

Abstract:

This paper offers an interpretation of Nietzschean freedom, by closely examining the way that he treats the lives of famous people and uses them as models. Freedom, for Nietzsche, is closely related to his conception of the 'untimely' – of that which is unusual, unexpected, irregular. His conception of freedom is also closely related to his condemnation of the modern as a 'decadent' society. To understand freedom, we must understand our own decadence.

The 'highest type of free man', thinks Nietzsche, is Julius Caesar. When we analyse Caesar carefully, we find that his freedom lies in overcoming particular obstacles in a particular way. This paper asks what we should make of this new kind of freedom. Is it something to which we can realistically aspire? Is it within our power to reach it? Such questions, I argue, were to plague Nietzsche. I conclude by suggesting that we find in his own work an admission that, by his own standards, he himself failed to achieve this freedom.