

Can a Free Spirit be Noble?

CAS PH 248 Existentialism

In *Beyond Good and Evil*, Nietzsche introduces the concept of noble people as individuals who possess the will to power. These individuals are self-centered, with no regard for the things around them. They are only interested in holding power over others not as strong as them, who they see as “slaves” needing to be controlled like cattle. They developed a distinction between the two groups, identifying themselves as “good” for being powerful and in charge, while the poor and weak slaves were considered “bad.” Nietzsche argues that this contrast between good and bad was artificially created by those in control in order to maintain the power that they have.

During discussion, a peer provided an excellent illustration of nobility in Homer’s *Odyssey*. Upon returning home from his voyage, Odysseus finds that a large number of men have taken over his palace trying to court his wife. Instead of trying to diffuse the situation or win his wife back, Odysseus is furious and fights for the power he once had. He goes under disguise to prove his wife’s loyalty to him, then slays all the suitors in a brutal display of power. Nietzsche would see this a demonstration of his will to power, as he is able to impose his own values and desires onto the world around him rather than submitting to the will of others.

Free spirits, on the other hand, are described by Nietzsche as self reflective and self aware. They know that exploration will help liberate them from the moral prejudices that hold them back. Because of this, they seek new experiences and try new things. These new experiences open up learning opportunities which facilitate growth within themselves. In turn, leading to them gaining the power to determine their own destiny. They know that there is something worth determining themselves to and they have the power to do it. Unlike the nobles, who seek power and domination over others, free spirits are able to channel their will to power in positive and creative ways. They are able to create their own values and live according to their own principles, without being constrained by the norms of society. This allows them to find meaning in their life and live authentically.

Given these two concepts of nobility and free spirits, I believe a free spirit cannot be noble. While both possess a strong will to power, nobles are unable to be self reflective, a key feature of free spirits. Without this ability, one would not be able to learn from their experiences and make their own judgments throughout life. Additionally, a noble’s pursuit of power is mainly focused on asserting dominance over others at the expense of those they deem “weak,” or “bad.” They manufacture this contrasting identification while free spirits create their own values in life, without the reliance on external validation.

A perfect example of a free spirit can be found within Huckleberry Finn from Mark Twain’s *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*. Huck defies societal norms by befriending a runaway slave named Jim. As he learns to question the values and prejudices of the society he was born into, he finds himself on a journey of self discovery and personal growth. If Huck was noble he would not try to test morality, and either ignore Jim or try to assume power over him as a slave.

In conclusion, the fundamental differences between these two concepts of Nietzsche lie in their motivations, values, and reasons for using their will to power. While nobles are driven by a desire for domination, free spirits are motivated by personal growth. These divergent paths make it impossible for a free spirit to be considered noble.

