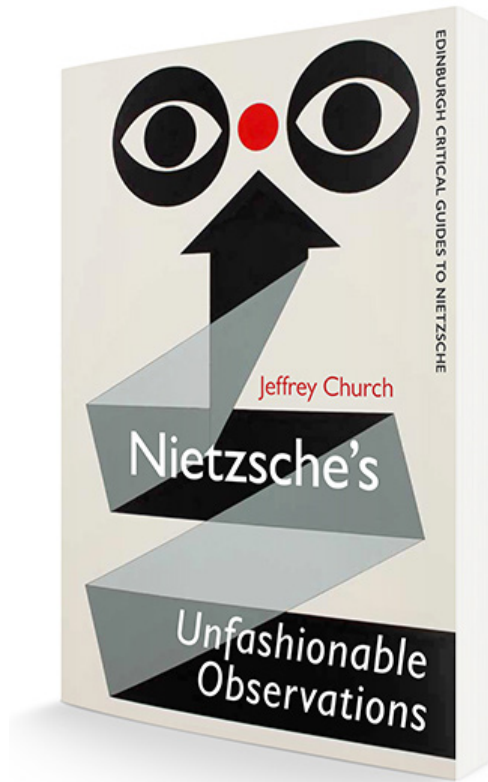
The next – and ultimately last – *Observation*, ‘Richard Wagner in Bayreuth’, took Nietzsche the longest to compose and publish. The most important reason is that his relationship with Wagner had begun to deteriorate, beginning in 1874, when Nietzsche deigned to leave on Wagner’s grand piano a copy of Brahms’s *Triumphlied*, a work that Wagner detested (Young 2010: 193–4). The story of the rise and fall of their friendship has been told and retold by many scholars, and these interesting biographical details need not detain us here. Nietzsche’s ambivalence to Wagner initially prevented him from publishing this essay (Hayman 1980: 185; Young 2010: 218). Although the essay continues the positive task of the *Observations*, pointing to Wagner as the hope for a renewal of culture in Germany, Nietzsche’s faith in Wagner had clearly been shaken. In April 1876, just four months before the Bayreuth Festival, his new friend Heinrich Köselitz convinced him to complete the essay and publish it. Nietzsche was concerned that his ambivalence had seeped into the essay, as he ‘made at least four attempts to draft the letter to the Wagners that would accompany their complimentary copies’. Nevertheless, Wagner loved the essay, exclaiming, ‘Friend! Your book is terrific! – Where did you get such knowledge of me?’ (Young 2010: 222).

Although Nietzsche projected twelve or thirteen *Observations*, ‘Richard Wagner’ would be the last to appear. He began a new essay, ‘The Ploughshare’, which instead became the basis for his next book, *Human, All Too Human*. In a response to his publisher’s request for the next instalment, Nietzsche states, ‘Shouldn’t we consider the “Unfashionable Observations” finished?’ (qtd Schaberg 1995: 53–4). Scholars have offered various explanations for Nietzsche’s decision to abandon the project: his disillusionment with Wagner (Kaufmann 1978: 36f.); his personal sense of the failure of the Bayreuth Festival (Safranski 2002: 139); and his growing friendship with Paul Rée, who may have pushed Nietzsche away from his early concerns with Schopenhauer and metaphysics (Young 2010: 212f.).

Although Nietzsche abandoned the *Observations* before its projected completion, we should not consider it a failed or incomplete book. First of all, from the very beginning Nietzsche conceived of these essays as part of a larger, unified whole. The title page for

each essay places *Unzeitgemässe Betrachtungen* in large type at the top of the page, and the title of each individual essay is printed near the bottom. They are numbered as consecutive ‘*Stücke*’ or parts. Second, after abandoning the project, Nietzsche himself still regarded the book as a whole. In an 1887 advertisement for Nietzsche’s earlier works, for example, the *Observations* is included alongside his other books, with the four parts of the book listed as well (see Jensen 2016: 12).

Nietzsche indicates in the title of the work, and in his notebooks, that we should treat this book as a unified whole. More importantly, however, he also suggests in the course of the book that we treat it as a whole, beginning, of course, with its intentionally mirrored structure: corrupted individual (‘David Strauss’) to corrupt culture (‘History’) to redemptive culture (‘Schopenhauer’) to redemptive individual (‘Wagner’). In addition, many of the arguments he makes in early parts of the work are taken up again later. In order to treat the work as a whole, then, it is best to begin with the overall context and problem that motivates it. This is the task of Chapter 1.



## **Nietzsche's *Unfashionable Observations***

Edinburgh Critical Guides to Nietzsche

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