

**Nietzsche, Friedrich, *On The Genealogy of Morals (Zur Genealogie der Moral)*.
Translated by Douglas Smith. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996.**

Friedrich Nietzsche (1844-1900) was one of Germany's most controversial and influential philosophical lights. He held the chair of classical philology at University of Bonn, Switzerland, which he resigned in 1879, after ten years, due to deteriorating health. Nietzsche wrote the bulk of his works in the six years before he was institutionalized because his mental health collapsed.

Preface

Preface, §1: Humans do not know themselves and this state of affairs is necessarily so.

Preface, §2: The subject of this book is the origin of moral prejudices. Philosophers' ideas must be unified and interdependent, not isolated or fragmentary.

Preface, §3: The question that has bothered Nietzsche from childhood is the origin of the notions of good and evil. The question became for him another: What caused man to invent the ideas of good and evil? What is their purpose?

Preface, §4: Nietzsche's thoughts on good and evil were spurred by his rejection of the theses of Paul Ree's book, *The Origin of Moral Sensations* (1877). Ree was Nietzsche's friend.

Preface, §5: Valuing compassion leads mankind toward great danger, toward a new Buddhism or nihilism. Nietzsche rejects Schopenhauer.

Preface, §6: Morality itself (the morality of compassion) may itself be the force that prevents human progress, and "good" men may be a narcotic that by which we live presently at the expense of the future.

Preface, §7: No other philosophers have been willing to join Nietzsche in his philosophical views.

Preface, §8: Nietzsche's *Zarathustra* and *Beyond Good and Evil* present difficulties in reading. They require a now-lost reading skill: rumination.

First Essay: 'Good and Evil', 'Good and Bad'

First Essay, §1. The English philosophers are enigmas and are by this fact interesting, unlike their books. They do not seek truth because some truths do not appeal to them.

First Essay, §2. The English philosophers justify their concept of "good" by reference to utility, forgetting, and habit. Their thought is essentially unhistorical. The "good" was so designated by the powerful and imposed by them upon the common people. There exists an emotional gap between the powerful and the common. There is no necessary connection between good and compassionate action. Only when aristocratic value-judgments declined did the "good equals compassionate" connection grow prevalent.

First Essay, §3. The English philosophers also err when they argue that the origin of good and evil has been forgotten.

First Essay, §4. Certain etymological speculations provide Nietzsche with insight into a lost history that supports his view. Words associated with the aristocracy recall "good," while words associated with common people recall "evil" or "badness." This is a fundamental insight.

First Essay, §5. The etymological argument is fleshed out. The Aryan race was the conqueror of the non-Aryans in Germany, but now finds itself in an inferior position.

First Essay, §6. Some aristocracies became priestly, which made "everything more dangerous." With the priests, humans became more interesting animals, because the soul became deeper and more evil.

First Essay, §7. The Jewish priesthood took revenge on the aristocrats by inverting (*transvaluing*) their values. The Jews made the powerless into the good, putting the world as it should be on its head. This is the *slave revolt in morals*, not two thousand years old.

First Essay, §8. The Jewish conspiracy of revenge culminated in Jesus. Cleverly, the Jews rejected him, creating in him a most dangerous bait by which to perfect Israel's *transvaluation of all values*.

First Essay, §9. Slave morality has won. The church propagated the poison, but has itself become so repellent that it now hinders the progress of the poison.

First Essay, §10. The slave revolt in morals began when resentment became creative, ordaining values. Slave morality is reactive; aristocratic morality is spontaneous and self-generative. The man of resentment (that is, the slave) does not deal with others uprightly. The slave's soul squints. In the end, slaves must become more clever than aristocrats (the nobles) because slaves practice deceit.

First Essay, §11. The evil of slave morality is the noble aristocracy. The bad of the aristocracy is an afterthought. The aristocracy is exemplified historically by the Romans, Arabs, Germans, Japanese nobility, Homeric heroes, and Scandinavian Vikings. They have customs among themselves, but in the wilderness are wild, committing a horrific succession of crimes as though they were student pranks. Blonde German animalism is the soul of all the aristocracies. The real goal of culture is to domesticate the noble aristocracies.

First Essay, §12. The smell of the entrails of a failed soul is worse than any other of life's displeasures. European man goes constantly downhill, becoming more tame. He wearies us—this is nihilism, to be weary of man. Nietzsche prays to see a noble man, a reason to retain faith in mankind.

First Essay, §13. Nietzsche proffers the memorable analogy of *lambs and eagles* (or large birds of prey). Doing is everything; no "being" exists metaphysically behind the doing. Slave morality argues that eagles can become lambs, and then blames eagles for failing to do so. Slave morality is self-deception, for it makes weakness an incapacity, to which the slave knows no alternative, a path of merit.

First Essay, §14. The workshop of slave morality (where weakness is transformed into merit) is described. Impotent failure to retaliate becomes goodness; craven fear becomes humility. Submission to those one hates is obedience. Patience is hesitation at the threshold. In the theory of salvation, God beats those whom he most loves. Revenge and hatred are cloaked as justice.

First Essay, §15. The Kingdom of God and a life lived in faith, hope, and love will require an eternity in compensation, so much is given up in so living. Nietzsche indulges long Latin quotations from Aquinas and Tertullian.

First Essay, §16. The battle between noble and slave morality has raged for thousands of years. Slave morality has prevailed. Now the battle has been psychologized; noble men fight the inroads of resentment within themselves. The battle is a battle between Rome and the Jews. In Napoleon, a man out of time, the ideal of the noble aristocracy emerged in flesh and blood. Napoleon was a synthesis of the inhuman and the superhuman.

First Essay, §17. Aristocratic morality, presently in abeyance, will flare up again. We should wish for this most strongly. Nietzsche includes a note to the academic community proposing that it set its program to consider the issues Nietzsche has been raising. His morality challenges the presupposition that good for the many is superior to good for the few. The fundamental task of the philosopher henceforth will be to establish the hierarchy of values.

Second Essay: 'Guilt', 'Bad Conscience', and Related Matters

Second Essay, §1. Man is an animal entitled to make promises. In promising, the healthy operation of active forgetfulness is suspended, and a man exercises a memory of the will. To do so presupposes that man himself has become regular, calculable, and necessary in his future acts.

Second Essay, §2. Man is regularized by the strait-jacket of the morality of custom. When this process has run its course, the sovereign individual results, who is entitled to make promises. The sovereign individual is the ultimate completion of man and he bestows respect or contempt on others. This bestowal is responsibility, and the sovereign individual's instinct for it is his conscience.

Second Essay, §3. The noble conscience is purchased at the price of remembering. The technique of memory is pain. Only what hurts incessantly is remembered. Consider the harshness of ancient punishments. The fruits—reason, seriousness, emotional control—were purchased at tremendous cost.

Second Essay, §4. Bad conscience (or guilt) derives from relationship between creditor and debtor. Guilt (Schuld) leads to debt (schulden). There exists an ancient idea of the equivalence of damage done and consequent pain inflicted on the doer.

Second Essay, §5. A promisor pledges something to show the earnestness of his promise. Ultimately, he pledges his body. The creditor accepts this arrangement because, upon default, he gets to exercise the power of the masters—doing evil for the mere pleasure of it. A contract entitles the promise-maker to a right of cruelty.

Second Essay, §6. Breach of contract caused displeasure; the extraordinary pleasure of inflicting suffering on the breacher compensates the injured party. This cruelty was, in ancient times, a part of every festivity. Seeing suffering is exceeded only by causing it; the agony makes a festival.

Second Essay, §7. The progress of slave morality is one of man learning shame. Man learns disgust of life. Man learns to be ashamed of all his instincts, to pinch his nose as he examines himself. The problem of evil and suffering now argues against existence, but in noble morality it argued for life. Suffering causes outrage, not because of the pain, but because of its meaninglessness. Man invented gods so there would be no meaningless or hidden suffering. By inventing gods, man justified his evil. In noble morality, suffering was a show for gods. Philosophers invented free will so that the world would be brimming with plots and subplots and never become tiresome to the gods.

Second Essay, §8. Responsibility and guilt derive from the thinking that accompanies commerce. This may be the earliest form of thinking, and constitutes thinking *per se*. Man is the animal that measures. Society derives from these economic relations. The great generalization of moral justice, that any debt can be repaid, is the ground of slave morality.

Second Essay, §9. Society and its members are creditor-debtor. The criminal breaks his promise to the community, is cast out, and suffers the fate of a warring outsider.

Second Essay, §10. As society grows more powerful, it reduces punishment for criminals. The measure of a creditor's (society's) wealth is how much harm it can sustain without suffering. So, justice began with the dictum, "Every debt can and must be paid," and it ends with society ignoring the debts of those unable to pay. Justice cancels itself out, as does every good thing on earth. The self-cancellation of justice is grace. And grace is an attribute of noble morality.

Second Essay, §11. Anti-Semitism, especially as stated by Dühring (father of anti-Semitism) is slave morality and resentment. Bad conscience derives from resentment. Justice tempers and diverts the rage of slave morality against the criminal. It does so by establishing law. Life, outside law, naturally operates by means that, within law, would be deemed criminal. Dühring's cliché, that each will must recognize every other will as equal, leads to the destruction and dissolution of man. Equality exhausts man, and leads to nothingness.

Second Essay, §12. Moral theorists have heretofore proceeded naively, believing the current use of a practice reflects its ultimate origin. For example, punishment exists to exact revenge or work deterrence. This theory is false. Everything gets reinterpreted in a process that manipulates past forms to present desires. The *will to power* uses everything to work its own interests. Form and meaning are fluid; they do not signify progress toward a goal. Progress would be to sacrifice the mass of humanity to promote a single stronger species of man. The democratic prejudice against the aristocracy is "misarchism" (Greek for hatred of power). Misarchism leads one to neglect the fact that activity is essential. The will to power reshapes everything; it gives form to life.

Second Essay, §13. To consider a particular example, punishment has enduring customs, but fluid meanings. In Europe, punishment has a synthesis of sometimes contradictory meanings; it is beyond definition. Ideas without actual historical context can be defined. Historical ideas cannot. Nietzsche lists some European meanings of punishment.

Second Essay, §14. Slave morality presumes that punishment creates a sense of guilt (bad conscience) in criminals. This is empirically false. Punishment hardens the criminal. The justice system does to the criminal just what that system punishes the criminal for doing, a fundamental hypocrisy. In prehistory, under noble morality, the aristocrat did not view the criminal as guilty, but only as one who caused harm. The criminal received punishment like a piece of his fate.

Second Essay, §15. Punishment increases fear, inculcates prudence, and urges control of desire. It tames man, but does not make him better. Punishment, insofar as it tames a man, makes him worse.

Second Essay, §16. Bad conscience arises when man's wild instincts are turned by society back upon man himself. Instincts that are not externally vented turn inwards—"soul" develops in man. The great and sinister sickness of this—man's suffering from man, from himself.

Second Essay, §17. The State derived when Germanic aristocrats seized power violently and suddenly. There was no social contract. A living structure of domination was created. This structure crushed the freedom of the slave masses. This repressed mass freedom gave rise to slave morality, the origin of bad conscience.

Second Essay, §18. Slave morality exercises the will to power against itself, psychologically. In aristocrats, the will to power takes others as its object. A slave is voluntarily divided against himself in his complicated and self-defeating motivations. The value of selflessness derives from slave bad conscience.

Second Essay, §19. A sense of obligation to the primordial forefathers of one's race-community grows as the prosperity of the community grows. Ultimately, this growth makes gods of the forefathers.

Second Essay, §20. Empires that seek to be universal seek to impose deities that are universal. For example, Christianity exports global guilt. Atheism may release mankind from guilt, and generate a second innocence.

Second Essay, §21. Bad conscience gets entangled with the concept of god. The growth of guilt, of obligation, to the progenitors (now deified) grows, so the impossibility of compensation becomes plain. So, Christianity had a stroke of genius: God pays himself back, out of love (incredible proposition).

Second Essay, §22. The slave invents an absolute idea—the idea of God and human sin—and proceeds to torture himself with this idea. Man is a sad, insane beast. Slave morality is fixated on this idea, and has lost touch with the animalistic activity. The earth is a mad house.

Second Essay, §23. God-concepts need not defile man, as does the Christian concept. The Greek gods were used to keeping bad conscience at bay.

Second Essay, §24. The West is heir to slave morality, which comprises centuries of self-mutilation of human conscience. Any attempt to reverse this state of affairs may now be impossible. It would require a different kind of spirit, a sublime wickedness, a self-assured intellectual malice, which belongs to great health. This "man of the future" will liberate us from the Christian god and the nihilism that God engenders. He is the Antichrist.

Second Essay, §25. The Antichrist is Zarathustra.

Third Essay: What is the Meaning of Ascetic Ideals?

Third Essay, §1. The meaning of the ascetic idea: for artists, nothing or too much; for philosophers, an instinct for high spirituality; for women, the charming flesh of a pretty animal; for the masses, struggle against pain and boredom by the fiction of being too good for this world. You don't understand. Humans must have goals, even if the goal is nothingness. The will has a horror of vacuum.

Third Essay, §2. Wagner adopted the ascetic ideal at the end of his life (much to Nietzsche's disgust). Wagner inverted himself. Luther's wedding (an unfinished Wagner opera) would have been a disgusting hymn to chastity. Luther himself, however, had the courage of his sensuality, which he called "Protestant freedom." Those who worship chastity are unsuccessful swine. What are these swine to us?

Third Essay, §3. Parsifal (a character in Wagner's opera) frees a king by the power of compassion. Did Wagner want us to take Parsifal seriously? Perhaps Wagner used Parsifal to laugh at himself—this is the height of artistic greatness. But if we take Parsifal seriously, he represents hatred of knowledge, spirit, sensuality, and a return to the sickly ideals of Christianity and obscurantism. The young Wagner preferred Feuerbach's healthy sensuality to the blood of the redeemer.

Third Essay, §4. The artist must be separated from his work. An artist is not his work. Parsing the psychological origin of artistic works is vivisection of the spirit. An artist is the womb or manure in which a work of art grows. As with pregnancy, the bloating and pain must be forgotten before the child can be enjoyed. So, an artist is a step back from reality. Homer is not

Achilles; Goethe is no Faust. The artistic whim is to reach over into the real. Parsifal (for Wagner) was one such fateful and disastrously misleading reach.

Third Essay, §5. Artists are the valets of men of true conviction. For example, Wagner is subservient to Schopenhauer. What does it mean when a true aristocrat like Schopenhauer acclaims the ascetic ideal? Wagner adopted Schopenhauer because the latter elevated music theoretically. Music was, to Schopenhauer, the most authentic and original of the arts. It spoke the language of will itself. And so, the musician rose in value too suddenly. The musician became the ventriloquist of God, speaking metaphysics. The ascetic ideal could not be far behind.

Third Essay, §6. Kant defines the beautiful as what pleases without interest. This is consistent with Kant's emphasis on impersonality and universal validity. But this thought, adopted by Schopenhauer is grossly off-track. To Schopenhauer, the beautiful suppresses desire and interest. Stendahl shows Schopenhauer's error. Stendahl says that beauty arouses the will. So to answer his question [of §3:5: What does it mean when a true aristocrat acclaims the ascetic ideal?], a philosopher who praises the ascetic ideal wishes to be freed from a form of torture.

Third Essay, §7. Philosophers have affection for the ascetic ideal, so much so that married philosophers are a study in comedy. A philosopher who affirms the ascetic ideal merely affirms himself as a philosopher. He is not denying his existence. He is making the world safe for him and his philosopher kind.

Third Essay, §8. Nietzsche considers philosophers. They value the ascetic not as a negation, but as freedom to be themselves, undisturbed by the world's concerns. They are leashed dogs, one and all. Philosophers dislike hatreds and friendships. They avoid big words and Truth, which they find boastful. Their chastity is seeking fertility in the spirit, in making the world think like them. Philosophers disdain their worldly existence, preferring universals. Schopenhauer fits this model. But he was wrong.

Third Essay, §9. Philosophy needed the ascetic ideal to find its self-confidence. Having found confidence, it learned pride, and taught it to the whole world. We are proud toward God, whom we view as a spider weaving his moral web behind causality. We are even proud toward ourselves, dissecting our souls. Good things now were previously bad; sins have become virtues.

Third Essay, §10. Philosophers, and the contemplative spirit generally, have throughout the ages been compelled to conceal themselves from the culture. They have disguised themselves in the form of the spiritual man of an earlier age: the shaman, priest, prophet, magician, and even the ascetic ideal. Philosophers have even come to believe the ascetic ideal, since they were forced to represent and believe it. Without doing so, their existence was not possible. But they were caterpillars. Have things changed? Is there enough boldness and spiritual will now for the philosophers to spread their bright and dangerous wings on the earth?

Third Essay, §11. The ascetic priest helps us understand the essay's question: What is the meaning of ascetic ideals? The ascetic ideal is a bridge from this life to another existence, calling one to retrace this life's path back to the point of beginning. Seen from outside, the ascetic ideal leads one to assume all earthly life dwells in profound frustration and disappointment concerning life as a whole, and derives pleasure only from its own pain. The ascetic priest does not reproduce biologically, and yet life itself does not let the ascetic priests die out. Ascetic priesthood serves life itself. Ascetic priests seek not to control a piece of life, but life itself. They deny life, and replace it with a jealous atrophy, pain, self-mutilations. Ascetic priests imagine their agonies are triumphs. "*Crux, nux, lux*" (Cross, nothingness, light): the ascetic priest holds all as one.

Third Essay, §12. If one could induce an ascetic priest to philosophize, he would seek error. For example, Vedanta (Indian) philosophy denies subject and object, pain, diversity. They are wrong. Kant argues that the only way to know the "intelligible character of things" is to note that they are entirely beyond our grasp. It is good to see differently, because this prepares one for objectivity. But objectivity is not disinterested daydreaming, but rather gathering arguments for and against to be deployed as weapons. Philosophers must abandon their old view of objectivity with its observer without perspective. Perspectival seeing and knowing are the only kinds of seeing and knowing that exist. The more perspectives the better. To suspend perspectives (feeling) is to castrate the intellect.

Third Essay, §13. Paradoxically, the ascetic priest, in his negation of life, is attempting to protect himself by desperate means. Why is the ascetic priest sick? He has abandoned his essence. He was destined for courage and wonder, but now wallows in despondent disinterest.

Third Essay, §14. What is of greatest concern is that the ascetic priest's disgust and compassion will breed, producing global nihilism. This could happen now. Everything has the smell of the asylum, the hospital. Weak people most undermine life. They poison an aristocrat's trust in life, in himself. Weak people conspire against the well-constituted man, whom they hate. Women in particular are unsurpassed in their refinement of sickness. Everywhere the sick wrestle the healthy. The sick's favorite sound is righteous indignation. They seek to make the aristocrat doubt his right to good fortune and feel disgrace. The sick should not infect the healthy.

Third Essay, §15. The ascetic priest exists to tend to the sickly. Such ministrations cannot be the task of the healthy, the aristocrat. The ascetic priest defends the herd, for he can summon contempt more easily than hatred. The ascetic priest wounds before he heals, and then poisons the wound before binding it. In the herd's desire to have its pain anaesthetized lies the root of the ascetic ideal. The herd says, Someone must be to blame for the fact that I do not feel well. And the ascetic priest enters the scene to say, That is correct. The cause of your sickness is you yourself. Thus is the direction of the herd's resentment changed from outward to inward.

Third Essay, §16. Life itself has a healing instinct, and it inoculated the world to some degree from the ascetic priests by destroying them through themselves. Human sinfulness is not a fact, but an interpretation of facts, as is spiritual suffering.

Third Essay, §17. Is the ascetic priest a physician? No, he only combats the sick man's listlessness, not the causes of it. Christianity anesthetizes. All the great religions struggle against listlessness of epidemic proportions. The listlessness is physiological, the result of miscegenation of races, classes, climate, racial old age, blood-poisoning, malaria, syphilis, and so forth, but is treated only psychologically and morally. This is in fact what a religion is and does. Religion depresses life and makes consciousness impossible. Buddhist and Indian religions urge a state beyond good and evil.

Third Essay, §18. The priestly ascetic also prescribes for listlessness a resort to the work. Mechanical activity can occupy a person's mind wholly. Also, the priestly ascetics organize the herd's instinct to congregate. The strong tend to disperse and join forces only with reticence. The weak congregate naturally.

Third Essay, §19. The means of ameliorating the listlessness of the herd so far discussed have been honest. We now turn to the guilty means: excess of emotion. How can an excess of emotion be generated? Only by dishonest lies. The honest liar knows he lies. The ascetic priest lies to all, especially himself.

Third Essay, §20. The ascetic ideal influences even the philosopher to mistrust himself. Florid and voluminous emotion alleviates listlessness. The ascetic priest harnesses such emotions like a "pack of wild dogs." Such excesses provide only temporary relief, each such treatment serves only to make the patient sicker. The ascetic priest generates emotional excess by manipulation of guilt. The parishioner's listlessness lifts temporarily while being castigated for his sins, and so he cries for more and more agony.

Third Essay, §21. Excess of emotion tames, weakens, discourages, pampers, and emasculates a person. It spreads physical illness: ruined nervous system, epilepsy, paralysis, depression, hysteria, somnambulism, death-wishes. The ascetic ideal's imposition of sin, and the emotional explosions that attend it, are a ruinous European pandemic.

Third Essay, §22. The ascetic priest ruins not only the physiology, but also the mind. Consider the New Testament. Nietzsche has no love for it, for its characters are weak. In the Old Testament, one encounters great men, heroic deeds, strong hearts. New Testament figures vomit their inner stupidities, and imagine intimacies with God. Luther found the church insufficiently German. He wanted to talk directly to God, and he did so. The ascetic ideal lacks good manners, because it flees moderation.

Third Essay, §23. The ascetic ideal has ruined many other things besides physiology and mind, but that is beyond the scope of this work. Why has an effective opposition ideal not risen to fight the ascetic ideal? Nietzsche says he is terrified. Some suggest that science is such an opposition ideal. But science has no self-confidence. Science is an elevated form of the ascetic ideal. Scientists should be shaken to consciousness.

Third Essay, §24. Are the anti-cultural freethinkers the opposition ideal? First, they are believers, not in God, but in their ideals. Belief establishes a probability of illusion. Believing in truth leads to the ascetic ideal. For in the ascetic ideal, which has dominated philosophy for so long, God is metaphysically the truth, and the truth is divine. But God may be our most ancient lie. If one denies the ascetic ideal, not as the cultural freethinkers do, but in fact, then a new problem comes to the fore: what then is the value of truth? The value of truth must be called into question.

Third Essay, §25. Science is not the opposition to the ascetic ideal. Science aids the ascetic. The two have the same foundation: an overestimation of the value of truth, the conviction that truth itself need not be questioned. Art is a better candidate for the opposition to the ascetic ideal, though some artists corrupt themselves by serving the ascetic ideal with their works. Science can itself be viewed as a problem, What is the meaning of science? Science, by dethroning man from the center of all things, has made his spiritual needs even greater, further diminishing man's self-respect. Kant severed the transcendentalists from theology, for which they thank him heartily. But the transcendentalists themselves, worshipping the great question mark in their agnosticism, nevertheless serve the ascetic ideal, depreciating man.

Third Essay, §26. Is modern historiography a spirit opposing the ascetic ideal? No, it is ascetic and even nihilistic. It is dominated by armchair blowhards who disgust, offend, and try the patience. Nietzsche has great respect for the ascetic ideal, provided the proponent honestly believes it. These scholars merely pretend. They excite the herd sentiments of the people, and stultify the German mind.

Third Essay, §27. So, we leave the search for the opposition ideal. The only enemy of the ascetic ideal is the man who pretends this ideal without really holding it, for those people make others suspicious. We call it atheism where the spirit works against the ascetic ideal. But even atheism is not the opposition, for it still seeks truth, and so is one of the final forms of the ascetic ideal. What will destroy the ascetic ideal? What defeated the Christian God? Christian morality defeats itself. Christian truth draws one conclusion after another, and now draws its final conclusion—against itself.

Third Essay, §28. Apart from the ascetic ideal, man has no meaning, a condition from which man suffers. Meaninglessness, not suffering, troubles mankind. The ascetic ideal gave suffering a meaning. As such, the ascetic ideal saved the human will from self-destructive nihilism. But the will which the ascetic ideal saved is the will to nothingness. A man prefers to will oblivion than nothing at all.