

**Christa Davis Acampora and Keith Ansell Pearson**

*Nietzsche's Beyond Good and Evil: A Reader's Guide.*

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This is a book in the series of Continuum Reader's Guides, from which I have read no other titles. A good reader's guide should be like a good map in that it faithfully represents the territory without representing all of its features. The extent to which a map attempts to represent every feature of a territory is the extent to which it tries to do too much, and is itself in danger of trying to turn, at some point along that trajectory, into the territory itself. I cannot say that this volume attempts to do too much. It does not discuss identity, the law of excluded middle or historical sense, for example, three topics that several theorists have associated with *Beyond Good and Evil* (BGE). I believe it does enough to acquire an informative, map-like feel however, and for this reason I recommend this book for students and professors.

It has twelve chapters followed by a set of 40 Study Questions, a Guide to Further Reading, Notes and an Index. The chapters include a brief biography, an Overview of Themes, chapters on each of BGE's nine chapters, and a final chapter about "From High Mountains", the poem appearing at the end of BGE. The Overview briefly discusses each of around 170 of Nietzsche's individual, numbered passages in an attempt to outline the flow of specific themes and to prepare readers for later chapters. Its 20 pages help readers to see what is coming, what has gone before, and how BGE's parts relate to one another. Given that much of the literature on this work has concentrated on the first two chapters, it strikes me as a good idea to bring students and their teachers deeper into the work this way.

Around 120 brief passages, most of them only one sentence long, from the chapter called "Epigrams and Interludes" are skipped over here, but are discussed in a later chapter. Curiously, the authors hold that this collection of numbered sentences 'might be regarded as the "heart" of the book' (16). They hold that BGE 'has a definite organization and complex structure which can be grasped when looking at it as a whole' (8). In addition, the collection of numbered sentences 'provides significant insight into the organization and structure of the book and its project' (98). They see the aphorisms in this chapter as aligning with three broad themes: the uncanny power of philosophical prejudice, visions of liberation from these prejudices, and analyses of current conditions and prospects for free spirits. In addition, BGE was originally planned as a "sentence book", and this chapter maintains that style (16). So, although not featured in the Overview, Nietzsche's chapter of very brief remarks has a prominent place in the authors' take on things.

At times the authors pose and answer questions. They occasionally appeal to recent interpreters or bring in outside work. They make use of Nietzsche's unpublished notes and letters. They bring up his other published material as well, but for the most part BGE is the sole focus. *Human, All Too Human* and *Daybreak* do not appear in the index. The fact that BGE was written immediately after *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* is barely explored (5). The fact that *Toward a Genealogy of Morals* was written a year later putatively to clarify BGE is merely mentioned (6). The fact that BGE was written with a structure similar to that of *Human, All Too Human* goes unmentioned even though the authors argue that BGE does indeed have a structure to it, which is more than many theorists have conceded. This historical fact could have served the authors when

they asserted that 'Nietzsche fails to mention the memory of his own positivist phase' in his treatment of positivism (134). The phase in question had *Human, All Too Human* as its seminal work, and the treatment of positivism in BGE aligns closely with the treatment there. In this way it seems less likely that the memory has been forgotten, and more likely that it is being built upon.

Nevertheless, BGE has garnered a great deal of attention over the years, and it deserves a closely focused treatment like this one.

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