

Nietzsche and Morality: The Higher Man and The Herd



The Higher Man and Society

- The great human being is a finale; the great age – the Renaissance, for example – is a finale. The genius, and work and deed, is necessarily a squander: that he squanders himself, that is his greatness. The instinct of self-preservation is suspended, as it were; the overpowering pressure of outflowing forces forbids him any such care or caution. People call this “self-sacrifice” and praised his “heroism,” his indifference to his own well-being, his devotion to an idea, a great cause, a Fatherland: without exception, misunderstandings. He flows out, he overflows, he uses himself up, he does not spare himself – and this is a calamitous, involuntary fatality, no less than a Rivers flooding the land. Yet, because much is owed to such explosives, much has also been given them in return: for example, a kind of higher morality. After all, that is the way of human gratitude: it misunderstands its benefactors. (Twilight of the Idols)
- But grant me from time to time—if there are divine goddesses in the realm beyond good and evil—grant me the sight, but one glance of something perfect, wholly achieved, happy, mighty, triumphant, something still capable of arousing fear! Of a man who justifies man, of a complementary and redeeming lucky hit on the part of man for the sake of which one may still believe in man! (On the Genealogy of Morality)
- And thus perhaps everything that is most beautiful still takes place in the midst of darkness and vanishes in endless night almost as soon as it has made its appearance, I refer to the spectacle of that power which a genius does not lay out upon works, but upon himself as a work, that is, his own self-control, the purifying of his own imagination, the order and selection in his inspirations and tasks. The great man ever remains invisible in the greatest thing that claims worship, like some distant star : his victory over power remains without witnesses, and hence also without songs and singers. The hierarchy of the great men in all the past history of the human race has not yet been determined. (The Dawn)
- “He shall be greatest who can be loneliest, the most concealed, the most deviant, the human being beyond good and evil, the master of his virtues, he that is overrich in will. Precisely this shall be called greatness: being capable of being as manifold as whole, as ample as full.” And to ask it once more: today—is greatness possible? (Beyond Good and Evil)

- Human beings who do not want to belong to the mass need only to stop being comfortable; follow their conscience, which cries out: "Be yourself! All that you are now doing, thinking, and desiring is not really yourself." (Untimely Meditations III)
- The only human right . He who strays from tradition becomes a sacrifice to the extraordinary; he who remains in tradition is its slave. Destruction follows in any case. (Human, all too Human)
- One man's greater morality, in contrast to another's, often lies only in the fact that his goals are quantitatively larger. The other man is pulled down by occupying himself with small things, in a narrow sphere. (Human, all too Human)

The Herd: The Last Man and the Slave

- When the great thinker despises human beings, he despises their laziness: for it is on account of their laziness that men seem like manufactured goods, unimportant, and unworthy to be associated with or instructed. (Untimely Meditations III)
- The over-all degeneration of man down to what today appears to the socialist dolts and flatheads as their “man of the future”—as their ideal—this degeneration and diminution of man into the perfect herd animal (or, as they say, to the man of the “free society”), this animalization of man into the dwarf animal of equal rights and claims, is possible, there is no doubt of it. Anyone who has once thought through this possibility to the end knows one kind of nausea that other men don’t know—but perhaps also a new task!— (Beyond Good and Evil)
- On the other side, the herd man in Europe today gives himself the appearance of being the only permissible kind of man, and glorifies his attributes, which make him tame, easy to get along with, and useful to the herd, as if they were the truly human virtues: namely, public spirit, benevolence, consideration, industriousness, moderation, modesty, indulgence, and pity...(Beyond Good and Evil)

- Not fear; rather that we no longer have anything left to fear in man; that the maggot “man” is swarming in the foreground; that the “tame man,” the hopelessly mediocre and insipid man, has already learned to feel himself as the goal and zenith, as the meaning of history, as “higher man... (On the Genealogy of Morality)
- A traveler who had seen many countries, peoples and several of the earth's continents was asked what attribute he had found in men everywhere. He said: "They have a propensity for laziness." To others, it seems that he should have said: "They are all fearful. They hide themselves behind customs and opinions." In his heart every man knows quite well that, being unique, he will be in the world only once and that there will be no second chance for his oneness to coalesce from the strangely variegated assortment that he is: he knows it but hides it like a bad conscience--why? From fear of his neighbor, who demands conformity and cloaks himself with it. But what is it that forces the individual to fear his neighbor, to think and act like a member of a herd, and to have no joy in himself? Modesty, perhaps, in a few rare cases. For the majority it is idleness, inertia, in short that propensity for laziness of which the traveler spoke. He is right: men are even lazier than they are fearful, and fear most of all the burdensome nuisance of absolute honesty and nakedness. (Untimely Meditations III)
- Whoever wishes to harvest happiness and comfort from life, let him always keep out of the way of higher culture. (Human, all too Human)
- Alas, the time of the most despicable man is coming, he that is no longer able to despise himself. Behold, I show you the last man. (Thus Spoke Zarathustra)
- When a decadent type of man ascended to the rank of the highest type, this could only happen at the expense of its countertype, the type of man that is strong and sure of life. When the herd animal is irradiated by the glory of the purest virtue, the exceptional man must have been devaluated into evil. When mendaciousness at any price monopolizes the word “truth” for its perspective, the really truthful man is bound to be branded with the worst names. Zarathustra leaves no doubt at this point: he says that it was his insight

precisely into the good, the “best,” that made him shudder at man in general; that it was from this aversion that he grew wings “to soar off into distant futures;” (Ecce Homo)

- The sick are man’s greatest danger; not the evil, not the “beasts of prey.” Those who are failures from the start, downtrodden, crushed—it is they, the weakest, who must undermine life among men, who call into question and poison most dangerously our trust in life, in man, and in ourselves. Where does one not encounter that veiled glance which burdens one with a profound sadness, that inward-turned glance of the born failure which betrays how such a man speaks to himself—that glance which is a sigh! “If only I were someone else,” sighs this glance: “but there is no hope of that. I am who I am: how could I ever get free of myself? And yet—I am sick of myself!” (On the Genealogy of Morality)
- “They are miserable, no doubt of it, all these mutterers and nook counterfeiters, although they crouch warmly together—but they tell me their misery is a sign of being chosen by God; one beats the dogs one likes best; perhaps this misery is also a preparation, a testing, a schooling, perhaps it is even more—...“Now they give me to understand that they are not merely better than the mighty, the lords of the earth whose spittle they have to lick (not from fear, not at all from fear! but because God has commanded them to obey the authorities)¹—that they are not merely better but are also ‘better off,’ or at least will be better off someday. But enough! enough! I can’t take any more. Bad air! Bad air! This workshop where ideals are manufactured—it seems to me it stinks of so many lies.” (On the Genealogy of Morality)

Slave (Herd) Morality

- and that the morality of decadence... has become accepted as morality itself.... Whoever is at odds with me about that is to my mind infected.—But all the world is at odds with me. (Ecce Homo)
- “But why are you talking about nobler ideals! Let us stick to the facts: the people have won—or ‘the slaves’ or ‘the mob’ or ‘the herd’ or whatever you like to call them.... ‘The masters’ have been disposed of; the morality of the

common man has won... everything is visibly becoming Judaized, Christianized, mobized (what do the words matter!). The progress of this poison through the entire body of mankind seems irresistible, its pace and tempo may from now on even grow slower, subtler, less audible, more cautious—there is plenty of time.— (On the Genealogy of Morality)

- Anti-natural morality—that is, almost every morality which has so far been taught, revered, and preached—turns, conversely, against the instincts of life: it is condemnation of these instincts, now secret, now outspoken and impudent. (Twilight of the Idols)
- It is different with the second type of morality, slave morality. Suppose the violated, oppressed, suffering, unfree, who are uncertain of themselves and weary, moralize: what will their moral valuations have in common? Probably, a pessimistic suspicion about the whole condition of man will find expression, perhaps a condemnation of man along with his condition. The slave's eye is not favorable to the virtues of the powerful: he is skeptical and suspicious, subtly suspicious, of all the "good" that is honored there—he would like to persuade himself that even their happiness is not genuine. (Beyond Good and Evil)
- Wherever slave morality becomes preponderant, language tends to bring the words "good" and "stupid" closer together. (Beyond Good and Evil)
- High and independent spirituality, the will to stand alone, even a powerful reason are experienced as dangers; everything that elevates an individual above the herd and intimidates the neighbor is henceforth called evil; and the fair, modest, submissive, conforming mentality, the mediocrity of desires attains moral designations and honors. Eventually, under very peaceful conditions, the opportunity and necessity for educating one's feelings to severity and hardness is lacking more and more; and every severity, even in justice, begins to disturb the conscience; any high and hard nobility and self-reliance is almost felt to be an insult and arouses mistrust; the "lamb," even more the "sheep," gains in respect. (Beyond Good and Evil)

- The slave revolt in morality begins when resentment itself becomes creative and gives birth to values: the resentment of natures that are denied the true reaction, that of deeds, and compensate themselves with an imaginary revenge. While every noble morality develops from a triumphant affirmation of itself, slave morality from the outset says No to what is “outside,” what is “different,” what is “not itself;” and this No is its creative deed. This inversion of the value-positing eye—this need to direct one’s view outward instead of back to oneself—is of the essence of resentment: in order to exist, slave morality always first needs a hostile external world; it needs, physiologically speaking, external stimuli in order to act at all—its action is fundamentally reaction. (Beyond Good and Evil)
- The European disguises himself in morality because he has become a sick, sickly, crippled animal, who has good reasons for being "tame," because he is almost an abortion, an imperfect, weak and clumsy thing. ... It is not the fierceness of the beast of prey that finds moral disguise necessary, but the gregarious animal, with its profound mediocrity, anxiety and ennui. Morality dresses up the European—let us acknowledge it!—in more distinguished, more important, more conspicuous guise— in "divine" guise— (Gay Science)
- They walk among us as embodied reproaches, as warnings to us—as if health, well-constitutedness, strength, pride, and the sense of power were in themselves necessarily vicious things for which one must pay some day, and pay bitterly: how ready they themselves are at bottom to make one pay; how they crave to be hangmen. There is among them an abundance of the vengeful disguised as judges, who constantly bear the word “justice” in their mouths like poisonous spittle, always with pursed lips, always ready to spit upon all who are not discontented but go their way in good spirits. Nor is there lacking among them that most disgusting species of the vain, the mendacious failures whose aim is to appear as “beautiful souls” and who bring to market their deformed sensuality, wrapped up in verses and other swaddling clothes, as “purity of heart”: the species of moral masturbators and “self-gratifiers.” The will of the weak to represent some form of superiority, their instinct for devious paths to tyranny over the healthy—where can it not be discovered, this will to power of the weakest! (On the Genealogy of Morality)

- Whoever examines the conscience of the European today will have to pull the same imperative out of a thousand moral folds and hideouts—the imperative of herd timidity: “we want that some day there should be nothing any more to be afraid of!” Some day—throughout Europe, the will and way to this day is now called “progress.” (Beyond Good and Evil)

Discover Your Own Virtue - The Free/Immoral Man

- “My brother, if you have a virtue and she is your virtue, then you have her in common with nobody.” Even naming one's virtue would make her too common; if one must speak of her, it should be: “This is *my* good; this I love; it pleases me wholly; thus alone do I will the good. I do not will it the law of a god; I do not will it as human statute and need”. (Thus Spoke Zarathustra)
- If we place ourselves at the end of this tremendous process, where the tree at last brings forth fruit, where society and the morality of custom at last reveal what they have simply been the means to: then we discover that the ripest fruit is the sovereign individual, like only to himself, liberated again from morality of custom, autonomous and supramoral (for “autonomous” and “moral” are mutually exclusive), in short, the man who has his own independent, protracted will and the right to make promises—and in him a proud consciousness, quivering in every muscle, of what has at length been achieved and become flesh in him, a consciousness of his own power and freedom, a sensation of mankind come to completion. (Ecce Homo)
- The butterfly wants to break through his cocoon; he tears at it, he rends it: then he is blinded and confused by the unknown light, the realm of freedom. Men who are capable of that sorrow (how few they will be!) will make the first attempt to see if mankind can transform itself from a moral into a wise mankind. (Human, all too Human)
- Can you give yourself your own evil and your own good and hang your own will over yourself as a law? Can you be your own judge and avenger of your law? (Thus Spoke Zarathustra)

- Injustice and filth they throw after the lonely one: but, my brother, if you would be a star, you must not shine less for them because of that. And beware of the good and the just! They like to crucify those who invent their own virtue for themselves—they hate the lonely one. (Thus Spoke Zarathustra)
- what is needful is new justice! And a new watchword. And new philosophers. The moral earth, too, is round. The moral earth, too, has its antipodes. The antipodes, too, have the right to exist. There is yet another world to be discovered - and more than one. Embark, philosophers! (Gay Science)