

# **Beyond Good and Evil Study Guide**

## **Beyond Good and Evil by Friedrich Nietzsche**

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# Plot Summary

Beyond Good and Evil is a philosophical examination of the theory that the "will to truth" is present in all human beings. Nietzsche believes that in order to discover the truth, one must question all one has learned and observed. This includes exploration of self perception, virtually everything taught in society, and probably the most important in the author's mind, religion. While man may have the innate ability to do this, many do not have the wherewithal or the ambition to search beneath all they have been taught. The people who do not have the ambition are viewed as weak, socialized, robotic creatures who have little worth in Nietzsche's eyes.

The philosopher asserts that his theories and reasoning are truth. Nietzsche's truth comes from many years of intense education as well as study of the great Greek masters and more modern philosophers. Nietzsche grants that the new breed of philosopher may have something new to say, but until the group proves itself, Nietzsche looks down on them as uneducated and inexperienced people who claim to know more than what is actual.

Nietzsche has very strong opinions on many things. Two of the most notable are the author's views on intelligence and the female gender. Nietzsche is extremely fond of pointing out the stupidity, naivete and folly of man in various positions throughout the ages. No matter what a person's upbringing or position in life, there is no excuse for "doltishness." In this area Nietzsche is particularly harsh and the overuse of the theme almost takes away from its impact and validity. The other topic on which Nietzsche is very vocal is women. The author believes women are frivolous, incompetent creatures who should do as they are told and keep their mouths shut. The author even refers to Napoleon's statement of how women need to be silent in church. To Nietzsche, women do not have the inclination or ability to grasp the world of philosophy or any of the sciences. The author often compares to women to artists who work not from knowledge but only from instinct.

Nietzsche is famous for the "God is Dead" quote from an earlier work. The author believes that blind religious faith equals sacrifice of self and therefore, one's own truth. One thing the author focuses on in regards to right and wrong, the faithful versus the atheist, is that there are no opposites, only shades of gray. However, later in the book, Nietzsche contradicts himself in regards to morality, which he states is at the opposite end of the staircase to immorality.

Beyond Good and Evil was translated from Nietzsche's native German by Walter Kaufman. The translation seems accurate although there may be something missing from the original tempo or flow of the words. Nietzsche cites the difference in tempo between languages as one of the reasons most works and ideas are misinterpreted.

In the end, Nietzsche sees himself as a man who has dared to delve into the truth, with no topic safe from exploration. The author believes he is a man of change and growth, forever seeking answers to unanswerable questions.



# Part 1: On The Prejudices of Philosophers - Chapters 1-10

## Part 1: On The Prejudices of Philosophers - Chapters 1-10 Summary and Analysis

Nietzsche introduces "The will to truth." The concept behind Beyond Good and Evil is to determine what causes people to strive for truth through the use or absence of self-will and prejudiced thinking. It is important to know who poses questions to us, and what lies within each human being that is seeking the truth? One must determine the value of truth to oneself as well as to society as a whole. Is there risk in seeking the truth?

Many believe everything is created through the existence of its opposite. If that is true, how does the opposite come into being? Nietzsche believes all things come from a higher being or force. Metaphysicians often make the vital mistake that faith is the opposite of value. Are there opposites at all? Are the opposites formed through provisional perspectives or deception?

Nietzsche presents an argument on conscious versus instinct. Humans are not often aware that each conscious decision or observation is based upon instinct.

A false judgment is not necessarily a thing that is objectionable to a person's mind. To what extent does one allow false judgments into one's life? Man cannot live in a life of nothing but truth. To be able to recognize falseness as a part of life is acceptable even if it means going against one's own value system.

Philosophers are not honest enough. Many will make virtuous noises when approached with the topic of truth, posing as if their work has been achieved through self-development and cold, pure research, while in truth, their philosophies are often derived from inspiration, hunches, and assumptions.

Nietzsche discovers that philosophy is a personal confession of its author, an "involuntary and unconscious memoir" instead of a "drive for knowledge". The drive for knowledge is actually a mere instrument to get to where one is going. Although philosophers claim that knowledge is at the base of their work, the real interests of the scholar lie somewhere else and are comprised of family, money or politics, whether or not this is a part of their consciousness.

Imagine being like nature—wasteful and indifferent beyond measure; without mercy or justice; without purpose or consideration. Every man has his own nature. Why make a principle of what you already are? Pride wants to pose your morality on nature, to create in your own image. Arrogance inspires you to have hope, to practice self tyranny; nature allows herself to be tyrannized. It is an ancient story that happens still today, and will as



long as any philosophy believes in itself. Philosophy is the tyrannical drive itself and the most spiritual way to claim power.

In rare cases, philosophers may prefer a handful of certainty to an entire universe full of possibilities. This is nihilism and a sign of a desperate, mortally weary soul. Some may be arrogant enough to believe in their own credibility and let go of more secure possessions in search of something from an ancient domain.

Nietzsche believes that all should agree with skeptical anti-realists as their instincts are unrefuted. Instinct repels them from embracing modern knowledge. Modern thinking cannot take the place of the wisdom of the ancient ones. However, it seems they do not want to go back to the old ways, but to get away.



# Part 1: On The Prejudices of Philosophers - Chapters 11-19

## Part 1: On The Prejudices of Philosophers - Chapters 11-19 Summary and Analysis

Nietzsche believes there are attempts being made to divert attention from Kant's influence on German philosophy. Kant discovered that man has a faculty to create synthetic judgments. Nietzsche believes the advancement of German philosophy depended on Kant's pride and the rivalry of a younger generation.

How are synthetic judgments possible? That they are possible by the virtue of a faculty is a German foolishness. The young theologians can not distinguish between "finding" and "inventing" those faculties.

Schelling called the "faculty of the suprasensible" an intellectual intuition which was successful in gratifying even the most pious cravings of the German people. To take this determination seriously is wrong and therefore, it should be treated with moral indignation. Is Kant's answer anything more than comedy? Synthetic judgments a priori should not be possible as we have no right to them.

Nietzsche states that materialistic atomism is a well refuted theory and almost no one in the learned world attaches a significance to it. One must also destroy the Christians' preliminary teaching of "soul atomism", the belief that the soul is eternal and indestructible. It is not necessary to get rid of the soul, according to Nietzsche. Instead, one must allow for revisions of the old ways.

Nietzsche asserts that physiologists should think twice before dismissing the cardinal instinct of self-preservation in man. All living things seek to discharge their power in some way, and self-preservation is only one of the indirect and most frequent results. The Platonic way, which Nietzsche asserts was nobler, consisted in resisting what is self-evident.

Some still believe in immediate certainties and absolute knowledge. The assertion of knowing everything about something is subject to close scrutiny and is not easy, and perhaps even impossible, to prove.

Logicians are a superstitious lot, who collectively seek to concede that the thought comes when it wishes, not when an individual wishes. While logicians may believe occurrences happen as they wish, philosophers believe the thinker has more control.

A refutable theory's charm is prone to attracting subtler minds. It seems that the theory regarding "free will," the theory that has been refuted a hundred times over, owes its persistence to this charm alone. Nietzsche says the will is complicated. Just as



sensations and reactions are ingredients of the human will, thinking is as well. Every act undertaken by man contains thought. The will is not only sensation and thought but the result. "Freedom of the Will" is the affect of superiority, the result of a command, in relation to those whose will they must obey. We are, at our base selves, commanding and obeying creatures. Nietzsche believes that will and action are one and that being willing is the same as taking action, at least in a sensory way.



# Part 1: On The Prejudices of Philosophers - Chapters 20-23

## Part 1: On The Prejudices of Philosophers - Chapters 20-23 Summary and Analysis

Individual philosophy concepts are not something that will autonomously evolve. Rather, individual concepts will evolve in connection with one another—even though the ideals may feel independent. Beliefs are not compartmentalized things.

Philosophy is not so much an actual discovery as it is man's recognition of what is already known to him. Each country or region bases their philosophies on what they see and recognize and are often unable to recognize or give credence to the philosophies of other cultures because the other cultures are so foreign that the people cannot relate.

Self-contradiction is formed through perversion of one's logic and is accompanied by arrogance and the extravagant pride of human beings. The responsibility extends beyond one's own actions into the areas of religions, heritage, and the state of society and the world.

There are those who believe in "unfree will". Many natural scientists quote cause and effect to explain actions and the outcomes of such. According to Nietzsche, the existence of the unfree will is a mythology. In real life, things occur as a matter of strong and/or weak will.

Nietzsche believes that every human being falls into one of two groups, which are considered to be opposites. The first group refuses to give up responsibilities, belief in self, and personal rights. In the second group are those who wish not to be responsible or answerable for anything.

So much in the area of philosophy is owed to bad interpretation, either through lack of knowledge or errors in translation. Many think that everything on earth is governed by nature's conformity to law. Do things occur because laws require it? Or, does the government "happen" because the laws are lacking and therefore every action draws ultimate consequences?

Philosophies are also based on moral prejudice and therefore are as binding morally as they are intellectually. For those who are apt to take a more scientific approach, psychology is the "queen of the sciences" for those who acquiesce that other sciences exist and may have some merit. However valid the other sciences may be, psychology is the best path to uncovering fundamental problems.





## Part 2: The Free Spirit - Chapters 24-35

### Part 2: The Free Spirit - Chapters 24-35 Summary and Analysis

Nietzsche observes that man goes to great lengths in order to keep himself from uncovering knowledge. The philosopher strives to rise above this simple life, to seek truth, regardless of the consequences. A true philosopher knows that no truth will ever be found in his theories.

Nietzsche feels that every human being instinctively craves solitude and a place where he can be protected and saved from the crowd. Even though one avoids the majority, there is still a stronger instinct to gain knowledge which guides him toward like minds and thereby, unconsciously, develops elevated tastes. In general, a man will not take on burden and responsibility without cause.

Language will not get over its awkwardness long enough for people to understand that there are no opposites, only subtleties of gradation. There is no need to do be the sole protector of mankind and the earth; instead, take time to seek solitude and embrace freedom.

Cynics recognize only what is common, yet manage to develop and maintain a degree of spirituality. One who tears himself apart from the world, God, and society may stand high among men yet be more ordinary, more indifferent.

Many things are misinterpreted or untranslatable due to the tempo of the foreign language. If nothing else, man must be able to rely upon the tempo of language as the source of truth.

Independence is reserved only for a few because it is the privilege of the strong and unattainable for the weak. When one is alone and blind, there is no one to see how or where one has lost his way. In the end, the seeker may be torn apart. Once the journey of the seeker has begun, he cannot go back to where he was.

Nietzsche divides the main approaches to thought into two groups—exoteric and esoteric. The exoteric form of thought sees things from below, while the esoteric form of thought sees things from above. Those who live an exoteric existence may only see what is in front of or beneath them while the esoteric may see what is above and beyond. Is there equality between the exoteric and esoteric?

Some believe in opposite values for the soul depending on the lower soul and a lower vitality or the higher soul and a higher vitality. The lower soul is prone to disintegration, while the higher soul calls the bravest to exert courage.



Youth do not employ the arts of tact or nuance. There are punishments for acts which do not meet with societal approval. The irreverent attitudes only fade, or become controlled, as maturity sets in. Value of one's behavior or misbehavior has always been reliant upon the resulting consequences. One cannot always know what the consequences will be, so it is imperative to know oneself.

Reality is a prejudice that must be overcome, while self-denial is something that must be questioned without mercy. Man holds many good thoughts and actions for others, but lacks the ability to treat himself with such consideration. Nietzsche admires thinkers, even though there is condescension toward them and the philosopher often treats other thinkers as ignorant children. Those who exhibit faith in immediate certainties exhibit a moral naiveté, and this somehow reflects honor upon the philosopher, who is not to be perceived as mere moral man.

Nietzsche poses a question to those philosophers who believe that the truth is worth more than appearance. If that is true, and philosophers would be able to abolish the apparent world altogether, does that not mean that their truth would be abolished as well? Nietzsche jokes about the nonsense in searching for the truth, that when a human being searches for the truth, the human being may in fact be too human and will probably find nothing.



## Part 2: The Free Spirit - Chapters 36-44

### Part 2: The Free Spirit - Chapters 36-44 Summary and Analysis

What if nothing in the world was real except for our desires and passions? Suppose we succeeded in explaining our entire lives as a development and result of the will? Nietzsche believes that if the explanation were possible then all organic functions could be traced back to it - all problems and creations are of the will and nothing else.

Nietzsche asserts that if one questions God, one also questions the devil. However, one must wonder why the devil can be refuted while God remains untouched.

Nietzsche uses the French Revolution as an example of an event being viewed through incorrect interpretation. While the Revolution may have seemed superfluous to many, enthusiastic spectators throughout Europe contemplated and interpreted it according to their own indignation.

Unhappiness and evil are not opposites to happy and pious. Something can be true while still being harmful. It might be a basic characteristic of existence, to see if one could measure the strength of a spirit by the amount of truth it can take in and accept. Perhaps hardness and cunning are more favorable or perhaps easier in establishing an independent spirit because it is easier to see or perhaps is more comfortable.

People will often take great pains to hide what is delicate and personal, even if it means rudeness. It is a part of human nature for one to rearrange his own memory in order to avoid shame, which is an inevitable part of being found out. There may be good things that cause shame if they intimate weakness. Evil is not the only thing that hides behind a mask.

One has to test oneself in order to prove that one is destined for independence and has the ability to command, and must make sure it is done at the right time. There will be no witness or no judge to our tests—only ourselves. We must also be careful not to remain stuck to our own virtues. It is important to know how to conserve oneself.

Nietzsche feels that the new philosophers will allow themselves to be unriddled only so much. Nietzsche dictates that these philosophers of the future will make a mere attempt to understand. All philosophers love their truths, although the new philosophers will not be dogmatists. There cannot be such a thing as the common good—for anything that is common has little value. The new philosophers will be free spirits.

Nietzsche asks if it is any wonder that we "free spirits" are not the most communicative of creatures. Free spirits do not want to betray from what a free spirit can be liberated and to what he may be driven toward. It is because of this protective instinct that the philosopher, the free spirit, craves solitude.



## Part 3: What is Religious - Chapters 45-62

### Part 3: What is Religious - Chapters 45-62 Summary and Analysis

The great hunt for the psychologist is to be able to dive into the human soul, to determine its limits. The curiosity of the psychologist will never be satisfied because the answers to all the questions will never be found.

In order to determine what kind of history lies in the problem of soul and conscience, one must be profound, as Pascal was, plus possess the "malicious spirituality" that would enable one to observe from above and make unemotional formulas in which to categorize the human religion.

Faith is no longer comparable to original Christianity. Nietzsche speaks of a faith that is more barbaric and one that requires a type of "continual suicide of reason." The author refers to the Christian faith as a faith of sacrifice. Nietzsche believes that this faith requires sacrifice of freedom, pride, and self-confidence. At the same time, it encourages enslavement, self-mutilation, and self-mockery. Nietzsche feels that "Enlightenment" enrages the human being. It requires that a slave command the unconditional and thinks and reacts in terms that seem to be back and white. The author states that three dangerous things are tied to religious neurosis: dietary demands, fasting, and sexual abstinence.

The most recent philosophy, in Nietzsche's time, pointed to a problem in itself—the question of awakening and religious crisis. How is it possible to deny that the will exists? Because man believed in moral opposites, sainthood became possible. If opposites do not exist, is a miracle actually a misinterpretation?

Nietzsche dictates that Catholicism has a much stronger tie to the Latin races than those who were descended from the "barbarian races." The latter, perhaps save for the Celts, has little talent for religion. The ancient Greeks have an enormous abundance of gratitude. It is a noble man who lives in this moral way. Later, when Christianity entered Greece, so did an abundance of fear.

There are many types of passion for God. There is the sincere faith of the peasant, perhaps ecstasy for a slave who will be pardoned, and tenderness and lust of the woman who marries the mystical and physical.

Nietzsche believes that the person who worships the saint sees something of himself in the miracle of this religious icon.



The Old Testament is the book of divine justice which instills terror and reverence. The New Testament is gentler, a book of grace which man may find relates closer to his own heart. Nietzsche believes that combining these two tomes into one book is a great insult.

Nietzsche states that the "father" in God has been refuted by man. The same goes with the "judge" and the "rewarder." The author states that God does not hear free will and even if free will was heard, God would not know how to help.

According to Nietzsche, the whole of modern philosophy is "at the bottom." Modern philosophers seek to destroy the "old soul," which is the basis of Christianity. Therefore, modern philosophy is, by and large, atheistic. Christianity is a ladder with many rungs, all centered on sacrifice. Three of these rungs are most important: the sacrifice of humans, especially loved ones; sacrifice of the first born; sacrifice of one's own instincts.

Those who have endeavored to separate pessimism from the "half-Christian, half-German narrowness and simplicity" have chosen to focus on the opposite ideal. As an analyst of pessimism, Nietzsche claims to have been able to separate pessimism from religion, thereby opening his own eyes. This philosophy directly contradicts Nietzsche's vehement statements that there are no true opposites. Did Nietzsche truly contradict himself, or has there been an error in translation or interpretation?

There seems to be no time for leisure in a "genuinely religious life". In fact, we are taught to be educated and industrious, which could lead us to stray from leisure and therefore take away time for prayer? Is being this industrious life preparing man for "unbelief"?

Nietzsche believes that it is suspicious fear that makes man rely upon the religious interpretation of existence. Fear cultivates the belief that man will discover the truth too soon and be unprepared for all it holds. In essence, man is hiding from the truth.

To love another human being for God's sake has been the noblest and the most remote feeling that has been attained by man. Unless there is an interior intent, a positive reason for doing so, then Nietzsche believes that this concept is stupid and brutish.

The free spirit is prone to use religion for his own purpose and cultivation of philosophy. For those who are strong and predestined to command, religion is a useful tool in overcoming resistance and obstacles. On the other hand, those who are not in command, may use religion as instruction and opportunity to grow. Nietzsche asserts that Asceticism and Puritanism are the most indispensable means for educating and ennobling those who wish to become masters over their origins.

Nietzsche believes religion can be dangerous when it does not strive to serve as an educational tool, but rather insists on being a sovereign entity. Men are separated into two categories: those who suffer necessarily and submit to rulers who command reverence, and those who are of a higher class. The higher man, particularly one of noble descent, will use spirituality to forge a more withdrawn life and only permit a

subtle form of rule. The lesser man will be able to use spirituality and religion to overcome obstacles until he is strong enough to stand on his own.



## **Part 4: Epigrams and Interludes - Chapters 63-185**

### **Part 4: Epigrams and Interludes - Chapters 63-185 Summary and Analysis**

Prevalent here is the belief that man takes himself too seriously, and in doing so, may compromise his own ability to seek the truth. Nietzsche has nothing against morality except when man uses it to put himself above others with no other explanation or accomplishments to back up such piety.

Nietzsche has little regard for women. Unfortunately, Nietzsche's words carries weight , so many are apt to take on his views.

Man is a strange and contradictory creature. One professes to believe in one thing but only as it applies to other people. However, when one encounters a person who has the same beliefs and expectations, one is apt to despise the other person, not recognizing in himself those very qualities he despises.

Women have much more of a primal approach to love and life. In general, people must realize that the desires they have are not so much the object of the desire but the desire itself. When one achieves this desire, oftentimes the end of the quest itself squelches the desire.



# Part 5: Natural History of Morals - Chapters 186-203

## Part 5: Natural History of Morals - Chapters 186-203 Summary and Analysis

Nietzsche states that modern day moral sentiments in Europe are as refined, diverse, irritable and subtle as the "science of morals" is still clumsy, raw, and "butter-fingered." The term science of morals is much too arrogant and offends good taste.

One must recognize the strictness necessary to collect, conceptualize, and arrange a vast amount of material; to recognize subtle feelings of value and its differences, which experience both life and death in order to form a typology of morals. While the moral philosophers knew the facts of morality, they never addressed the real problem, that of morality itself.

Nietzsche believes that morals are meant to justify the creator before any other. Many moralists desire to vent their power in creativity on all humanity, while others, including Kant, state that one should not be different from another.

Nietzsche considers morality to be tyranny against nature and reason. The author does not find it objectionable unless there is a separate morality that decrees tyranny as being unreasonable. Nietzsche also believes that the Christian morality of our personal experiences in the name of God is also a type of tyranny, and that this "grandiose stupidity" has been responsible for educating the spirit.

Industrious cultures find it difficult to partake in leisure. Nietzsche asserts that the leisure of Sabbath was intended to be holy and boring enough that the English began to unconsciously lust for the return of the workday.

While Plato devoted his life to studying the philosophies of Socrates, there are certain aspects of this philosophy that are not noble enough. One of the teachings states that no one intentionally harms oneself, and that if one knew that the actions taken were bad, then one would no longer practice such behaviors. This philosophy reeks of those who believe that bad actions result in unpleasant consequences and tend to judge that it is stupid to do bad things while it is agreeable and useful to do good things.

Nietzsche addresses the ancient theological issue of faith versus knowledge, also referred to as instinct versus reason. Socrates was a man of knowledge and reason, and often laughed at noble Athenians who followed instincts and faith.

Nietzsche asserts that our senses are developed late, are never entirely formed, and have difficulty recognizing things that are foreign. Things that are new discover our senses to be hostile and reluctant to accept. While our senses seem to be disagreeable,





our minds are often more open. Even if what we experience in our dreams is implausible, our minds tend to embrace the event as real, and our lives become richer or poorer through these dream related experiences.

Nietzsche believes that the Jews have been able to accomplish a miraculous feat through the inversion of values. Their prophets have fused together such concepts as godless, rich, evil, and violent.

The author believes that there is a great misunderstanding between the "beast of prey" and "man of prey," that scientists must search for something pathological that is innate. Moralists seek to know the difference. Do moralists have a hatred of the primeval? Must this be sacrificed in favor of a more temperate personality? Nietzsche defines this as "Morality as Timidity".

What are moralities but one's own counsel for one's various behaviors? Man may choose actions based on the degree of dangerousness.



## Part 6: We Scholars - Chapters 204-213

### Part 6: We Scholars - Chapters 204-213 Summary and Analysis

Nietzsche believes that experience, particularly bad experience, allows one to seek answers to high questions.

There is much danger in the development of a philosopher. Frequently, a philosopher will pause during education to become a specialist, or perhaps grow too weary to continue. If this is the case, the philosopher will not gain the necessary knowledge to exercise sound judgment. A scientific man is not noble, his virtues are not noble, and he is one who is not self-sufficient or able to be authoritative. However, he is industrious, excepting of his status and rank, aware of his modest talents and the ability to gauge the needs of others.

Although one grows tired of one's own subjectivity and craves an objective spirit, one must be cautious against gratitude and the depersonalization of self. The objective man is a mirror and takes pleasure only in knowing. One gains strength through knowledge.

A philosopher who claims that he is no skeptic may be considered dangerous. Skepticism is not evil, it is a spiritual expression that relates to man's physiological condition.

The strength to will is strong in Germany, but stronger in England, Spain, and Corsica. While it has been expressed through many sound philosophies, Italy is too young to know what it wants and must prove itself to the philosophical community.

The new war-like age which Europe has embraced is undoubtedly creating a new and stronger type of skepticism. This type of skepticism allows the spirit to take on a dangerous freedom and yet it is severe toward the heart. This is considered to be a German form of skepticism, which brought Europe under the German spirit of historical mistrust. Therefore, a new concept of the German spirit was created in spite of the romanticism in philosophy and music.

New philosophers will undoubtedly be able to distinguish the skeptic from the critic in the way of values, courage, and the ability to stand on one's own. The new philosophers will say that critics are merely instruments for a philosopher, and as instruments, are far from being able to be philosophers themselves.

Nietzsche believes the people should stop inundating philosophical laborers and scientists with philosophers. It may be necessary for a genuine philosopher to stand on every step in which his servants remained standing and must remain standing. This experience will ensure that philosopher may have the ability to see with different eyes and consciences.



As the philosopher is a man of tomorrow and every day after, he will always find that he is in contradiction to today. Modern ideas will banish everyone into a corner and the philosopher will be compelled to discover greatness in man. The philosopher will be required to determine value and rank in relation to how much one human could bear. The more one can bear, the more strength one exhibits, will surely determine his value to self and to society.

Defining a philosopher is difficult because one must have an experiential knowledge, it cannot be taught. It is a combination of exuberant spirituality and severity and necessity that allows one to take no false step. Artists, on the other hand, have more sensitive noses than philosophers as they are in tune with both sides of the human spirit. The artist knows the exact moment when he ceases to do things voluntarily and life is created and conducted because of necessity.



## Part 7: Our Virtues - Chapters 214-239

### Part 7: Our Virtues - Chapters 214-239 Summary and Analysis

It is probable that one still has virtues, although they will not be as simple as the virtues held by our grandfathers. If new virtues exist, they will be virtues that directly relate to one's most secret inclinations. Since man's moralities are very different, their actions shine in different colors.

Nietzsche states that in order to love one's enemies, one must also learn to despise at the same time. The man who practices moral revenge is often spiritually limited; those spiritual limitations are still greater than those he criticizes. There are those, too, who prize their gift to bestow moral tact and subtlety. They are the ones who will not forgive us if we have observed a mistake in their behavior. One must wonder where honesty fits in among those virtues.

Nietzsche refers to a moralistic pedant when he states that a person in command must not commit self-denial and self effacement. To do so would not be a virtue, rather it would be a waste of a virtue.

The new European is a hybrid that requires a costume. By costumes, Nietzsche means morality, faith, artistic taste, and religion. Historically speaking, the modern European has brought about a mad semi-barbarism through the mixture of class and race. While this combination creates chaos, it also contributes to developing a modern soul. Man still retains virtues that one cannot deny, including the ability to remain unpretentious, modest, and courageous. Man is also able to overcome one's self to reach above and beyond his earthly needs. In relationships, man may be fully devoted, grateful, patient, and accommodating.

There is a great misconception that those who love are interested solely in the object of their desire. Love is not unegoistic, according to Nietzsche. Anyone who makes sacrifices for love must know that he has wanted and received something in return.

Although modern man is proud of his humanity, there is much fear that remains. Almost everything that is considered higher culture is based on a spiritual version of cruelty.

Nietzsche claims "the basic will of the spirit" may not be completely understood. The spirit wants to be master and wants to be recognized as such. The spirit has the power to appropriate the foreign and reveals its ability to assimilate the new to the old and to overlook, whatever is contradictory or repulsive.

Knowledge changes people. At the bottom of it, however, there is something that is unteachable. At times, we may find solutions to certain problems and claim that they



inspire faith in us, but later, we see this as a step to self-knowledge and signposts to the very problem we are.

Nietzsche condemns the woman who wants to become self-reliant and sees fit to enlighten men. Nietzsche asserts that men wish that women should not compromise themselves through enlightenment. In the author's mind, it is a corruption of the instincts when a woman proves anything in favor of a "woman as such." Nietzsche makes it very clear that he feels all women are beneath him and should be used as possessions and servants.

To date, men have treated women like rare birds who have traveled to them from some distance; something that is refined, something that must be locked up, lest it fly away. To Nietzsche, a typical sign of shallowness is to deny the antagonism between man and woman. The modern age has treated the weaker sex with more respect than in any other point in history. This respect is immediately abused, because woman wants more, learns to demand and would prefer competition for equal rights to this respect, causing the woman to lose her modesty.



## Part 8: Peoples and Fatherlands - Chapters 240-256

### Part 8: Peoples and Fatherlands - Chapters 240-256 Summary and Analysis

Richard Wagner's overture to the *Meistersinger* is a favorite of Nietzsche's. Nietzsche feels that Wagner's music expresses the basest opinion of the Germans: the German people belong to the day before yesterday and today after tomorrow, yet they have no today.

Many good Europeans will spend hours and permit themselves to "Fatherlandishness" and patriotism, to relapse into old loves and narrowminded ways.

The democratic movement in Europe accompanies a great tremendous physiological process. Europeans are becoming more similar to one another as they become more detached from the origins of race and class. The author believes that the democratization of Europe leads to the creation of a people that is prepared for slavery in the subtlest sense. At the same time, the democratization of Europe is an involuntary arrangement for the cultivation of tyrants.

The German soul was once considered profound. The German soul is of diverse origins, more superimposed than actually built. Through a monstrous mix of races, the German people are contradictory, unknown incalculable and frightening.

In Nietzsche's mind, Mozart's music heralded the end of centuries-old European taste. Beethoven is considered to be the interlude of the mellow old soul that constantly breaks and the future soul that constantly comes—as if it is the twilight between eternal losing and eternal hoping.

Tempo remains the focus of Nietzsche, and how improper translation can lead to misinterpretation. German style has little to do with sound, and music has little to do with the ears, unless it is to show that good musicians write poorly. For this reason, the German does not read aloud. German music is an acquired taste.

Some say there are two types of genius: one who strives to accomplish, achieve, and possess; the other is content with giving birth. Yet, the best things in each of us are often unrecognized by self. Some truths are recognized best by ones with mediocre minds because they are most agreeable to them; there exists a set of truths that have seductive powers and charm targeted toward mediocre spirits. Perhaps there is a great chasm between "know" and "can"; those who can do certain things with great flair and creativity may lack knowledge.



There are many that suffer from "nationalistic nerve fever and political ambition." Nietzsche points to the various German factions, including the anti-French stupidity, the anti-Jewish, the anti-Polish, the Christian romantic movement and others. Nietzsche believes that Europe owes the Jews many things both good and bad. The author admires the Jewish strength of character and believes that they are "the strongest, toughest and purest race now living in Europe." On the other hand, the English are not considered a philosophical race.



## Part 9: What is Noble - Chapters 257-296

### Part 9: What is Noble - Chapters 257-296 Summary and Analysis

Every type of man has been enhanced through the work of an aristocratic society. A main characteristic of a healthy aristocracy is that it does not experience itself as a function but rather as a meaning and justification, thereby accepting with good conscience the sacrifice of many who must be reduced to incomplete human beings or slaves.

Exploitation is a part of all types of society, not just those who are primitive or imperfect. Exploitation is a basic function of man and can be attributed directly to the will.

Nietzsche has discovered there are subtle and coarse moralities that are prevalent on earth. Nietzsche explains the master morality and the slave morality, including the attempts by some cultures to mediate between the two groups. The bad and good, the moral and immoral, are all well defined in various shades of gray. Yet they are still what separates these two groups. The basic difference between the two groups is a longing for freedom.

Vanity is a difficult thing to understand for a noble human being, who will attempt to deny it. However, a noble must recognize that man was not used to placing value on himself but was attached to the value his master attached to him.

The instinct for rank remains a topic for Nietzsche's consideration. This instinct is a sign of high rank, as it is a delight in the nuances of reverence, which will allow people to infer noble origin. Regardless of one's origin, it is impossible to erase from one's soul the nature of one's ancestors.

It is not enough that man may speak the same language. It is imperative that people speak with the same tempo and expression in order to understand one another.

The more a psychologist investigates exquisite cases of both average and extraordinary people, the more he places himself in danger. When delving into the fundamental problems of these individuals, it is possible that the psychologist might actually suffocate from pity.

One who has suffered profoundly maintains a spiritual haughtiness because he believes that the suffering has allowed him to have more knowledge than the cleverest and wisest man. The author believes that one who has less knowledge, and is therefore a less noble spirit, may be better off. Martyrdom does not always equal superiority.

The church incites mixed feelings in Nietzsche. While most of those feelings center around contempt, there is a hint that the author admires the mastery involved in the





church's training of obedient followers. The need for faith and morality are innate in man. While the church may satisfy this basic need, it opposes the search for and acceptance of scientific knowledge and philosophy. Nietzsche believes that if one is willing to sacrifice for faith, then one is not able to exercise his will to truth. Without the will to truth, man is unable to see beyond what he has been taught. If one does not delve beneath the faith and exert the will to truth, then one will never know that which one should seek to know.

A philosopher is a man who may experience many things through his senses and dreams. A philosopher will always be inquisitive enough, have the burning desire to know what is truth, and therefore return to himself.

The author holds great esteem for those who stand up for one's own beliefs and have the courage to protect what is in their possession. To be able to master one's own universe is a great feat. Nietzsche believes it is pathetic and pointless to reveal pity cast out by those who have no mastery, or worse, those who preach about pity.

The author criticizes those who support "The Olympian Vice," which is the belief that thinking men should overcome laughter. It is often inferred that the gods are high minded and have imparted great philosophy to man. Nietzsche believes that even the gods enjoy laughter and therefore, so should man.

Nietzsche waxes poetic about an omnipresent god who deserves to be praised. The author reveals that the god worthy of his praise is in fact Dionysus. Nietzsche claims that he is a disciple of the great god and perhaps the last remaining initiate of the supernatural philosopher.

The author laments the end of this writing and the fact that these theories have been around long enough to have entered the afternoon of their lives. Nietzsche believes that his words have been painted and written with care. Although the author seems reluctant to allow these "children" to leave, the author asserts that some of these thoughts are ready to become truth.

# **Beyond Good and Evil**

## **Summary and Analysis**



# Part 10: From High Mountains - Aftersong

## Part 10: From High Mountains - Aftersong Summary and Analysis

According to Walter Kaufmann, the translator of *Beyond Good and Evil*, Nietzsche sent an early version of *Aftersong* to Heinrich von Stein. Accompanying the poem was a letter that said, "This is for you my dear friend, to remember Sils Maria, and in gratitude for your letter, such a letter." In that early version of *Aftersong*, several of the stanzas were reversed, some of the wording slightly altered, and the last two and those were missing entirely.

Nietzsche speaks of joy in a summer garden while waiting for friends. The sky and the brook seek these unnamed friends while the wind and clouds search for them with a bird's eye view.

Once they arrive, the friends see a man standing before them, a man they do not recognize. Nietzsche asks if he has changed so much. The author says the friends look at him in love and fear. The friends leave and Nietzsche says that his heart has born worse hunger. Is there a name for those who are no longer friends?

Those friendships, who were made in youth had changed with age and in order to remain akin in to the author, one must also change.

And so Nietzsche looks for new friends. And when they come there will be a celebration and a feast that lasts through the wedding of dark and light.



# Characters

## Fredrich Wilhelm Nietzsche

Friedrich Wilhelm Nietzsche was born on October 15, 1844 in Rocken, Germany. He studied classical philology at the Universities of Bonn and Leipzig. In 1869 Nietzsche was appointed to the position of Chair of Classical Philology at the University of Basel in Switzerland. Declining health led Nietzsche to resign his post a decade later.

Nietzsche was a controversial figure—and he thrived on seeking out controversy. However, Nietzsche is considered to be one of the greatest German writers and philosophers of all time and to this day holds an almost saint-like following in Germany and France.

Nietzsche routinely wrote critiques of philosophy, religion, science, morality, and contemporary culture. A distinctive style was typical of the philosopher, as was fondness for aphorism. Nietzsche's influence remains substantial, most notably in existentialism and post-modernism. Nietzsche is well known for his unrelenting questioning of the value and the objectivity of truth.

Nietzsche is probably best remembered by the average reader as the man who stated, "God is dead." This is a most misinterpreted statement. When Nietzsche made the claim, he was in fact talking about the cessation of belief in a high moral authority, not the actual death of God.

Nietzsche's famous works include the Birth of Tragedy Out of the Spirit Music, Thus Spoke Zarathustra, Beyond Good and Evil, On the Genealogy of Morals, The Case of Wagner, Twilight of the Idols, The Antichrist, Nietzsche Contra Wagner, and Human, All Too Human. The Will to Power, which was extracted from the philosopher's notebooks, was published posthumously.

In 1889, Nietzsche began to exhibit signs of a serious mental illness and was cared for by his mother and sister. Friedrich Nietzsche died in 1900.

## Immanuel Kant

Immanuel Kant (1724-1804) was an 18th-century German philosopher born in Königsberg in the Kingdom of Prussia. Kant remains regarded as one of the most influential thinkers of modern Europe and of the late Enlightenment.

Kant's first notable work was in the Allgemeine Naturgeschichte, written in 1755. In this work, Kant laid out his Nebular Hypothesis, which recanted his deductions that the Solar System was formed from a large cloud of gas, a nebula. He continued to explain the order of the solar system, previously seen by Newton as being imposed from the beginning by God.



After *Allgemeine Naturgeschichte*, Kant focused on philosophical issues, although he would not completely abandon his writings on the sciences. The early 1760s saw Kant's initial foray into philosophy when he completed *The False Subtlety of the Four Syllogistic Figures*, published in 1762. Two other works were published the following year: *Attempt to Introduce the Concept of Negative Magnitudes into Philosophy* and *The Only Possible Argument in Support of a Demonstration of the Existence of God*. In 1764, Kant wrote *Observations on the Feeling of the Beautiful and Sublime*.

At the age of 45, Kant finally received the appointment to Professor of Logic and Metaphysics at the University of Königsberg. At the age of 46, Kant was an established scholar and an increasingly influential philosopher.

Kant spent what is referred to as "his silent decade" deciphering previous oversights in his work. It was during this time that Kant took up an attitude of solitude, despite friends' and colleagues' attempts to return him to a social sphere. *The Critique of Pure Reason* was the result of Kant's silent decade. Although it is now recognized as one of the greatest works in the history of philosophy, Kant's crowning achievement was largely ignored by critics when it was initially released.

Kant managed to define the Enlightenment in an essay titled, *Answering the Question: What is Enlightenment?* This was Kant's response to the motto, "Dare to know." This work involved man's ability to think autonomously, without the interference of external authority. Kant had a definitive impact on the Romantic and German Idealist philosophies of the 19th century. As with Nietzsche, Kant's work has been a valuable starting point for many 20th century philosophers.

## Socrates

Socrates (c. 470 BC-399 BC) was a well known and much celebrated Classical Greek philosopher. Among his best known works are the Socratic irony and the Socratic Method. Socrates' methods were somewhat controversial as he developed the practice of a philosophical type of teaching, in which the teacher asks questions of the student in order to elicit the best answer. This was meant to garner fundamental insight on the part of the student.

In general, Socrates is credited with exerting a powerful influence upon the founders of Western philosophy, principally Plato and Aristotle.

Although there are many writings and legends about Socrates, scholars face a specific problem when trying to verify information. The "Socratic Problem" is caused by three separate circumstances:

1. There is no evidence that Socrates ever wrote or published texts of any kind. The primary sources relating to Socrates are gleaned from the writing of four men: Plato, Xenophon, Aristotle, and Aristophanes;



2. As with many tributes to their teacher, each of those men recorded information that implies a level of creativity on the part of the writer;
3. Since there are no primary sources regarding the life of Socrates, the ones that do exist do so without any concrete historical veracity.

Plato is considered to be the most reliable source of information about Socrates' life and philosophy. Since Plato was a devout student of Socrates, most classicists claim that any true description of Socrates must be in accordance with what Plato recorded in his own works. However, some surmise that if Plato was the only source of information about Socrates, then Socrates may be a mythological spokesperson to disseminate Plato's philosophy. To prevent such a case, historians and classicists who study Socrates often use the doctrines of Xenophon and Aristotle in combination with the portrayal of Socrates according to Plato.

One of the most noted facts about Socrates was his trial and resulting execution. As this tragedy ended the life of Socrates, it became a central theme in the writings of Plato.

## Voltaire

François-Marie Arouet (1694-1778), was a French Enlightenment writer, essayist, deist and philosopher. Arouet, who was widely known by his pseudonym, Voltaire, was reputed for his wit, philosophy and staunch defense of civil liberties, regardless of the consequences.

The writer adopted the name "Voltaire" in 1718 not only as a pen name but also in daily use. It is believed that the name is in fact an anagram of the Latinized spelling of his "Arouet" plus the letters of the sobriquet "le jeune" ("the younger").

Voltaire displayed an exceptional talent for writing verse at a young age. His first published works were two long poems, the *Henriade*, and the *La Pucelle d'Orléans*. Many shorter pieces would follow.

Many of Voltaire's works were written as polemics. Most notable are: *Candide*, which attacks traditional religious and philosophical optimism; *L'Homme aux quarante ecus*, a criticism of social and political ways of the time; *Zadig* and others, which were written in the forms of moral and metaphysical orthodoxy. Voltaire tended to display an ironic style which was free of exaggeration. It is obvious that Voltaire amused himself as he often laughed at his own work and made comments on his own jokes.

Along with prolific writings, Voltaire also showed a penchant for penning private correspondence throughout his life. One account attributes more than 21,000 letters to the writer. His personality comes through in the letters, revealing high energy and versatility, unhesitating flattery, ruthless sarcasm, and clever business acumen. Voltaire exercised his business savvy in the financial world which led him to be a millionaire by his forties.



Although Voltaire was often thought of as an atheist, he did participate in religious activities, eventually erecting a chapel on his estate in Ferney. Historians believe that the principal source for this misconception comes from a line from "Epistle to the author of the book, *The Three Impostors*," which translates as: "If God did not exist, it would be necessary to invent Him." This may be one of the things that Nietzsche related to the most.

Although he died in Paris, Voltaire spent the last 20 years of his life in Ferney, which is now named Ferney-Voltaire in honor of its most famous resident.

## **Friedrich Wilhelm Joseph Schelling**

Friedrich Wilhelm Joseph Schelling (1775-1854) was a much revered German philosopher. Historians place Schelling at the midpoint in the development of German Idealism. The popular consensus regarding Schelling's philosophy is that interpretation as such is often difficult because of its ever-changing nature.

## **Epicurus**

Epicurus (341 BC-270 BC) was an ancient Greek philosopher and the founder of Epicureanism, a popular school of thought in Hellenistic Philosophy. Out of more than 300 works, only a few fragments and letters survive. As with Socrates, historical fact about Epicurus is derived from the works of followers and scholars.

Epicurus believed that the purpose of philosophy was to attain the happy, serene existence, characterized by the absence of pain and fear. He cherished the ideal of a self-sufficient life surrounded by friends and colleagues.

## **Molière**

Jean-Baptiste Poquelin (1622-1673) aka Molière, was a French playwright and actor who is considered by historians to be one of the greatest masters of comedy in Western literature. Molière's most revered dramas are *Le Misanthrope* (The Misanthrope), *Tartuffe ou l'Imposteur* (Tartuffe or the Hypocrite), *L'École des femmes* (The School for Wives), *Le Bourgeois gentilhomme* (The Bourgeois Gentleman), and *L'Avare ou l'École du mensonge* (The Miser).

## **Nicolaus Copernicus**

Nicolaus Copernicus (1473-1543) was the first astronomer to formulate a scientifically based theory that the Earth was not the center of the universe. One of his writings, *De revolutionibus orbium coelestium* (On the Revolutions of the Celestial Spheres), is considered to be starting point of modern astronomy.



## **Roger Joseph Boscovich**

Roger Joseph Boscovich (1711-1787) was a physicist, mathematician, astronomer, philosopher, poet and diplomat from Ragusa. Boscovich is most famous for his atomic theory, a precisely-formulated system utilizing principles of Sir Isaac Newton.

## **Baruch de Spinoza**

Baruch de Spinoza (1632-1677) was a Dutch philosopher of Portuguese origin. As with many famed scientists, the depth and importance of Spinoza's work was only fully realized posthumously. Today, Spinoza is regarded as one of the great rationalists of 17th century philosophy and responsible for laying the groundwork for the 18th century Enlightenment.





# Objects/Places

## Germany

As a native German, Nietzsche is devoted to his country. However, Nietzsche also views the country and the Germanic people as being the most advanced in their philosophy. Nietzsche regularly compares Germany to other countries where the language, government and philosophy are not as advanced as the Indo-Germanic people. Nietzsche seems to believe that the Indo-Germanic people are the most enlightened and have made the best contributions to society. After all, the Germans created gunpowder but they also invented the printing press, something which Nietzsche seems to think was not a good thing. Nietzsche also prefers the presto (rapid tempo) of the German language and surmises that many misinterpretations occur in other countries where German is not easily understood or translated.

Nietzsche had only a few negative things to say about Germany as a whole. While he fully embraced the culture, and most certainly, the philosophical value of its people, Nietzsche felt that the country began to experience a moral decline. This overall decline in morals and values markedly affected the culture and began to taint the philosophical offerings being presented by modern day philosophers. As a classically trained philologist, Nietzsche took exception to these attitudes and vehemently reeled against them.

## The Church

The church incites mixed feelings in Nietzsche. While most of those feelings center around contempt, there is a hint that the author admires the mastery involved in the church's training of obedient followers. It is clear that the church is the most preeminent form of command when it comes to faith and morality. The need for faith and morality are innate in man, therefore it may serve a purpose for those who may be weak and not able to determine what is best.

While the church may satisfy this basic need, it opposes the search for and acceptance of scientific knowledge and philosophy. The sacrifice of oneself for God is a major issue for the author. Nietzsche believes that if one is willing to sacrifice for faith than one is not able to exercise his will to truth. Without the will to truth, man is unable to see beyond what he has been taught. If one does not delve beneath the faith and exert the will to truth, then one will never know that which one should seek to know.

## France

As much as Nietzsche loves Germany, the author shows a great affection for France and, in particular, the French language. One of Nietzsche's favorite words is "naiserie," which translates to folly or stupidity. Man's naiserie is a main theme throughout Beyond



Good and Evil. In addition, Nietzsche considers France to be one of the few countries who possess the ability to match the tempo and interpretation of language required to make proper sense of the philosophies of his predecessors.

Nietzsche addressed the French Revolution as a classic example of a "gruesome farce." The author considers the Revolution as superfluous although there was a nobility in the war. People from near and far contemplated it and interpreted it differently. Some felt that the Revolution was a horror and treated it with righteous indignation. Others saw the purpose in the Revolution and became enthusiastic supporters of the cause.

## The Summer Garden

In the poem "Aftersong," Nietzsche refers to a summer garden where he waits for his friends. Nietzsche speaks of roses, clouds, the vaulting blue sky, wind, and a brook full of longing. In the summer garden Nietzsche waits day and night for friends who are late.

The friends arrive in the garden, and do not recognize the friend who awaits them. The friends are and they used in Nietzsche states that anger is kinder than the reception received. The author explains that he has learned to dwell, "where no one lives in the bleakest polar hell." Has he become a ghost that "wanders over glaciers"?

The author exudes despair over this rejection and he begs the friends to stay. The friends depart and Nietzsche claims that "no heart has borne worse hunger." The author beseeches the friends to leave the gate opened so that new friends may enter. When the new friends arrive, those who share Nietzsche's beliefs, there is a great celebratory feast.

## Greece

Greece is home to great philosophers who have inspired Nietzsche.

## China

China is a country in which morality is judged either through distinction or disgrace.

## Europe

Nietzsche considers Europe to be the heart of all of modern philosophy, home to his fatherland of Germany.

## England

Referred to by Dr. Oscar Levy in 1913 when he writes the essay, "The Nietzsche Movement in England."

## **Israel**

The native land of Miss Helen Zimmern (1846-1934), who is responsible for the first English translation of *Beyond Good and Evil*.

## **Prussia**

In 1701, the first king of Prussia is crowned, and his descendants become German emperors.



# Themes

## Philosophical Truth

The whole premise of *Beyond Good and Evil* is Nietzsche's exploration of truth. Not only truth itself but man's "will to truth"—the willingness to explore all areas in life regardless of the teachings of society, family, and religion. In Nietzsche's view, every person has the ability to explore the truth, at least on some level. However, the beliefs instilled in one may lead to blind faith which may prevent one from examining things which may be considered traditional or sacred. Nietzsche urges all men to delve beneath the surface but feels that women are not as capable of completing the task. Nietzsche shows disdain for the female gender in several passages.

Nietzsche asserts that the Indo-Germanic are the most advanced culture when it comes to developing philosophies for the modern age. The author disparages other cultures such as Muslims whose language is not as expressive or adequate enough to develop worthwhile hypotheses to examine man's will to truth.

Whether or not it was Nietzsche's intention, *Beyond Good and Evil* seems to suggest that if all cultures had the ability to interpret ancient and modern philosophies in the appropriate language and tempo, then the learned world would be of one mind.

## Stupidity

Nietzsche is an intellectual snob. It seems that this snobbery permeates not only his academic life but his personal life as well. Nietzsche alludes to this in the poem "Aftersong," in which the author is approached by old friends who no longer recognize him because he has changed so much. Nietzsche does not see such a major change and what he does see seems to be a necessary change in order to grow as both a human being, a philosopher, and a scholar. Nietzsche states that it is time for new friends, ones that are able to keep up with him and are willing to grow and change.

A constant theme throughout the book is the average man's stupidity or "doltishness." Nietzsche's favorite French word is *naiserie*, which translates to "folly" or stupidity." Nietzsche is also extremely fond of all forms of the word "dolt." (This may or may not be a literal translation). Doltishness applies to most anyone who does not, can not or will not cast aside old beliefs and ideals in order to search for the truth. Those who do not seek the will to truth are betraying themselves and therefore are not worthy.

Nietzsche takes great pride in German heritage and claims that no other culture has the same amount of ability in the philosophical arena. According to Nietzsche, the German language has a specific tempo that properly conveys the language of philosophy and that even if it is translated, the meaning is all but lost.

## Pride

Nietzsche takes great pride in the fact that Germany is his fatherland. The author seems to have a great affinity for the works of Goethe and certainly feels a sort of kinship with the German writer. Nietzsche references other Germans, either by name or inference, giving them an equal share of reverence. Along with Nietzsche's obvious pride for Germany is an admiration for the French.

Through his study in classical philology at the universities of Leipzig and Bonn, Nietzsche began to develop a great deal of pride through his philosophical studies as well as his own hypotheses. As the Chair of Classical Philology at the University of Basel Switzerland, Nietzsche shows great pride in continuing his studies and observations on both classic and modern philosophy.

As a result of his great pride in his works as a scholar, philosopher and writer, Nietzsche suffered greatly when ill health required him to resign his professorship from the University of Basel. Although Nietzsche continued to study and teach, the author was never quite the same.



# Style

## Perspective

Friedrich Wilhelm Nietzsche was born on October 15, 1844 in Rocken, Germany. He studied classical philology at the Universities of Bonn and Leipzig. In 1869 Nietzsche was appointed to the position of Chair of Classical Philology at the University of Basel in Switzerland. Declining health led Nietzsche to resign his post a decade later.

Nietzsche's famous works include the Birth of Tragedy Out of the Spirit Music, Thus Spoke Zarathustra, Beyond Good and Evil, On the Genealogy of Morals, The Case of Wagner, Twilight of the Idols, The Antichrist, Nietzsche Contra Wagner, and Human, All Too Human. The Will to Power, which was extracted from the philosopher's notebooks, was published posthumously.

In 1889, Nietzsche began to exhibit signs of a serious mental illness and was cared for by his mother and sister. Friedrich Nietzsche died in 1900.

Nietzsche approaches Beyond Good and Evil from the point of view of a seasoned scholar who believes that he is an authority on philosophy, the laws of nature and ancient philosophies of the Greek Masters—Socrates, Plato, Aristotle, Aristophanes, and Epicurus. Nietzsche holds reverence for these great men and what they managed to accomplish in their short lives, even though there is no documented history that Socrates actually existed. Nietzsche's approach is purely academic with little to no regard for those not involved in his chosen field. In the poem Aftersong, the author even states that one must grow and change to keep up with him or he will move on to new friends who look at the will to truth through the same eyes.

## Tone

Beyond Good and Evil was written in a decidedly subjective tone. Although there are parts in which Nietzsche attempts to be objective, the author's obvious opinions and prejudices shine through.

The most objective part of Beyond Good and Evil relates to the philosophies of those who went before and have proven to have made significant contributions to the philosophical world. In particular, these include Socrates, Plato, Aristotle, Aristophanes, Epicurus, Hegel, and most notably, Immanuel Kant. Nietzsche consistently makes reference to these philosophers and scholars, claiming that many of their theories, hypotheses and findings have shaped modern philosophy.

The most subjective part of the text relate to the differences between various cultures, and in Nietzsche's mind, their inability to interpret philosophies so that they will be understood in the way philosophers meant them to be interpreted. This is a constant theme throughout Beyond Good and Evil. To Nietzsche, misinterpretation often goes



hand in hand with stupidity. The constant references to the stupidity of others enhance Nietzsche's obvious prejudice against those who do not interpret philosophies in the same way he does.

The subjective slant of *Beyond Good and Evil* should not, however, completely dissuade the non-academic from actively participating in the development of thought and philosophy.

## Structure

*Beyond Good and Evil* was written in the first person point of view, although it sometimes almost feels like third person. One begins to wonder where the differences lie between subjective and objective through Nietzsche's eyes.

There is no way of knowing, without reading the original German text, if Nietzsche's original manuscript was as fractured as it seems to be in the translation. The chapters seem to fall over one another, with subsequent chapters revisiting text and theories that have already been discussed. This lack of consistent thought is prevalent throughout the book. However, it almost seems as if Nietzsche's thoughts were one coherent stream that were somehow separated into various chapters.

There are many chapters that could be considered snippets, parables, or quotes. Many seem to be randomly interjected throughout the text and one must wonder why they are present. This is especially true of chapters 63 through 185, in Part Four: Epigrams and Interludes—the title of this section is truly descriptive.

The chapters are consistently short. Many consist of a single paragraph, while the longest is approximately 3 pages in length.

The epilogue consists of a poem titled "Aftersong." It appears in both its native German form, as well as an English translation. The poem itself is well written and seems to capture the essence of Nietzsche.



## Quotes

". . . it might even be possible that what constitutes the value of these good and revered things is precisely that they are insidiously related, tied to, and involved with these wicked, seemingly opposite things - maybe even one with them in essence," p. 10.

"Behind all logic and its seeming sovereignty of movement, too. There stand valuations or, more clearly, physiological demands for the preservation of a certain type of life," p. 11.

"A living thing seeks above all to discharge its strength—life itself is will to power; self-preservation is only one of the indirect and most frequent results," p. 21.

"Cynicism is the only form in which base souls approach honesty; and the higher man must listen closely to every coarse or subtle cynicism and congratulate himself when a clown without shame or a scientific satyr speaks out precisely in front of him," p. 38.

"'My judgment, is my judgment': no one else is easily entitled to it—that is what such a philosopher of the future may perhaps say of himself," p. 53.

"But a curiosity of my type remains after all, the most agreeable of all vices—sorry, I meant to say: the love of truth has its reward in heaven, and even on earth," p. 60.

"The great epochs of our life come when we gain of the courage to rechristen our evil as what is best in us," p. 86.

"There are moralities which are meant to justify their creator before others," p. 98.

"The Scholar also has, as is only fair, the diseases and bad manners of a type that is not noble: he is rich in petty envy and has lynx eyes for what is based in natures to whose heights he cannot attain," p. 126.

". . . in the end she is a woman: she should not be violated," p. 149.

"What is best in us we do not know - we cannot know," p. 185.

"Slave morality is essentially a morality of utility," p. 207.

"God enjoys mockery: it seems they cannot suppress laughter even during holy rites," p. 233.





## Topics for Discussion

How might Nietzsche's philosophies be different if he was not influenced by Kant?

Nietzsche is well known for the "God is Dead" reference although it has been proven that the philosopher was not an atheist. What could Nietzsche have meant by this statement?

Nietzsche states that our organs could not have produced the entire universe. What supports this theory?

Beyond Good and Evil makes clear the ideal that it is senseless to avoid the laws of nature. How is this proven?

Nietzsche dispels the notion that life is black and white, that opposites exist. What statement might refute this theory?

What kind of consequences might Nietzsche have faced when he stated that the soul is not eternal?

Do you feel that Nietzsche's propensity toward intellectual snobbery affects his hypotheses? Explain.

How might Nietzsche view the moralism, or lack thereof, in today's society?