

**Nietzsche, Friedrich. *Beyond Good and Evil, (Jenseits von Gut und Bose).* Translated by Walter Kaufmann. New York: Modern Library, 1992.**

Friedrich Nietzsche (1844-1900) was one of Germany's most controversial and influential philosophical lights. He held the chair of classical philology at University of Bonn, Switzerland, which he resigned in 1879, after ten years, due to deteriorating health. Nietzsche wrote the bulk of his works in the six years before he was institutionalized because his mental health collapsed.

**On the Prejudices of Philosophers.** What is the value of truth? Perhaps no one has yet been truthful enough about what truthfulness is. It may be that what we take for goodness is inextricably linked with deception, selfishness, and lust, that good and evil may be essentially one. Philosophers who think such thoughts deliberate dangerous possibilities. The core issue is not whether a judgment is true, but whether it is life-promoting and species-preserving. False judgments appear to be essential to mankind, as in math, language, and imagined absolutes by which we evaluate reality. Untruth is a condition of life. Men survive by use of falsehoods. A philosophy that risks these sorts of thoughts places itself beyond traditional morality, beyond good and evil. Most philosophers of history simply have it wrong; they were guided invisibly by their instincts into wrong-headedness. They have frog-perspectives, seeing the world each from their own little ponds. Kant, Plato, the Stoics, Descartes, Berkeley, Locke, Spinoza, even Schopenhauer—all of the greatest minds are subject to the error. They failed to see that any philosophy that believes in itself creates the world in its own image. This is the philosopher's *will to power*. Even science is subject to this error. Physics is an exegesis of the world, not an explanation. Psychology has gotten stuck in moral prejudices, and avoided the depths of the will to power and the doctrine that all good impulses derive from wicked ones. Unlike these many, philosophers of the dangerous maybe skip over common morality.

**The Free Spirit.** The free spirit, who is the philosopher of the dangerous maybe, lives in simplicity, superficiality, and falsehood. He has a will to know, but also a will to ignorance. This ignorance *refines* knowledge, and is not its opposite. The free spirit, who is a choice human being, seeks a citadel and a secrecy where he is saved from the crowd, because all contact is bad contact except with one's equals. Nietzsche himself strives to be hard to understand. It keeps his thought inaccessible to the rabble. Such independence is for the very few; it is a privilege of the strong. If the crowds learn of the free spirit, they see his acts as follies and crimes. But there are heights of the soul from which even tragedy ceases to look tragic, and the free spirit inhabits these heights. In the pre-moral period, the value of an action lay in its consequences. In the moral period, the value of an action was reinterpreted to lie in the intention of the actor. The free spirit stands at the threshold of the extra-moral period, in which the value of an action lies in what is unintentional in it. This is the challenge of the free spirit—to overcome morality. This is the work saved up for the finest and most honest and most malicious consciences of the present, who are living touchstones of the soul. These philosophers of the future are free spirits.

**What Is Religious.** Christianity overturned the values of antiquity. Christian faith is a sacrifice of all freedom, pride, and self-confidence of the spirit. Christianity creates enslavement and self-mockery and self-mutilation. It is a neurosis. Unlike the Italians, Germans have little talent for religion. The Old Testament had a fearsome God and the people cowered before him. But Christianity glued the New Testament to the old and sinned against the spirit by infecting it with the small-soul smell. This Christian superficiality may derive from reaching beneath it, and finding terrifying realities. Man may not yet be artist enough to look so deeply. The choice individual might find a use for religion in pacifying his followers. Nevertheless, Christianity has been the most calamitous sort of arrogance yet; it has made of the European the small, almost ridiculous herd animal, something sickly and mediocre.

**Epigrams and Interludes.** There are no moral phenomena at all, but only moral interpretations of phenomena. Where lies courage, the choice man finds the courage to rechristen his evil as what is best in himself. To the tyrant in such a choice man, not only reason but also conscience bows.

**Natural History of Morals.** All philosophers have to date been seeking a rational foundation for morality. This is a false and sentimental view. The will to power explains the world, but knowledge of this fact is veiled. Men make up most of the world. We are accustomed to lying, or, put more virtuously, we know inadequately how much of an artist we are. The Jews first inverted values, working a slave rebellion as to moral issues. The Jewish/Christian formulation of morality amounts to advice concerning the danger that lies in the individual: prudence, prudence, prudence, mixed with stupidity, stupidity, stupidity. Mixing races has resulted in a weaker sort of human being. And loving one's neighbor is based upon fearing him. Fear is the mother of morals. European morality is the imperative of herd timidity, with its democracy and femininity. Higher moralities are possible. The philosophers of the dangerous maybe have a different faith, and one that views European morality with nausea.

**We Scholars.** Scholars have declared their independence from philosophy. Philosophy has castrated itself, reducing itself to mere knowledge theory. This is philosophy in its death throes. A genuine philosopher lives unphilosophically and unwisely and imprudently. Scientists share the sentiments of other scholars. All work to annihilate the uncommon man. The "objective" man is a minion, working for the uncommon man, and not the goal of manhood. Objectivity is a form of nervous exhaustion and sickliness. Europe needs a new caste to rule for a long, terrible millennium. We need a fight for the earth, and a compulsion to large-scale politics. The problem with the European scholar is his insipid skepticism. The skepticism of audacious manliness is virile. Its proponents are harder than human people might wish. They feel genuine nausea over everything that is enthusiastic or idealistic. Such men create values. They determine the Whither and For What of man. These philosophers of the dangerous maybe are men of tomorrow and the day after tomorrow. They are the enemy of the ideal of today. They are the bad conscience of their time. The greatest among them are the loneliest, most concealed, most deviant, human beings beyond good and evil, the master of his virtues, he that is overrich in will.

**Our Virtues.** The values of a philosopher of the dangerous maybe differ from those of the European herd. This means, first, that there may be moralities of various colors, and, second, that some moralities might be superior to others. Proponents of inferior moralities always denigrate proponents of superior moralities. Moralities must bow to the order of rank. It is immoral to say that what is right for the superior man is also fair for the inferior. The morality of herd Europe is the product of semi-barbarism linked to mingling of classes and races. We must reject hedonism, pessimism, utilitarianism, and Aristotelianism. Each leads to a pity of the downtrodden sufferer. The pity of the choice man is not for the poor, but for the miniaturization of man caused by these misled philosophies. Man is both creature and creator, paradoxically (and painfully) united. The British Utilitarians have caused the most havoc. They are boring. If talk of morality were ever to become interesting to large numbers, we might find exactly how seditious moral talk can be. The general welfare cannot guide all men; such morality is detrimental to the higher men. Their morality must be allowed. The herd concern with stamping out cruelty must be itself quashed. All drama is rooted in cruelty. Even seeking knowledge involves a form of self-cruelty. We must, rather than avoid cruelty, translate man back into nature by erasing the interpretations by which philosophers have painted man as other than he is. Deep down in every man is an unteachable granitic core, insensitive to learning. The worst evidence of the putrefaction of European values is feminism. The great art of woman is lying, with her emphasis on appearance and beauty; woman is demeaned by teaching man of her equality and seeking such. Woman is properly a man's possession, and a woman's power comes by her will to power from that position. Feminism defeminizes women, making of her a mere clerk with almost masculine stupidity. She should bear strong children. Feminism makes women boring.

**Peoples and Fatherlands.** Choice men have overcome the fragmented structure of European politics and thought to prepare the way for a new synthesis of European culture, men like Goethe, Napoleon, Beethoven, Stendahl, Schopenhauer, even Wagner. Soon one will come who will be master over the strong in Europe. They will unify Europe, and avoid national identity. The mixing of classes and races in Europe has created a supra-national, nomadic type of man, one who is extremely adaptable. Though this has leveled the European, made of him a mediocre multi-purpose herd animal, these same conditions make it more likely a highly exceptional and dangerous human being will arise. He will find Europe peopled with persons ready for slavery before a tyrant. Nietzsche then turns to analyze components of the European

culture. First, he examines Germanness. Germans elude definition; they lack a center. Germans are developing, good natured and vicious. In German music and language, the result lacks melody. German is best heard in Luther's Bible. The European Jews could easily overwhelm the German culture, for theirs is the toughest and purest race in Europe. They resist change and prevail under bad conditions. Anti-Semites should be expelled from Germany, for fear they might jolt the Jews from their thirst for assimilation into Europe. Second, the English philosophers have manufactured a world of mechanized dolts. The French have Europe's most spiritual and sophisticated culture, which suffers by voluntary and involuntary Germanization. Third, Mediterranean music makes one imagine a music with no knowledge of good and evil. The Germans are better positioned for the coming of the leader of the future because they are closer to barbarism than the French.

**What Is Noble.** Aristocratic societies have created all improvements in mankind. By standing upon the backs of lower men, choice men (masters) have enhanced themselves, creating the continual *self-overcoming of man*. Admit the truth. Powerful barbarians subjugated those who could be subjected. The nobles were more whole human beings, which meant also more whole beasts. A vital aristocracy accepts slavery as its due and the price of its ascension. Mutual respect befits equals, but if the principle is extended between classes, the result is cultural disintegration. Life is will to power. Aristocrats exploit the underling classes. This is as it should be. Morality is of two sorts: master morality and slave morality. The problem is that in higher cultures and even in individuals, these two moralities exist side by side. Nobility creates values; it does not acknowledge them. What is good for the aristocrat is good. With respect to the lower classes, the aristocrat is beyond good and evil. He does as he pleases. Slave morality concerns utility. Goodness in slave morality is whatever is not dangerous to slaves. Good and stupid grow closer together. Noble humans fail to understand vanity. The aristocratic commonwealth is a breeding ground for aristocrats, which noble characteristics pass as acquired traits to their children (Lamarckism). Language depends on shared experience to invest words with meanings. Mixing peoples diminishes linguistic understanding. Thus there is constant inheritable pressure creating herd-people, and a pressure contrary to the emergence of extraordinary individuals. The noble tends to the ruination of his soul. He is masked, and needs to be so. What most separates peoples is their various senses of cleanliness. The four noble virtues are courage, insight, sympathy, and solitude. One writes philosophical books to conceal what one thinks. Man invented "good conscience" so, despite his nature, he could enjoy his own soul. Gods enjoy laughter and could learn some humaneness from humanity.

**From High Mountains: Aftersong.** A convoluted poem about loneliness and solitude.