

THE DEATH OF FREEDOM

Hannah Zarr on the Insufficiency of
Nietzsche's Innovation

“. . .God or Man, Soul or Mind, Freedom or Communism.” Mankind must choose between those irreconcilable opposites, as stated by Whitaker Chambers in his book *Witness*.¹ Chambers said that two faiths were on trial.² The faith based on God and Soul and leads to Freedom stands against the faith based on Man and Mind that leads to Communism, which is a replacement of traditional morality. C.S. Lewis and Chambers advocated the former faith and Friedrich Nietzsche the latter. When Nietzsche declared “God is dead,” traditional morality died too, causing Nietzsche much exhilaration:

¹ Whittaker Chambers, *Witness*, 50th ed. (Washington, DC: Regnery Pub., 2001), 16.

² *Ibid.*, 4.

Indeed, we philosophers and "free spirits," feel, when we hear the news that "the old god is dead," as if a new dawn shone on us . . . At long last the horizon appears free to us again . . . at long last our ships may venture out again . . . the sea, *our* sea, lies open again; perhaps there has never yet been such an "open sea."³

Nietzsche thought his faith of Man and Mind would make mankind freer, giving man endless possibilities. **However, by putting Chambers's and Lewis's faith on trial against Nietzsche's faith, it becomes clear that when Nietzsche abolished all limits of the horizon, Nietzsche abolished man as well, transforming him into a beast in chains.**

Lewis's faith embraces what he calls for convenience the *Tao*. The *Tao* refers to what some people may call Natural Law or Traditional Morality.⁴ He shows that it is self-contradictory to try to invent new values if traditional values have been debunked: the new values will always consist of a fragment of the *Tao*; the values' validity comes from the *Tao*. Destroying the *Tao* would take away the very basis for the values in people's ideologies,

³ Friedrich Nietzsche, *Gay Science* (handout), 280.

⁴ C.S. Lewis, *The Abolition of Man, Or, Reflections On Education with Special Reference to the Teaching of English in the Upper Forms of Schools* (San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 2001), 43.

just as branches can't destroy the tree without destroying themselves.⁵ Lewis adds that rejecting the concept of value completely, however, is not contradictory. People could concede that there are no values at all if the *Tao* is rejected, but could then respond, "Very well: we shall probably find that we can get on quite comfortably without them."⁶ They will then declare that "ought" has just been psychological survival, and so everyone can now stop imagining value and decide for themselves what men should be and make them into that. This position states that men can master themselves and create their own destiny.⁷

That position is exactly what Nietzsche attempted to establish. As Lewis described, the Nietzschean ethic gets rid of traditional morals and leaves men with no foundation to make any value judgments.⁸ Nietzsche's morality is not an improvement upon the *Tao*, but is mere innovation.⁹ Nietzsche wanted to get rid of morality because he

⁵ Ibid., 44, 51.

⁶ Ibid., 51.

⁷ Ibid., 51.

⁸ Ibid., 46.

⁹ Ibid., 46.

believed it was a poisoner and slanderer of life.¹⁰ It restricted men from creating their own destiny because it is against a boundless freedom and “implants the need for limited horizons. . .teaching *the narrowing of our perspective.*”¹¹

Further, Nietzsche thought that under traditional morality, men could not decide for themselves who they wanted to be because the concept of guilt existed. Priests wanted to create for themselves the right to judge and punish. As a result, men were considered “free,” meaning every act had to be considered willed, so men might become guilty and deserving of punishment.¹² Thus, Nietzsche proclaimed that the “concept of ‘God’ was until now the greatest objection to existence. We deny God, we deny the responsibility in God; only thereby do we redeem the world.”¹³ Rejecting that responsibility to the priests’ or God’s morality could bring the greatest liberation.¹⁴ Nietzsche sought that freedom by declaring that God is dead: “. . . the belief in the Christian god has become unbelievable.” With God

¹⁰ Friedrich Nietzsche, *Twilight of the Idols* in Forrest E. Baird and Walter Arnold Kaufmann, *Philosophic Classics*, 5th ed. (Upper Saddle River, N.J.: Pearson/Prentice Hall, 2008-), 1034.

¹¹ Nietzsche, *Beyond Good and Evil* (handout), 292.

¹² Nietzsche, *Twilight of the Idols*, 1034.

¹³ *Ibid.*, 1035.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 1035.

“killed,” Nietzsche looked forward to what man could become now that he had unexhausted possibilities.¹⁵

Rather than unexhausted possibilities for mankind, traditional morality’s burial only opens the door of endless possibilities for some individuals. Lewis argues that “the power of Man to make himself what he pleases means . . . the power of some men to make other men what *they* please.”¹⁶ Since complete public ownership of materials, factories, and scientific research across all nations is impossible, when man gains power, it will inevitably only be a power possessed by some men who may allow others to profit by it or not.¹⁷ That power possessed by a few might not only affect the current generation, but other generations to come. If man gains the power through eugenics and science to make his descendants whom he pleases, all successors will be the result of a few exercising their power.¹⁸ They will thus not have freedom, for they will be subject to the “dead hand of the great planners and conditioners and will themselves exercise least power upon the

¹⁵ Nietzsche, *Beyond Good and Evil*, 308.

¹⁶ Lewis, 58.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 55-56.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 56-57.

future.”¹⁹ Such Planners and Conditioners have no norm they are subject to if the *Tao* has been abandoned, and thus can cut man into whatever shape they choose. In the past, teachers handed down values they had received, but now Conditioners can produce whatever judgments of value they want in their pupils. The Conditioners can control others by producing in the human race whatever artificial *Tao* they want to for their own personal gain.²⁰

Most people’s freedom is restricted by the few Conditioners in power. As already mentioned, Nietzsche claimed that priests invented traditional morality to have the right of being in control. However, traditional morality is not what gives men control—the abandonment of morality leads to that. The Conditioners make up a morality, an artificial *Tao*, to be in control. Nietzsche has not escaped a morality—a type of morality will still exist with the Conditioners—but now it will not be one based on an objective standard that is good for all mankind. Nietzsche envisioned the priests the same way Lewis envisioned the Conditioners, but Nietzsche had a wrong perception of the priests: the priests are under the *Tao* as well. “Only the *Tao* provides a common

¹⁹ Ibid., 58.

²⁰ Ibid., 62.

human law of action which can over-arch rulers and ruled alike.”²¹ Mankind’s freedom could stay intact because the *Tao* prevented the priests from taking arbitrary control of this generation and the ones to follow.

Furthermore, by throwing away the *Tao*, Conditioners reduced all mankind, including themselves, to raw material; thus, rather than man having endless possibilities, man has been abolished. As Lewis explains, “Man’s final conquest has proved to be the abolition of Man.”²² Conditioners have sacrificed their own traditional humanity to decide what “Humanity” will mean.²³ In deciding, they cannot be motivated by such things as a sense of duty, or a desire to preserve the species, for those are part of the *Tao*. Their only motivation can be their own pleasure.²⁴ They must merely take their impulses as they come, dependent on chance. In other words, they’re dependent on Nature. Without the *Tao*, men cannot be trained in which impulses are correct, and they become what Lewis calls “Men without Chests.”²⁵ Men cannot know which

²¹ Ibid., 73.

²² Ibid., 64.

²³ Ibid., 63.

²⁴ Ibid., 64-65.

²⁵ Ibid., 25.

emotional states are rational without objective value.²⁶ Therefore, the human race is subjected to some individual men who are in turn subjected to their own irrational impulses.²⁷ Nature, not constrained by values, is in charge of the Conditioners and thus humanity. Man is merely raw material to be manipulated, not by himself, but by appetite, by the Nature which is controlling the dehumanized Conditioners. Nature has conquered man.²⁸

Further, when Nietzsche eradicated man's responsibility to God, he may have freed man from guilt, but in doing so, he took away the essence of true freedom in man. Nietzsche claims man's essence is fatalistic. Free will does not exist.²⁹ Nietzsche therefore must think that only external freedom from traditional morality is important. Chambers, on the other hand, believes that freedom is a need of the soul, and external freedom is only an aspect of the interior freedom of the soul. Chambers declares that "Without freedom the soul dies. Without the soul there is no justification for freedom." The Communist (materialistic) view is

²⁶ Ibid., 19.

²⁷ Ibid., 67.

²⁸ Ibid., 68.

²⁹ Nietzsche, *Twilight of the Idols*, 1034-1035.

that man is no more than atoms in nature coming together by chance.³⁰ If that is the case, freedom cannot be justified because there is nothing in an atom's essence that requires freedom. Freedom is a need of a Soul, not of an atom.

Additionally, if Nietzsche is seeking an external freedom through Man and Mind, that freedom is just a façade if there is no freedom of the Soul. If man's essence is fatalistic instead of free, and man has no responsibility for his actions, man actually has no real choice and can merely appear to be free externally. He cannot be blamed for what his atoms determine him to do. That is why "God alone is the inciter and guarantor of freedom," and so religion and freedom are thus inseparable, according to Chambers.³¹ When Nietzsche separated freedom from religion, trying to eradicate limits by denying God's existence, in the process he created the most restrictive limit yet: no freedom of the Soul. By trying to open the door to every possibility, freeing people from the locked doors of "thou shalt not's" within traditional morality, Nietzsche instead slammed the door to every possibility except one: the mere external appearance of freedom.

³⁰ Chambers, 16.

³¹ Ibid.

Nietzsche's declaration that God is dead helped build a bridge to Communism. Communism is an example of Nietzsche's philosophy put into practice, and it is anything but the beautiful rhetorical picture of exhilaration and opportunity that Nietzsche painted. "Communism is what happens when, in the name of Mind, men free themselves from God."³² Communism is the vision of man without God and is the vision of man's liberated mind redirecting man's destiny.³³ Communists, warmed by the light of the vision, close their eyes to the crimes and horrors that are inseparable from its politics.³⁴ Without the *Tao*, there is nothing that can claim those things are wrong. The only freedom Nietzsche offered man is the freedom to commit horrors without guilt. Under Nietzsche's system, no instinct is wrong, so sentiment and emotion have not been trained by the *Tao*. Communists become the "Men without Chests." Thus, most do not hear the screams of those suffering under the horrors of Communism. Chambers was a communist who eventually heard the screams of agony though. They reached beyond his Mind to his Soul, and he was able to see beyond the vision of the Almighty Man and stand before the

³² Ibid.

³³ Ibid., 9.

³⁴ Ibid., 13.

Fact of God.³⁵ He then could see that his need for Freedom could only be met by choosing God and the Soul.

Nietzsche thought he was gaining more freedom and the power to control his own destiny by “killing” God and traditional morality. In reality, the result of that “murder” is the death of man. Man has been turned into an animal, only being able to make decisions by following the strongest impulse or instinct. The “animal” is even in chains, because it has no actual free choice, having been enslaved by the deterministic atoms that form it. Nietzsche gloried in the possibility of horizons being washed away and seas opened up, but no man is even left in the boat to explore the open sea because Nietzsche’s theory has abolished man. Nietzsche’s “new dawn” should not be met with exhilaration, but with mourning for the death of man and his freedom.

³⁵ Ibid., 15.

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"The Death of Freedom"

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