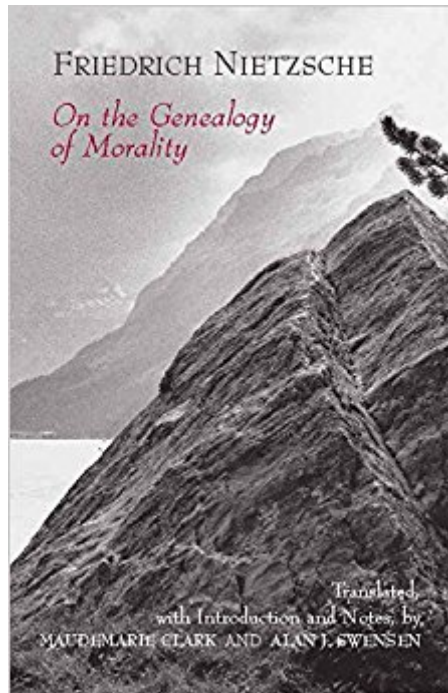




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On The Genealogy Of Morality



Synopsis

This new edition is the product of a collaboration between a Germanist and a philosopher who is also a Nietzsche scholar. The translation strives not only to communicate a sense of Nietzsche's style but also to convey his meaning accurately and thus to be an important advance on previous translations of this work. A superb set of notes ensures that Clark and Swensen's *Genealogy* will become the new edition of choice for classroom use.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Hackett's *On the Genealogy of Morality* (we now have even the correct title!) may very well change the entire climate for reading Nietzsche in English--especially if read in conjunction with their equally splendid *Twilight of the Idols*. . . . Competing translations of Nietzsche's late, utterly influential masterpieces have often made them a chore, rather than a delight, to read; and their introductions generally obscure, rather than illuminate, the texts' situations. Clark and Swensen (and Polt and Strong) have made the *Genealogy* and *Twilight* accessible and exhilarating--while leaving them, as they are, enigmatic and problematic. Finally, readers of Nietzsche in English can--begin!--William Arctander O'Brien, University of California, San Diego
This unique collaboration of an internationally renowned Nietzsche commentator and a scholar of German language and literature has yielded the finest existing edition of Nietzsche's book in English. The translation itself strikes an intelligent balance between fidelity to the German and readability in English. It is especially welcome for bringing an historically and philosophically sensitive appreciation of Nietzsche to bear on translation issues. (The decision

to translate Mitleid consistently as 'compassion,' instead of 'pity'--thus emphasizing for the English-language reader Nietzsche's opposition to Schopenhauer's moral philosophy--is but one of many examples.) The Introduction is the most philosophically substantial guide to the Genealogy in any edition, and will be of value to both student and specialist. Most remarkable of all are the notes on the text: the wealth of biographical, historical, philosophical, and literary detail makes the volume the most informative and reader-friendly edition of Nietzsche's work to date. The notes will also prove fascinating for the scholar, as the editors have tracked down the numerous contemporary scholarly sources on which Nietzsche relied in writing the Genealogy.--Brian Leiter, University of Texas at Austin
This is an excellent translation. The copious and detailed endnotes will make it easy for a beginner to grasp Nietzsche's thought--Fred Clark, Colorado State University

Text: English (translation) Original Language: German --This text refers to the Hardcover edition.

My niece recommended it. A bright brute.

Worked well for my philosophy class

Cool.

as advertised

mint

Very good translation of Nietzsche best and perhaps only essential book. Not only is it his most accessible and systematic book, it contains his most original and important insight: that western morality has its origins in the historical dynamic between the noble and common classes. The Christian ethics of humility, chastity and hard work, is the result of a post-ancient "slave revolt" whereby the priestly class took over European society in the Middle Ages. Postmodern philosophers such as Deleuze and Foucault have noticed that this very moral system laid the foundation for the bourgeois or Capitalist ethics of productivism: the notion that one's moral value depends on their constant labor for human society. At the heart of this book is a powerful and original conception of debt relations as the engine of this morality, or the apparatus by which humans are instilled with a

bad conscience to work as much as possible. Just as the Christian God is the symbol of the infinite guilt His subjects feel (starting with the doctrine of original sin and culminating in the bankruptcy of the self-forgiven debt that is the crucifixion of God), capital-money is the infinite debt we are all born into - the need for money to live and the need to work constantly for it. Great book for those who want to understand the world and who are sick of feeling ashamed for the joy that comes with that understanding. Nietzsche's analysis of Western society helps us identify the "ressentiment" that lies behind our desire to be good people, so that we may avoid it and seek to be better people for the honor and self-satisfaction instead. In that sense, this book is a good, if very dark, supplement to Spinoza's Ethics.

Reading and understanding much of Nietzsche's work requires broad based knowledge in history, physiology, comparative religion, and philosophy. However, you can read as a layman and get the general gist of what Nietzsche is up to. There's a sublime poetry to his work. Even if you do not see the world as he does, you will still be taken and transported by his madness and genius. Everyone should read the third part of this book, a rousing broadside against Christian morality, which he likens to a sickness. He says the denial of the self and the desire for capital letter Truth has held mankind back for millennia. It's beautiful writing, building and building to an exciting crescendo. It sounds odd to our ears and eyes today to come across someone who thinks misunderstanding, artifice, cruelty and radical subjectivism are the things that make the human animal great and unique. It's when we begin to feel bad about what we have created that causes man to fall away from his destiny. Nietzsche would have been nauseated by our dependence on science and our desire to understand reality beyond its surface. He says that it is taking away our meaning and our will to live. Nietzsche praises values of the lords and despises the values of the serf or slave. The noble have the courage and the lust to mold reality in line with a vision that loves itself as *causa sui*. There is a certain internal logic to the idea that things like kindness would not exist if not for vindictiveness and cruelty. He says that kindness was permitted for the strong as rest from oneself. This is the central theme of the first two parts of the book. As I said in the beginning of this review, it is helpful to understand something about Nietzsche's literary references as he makes his case. But it would take the dedication of a lifetime to fully understand the picture that he paints in his books. I'm having a heck of a time doing a summary right now. There's a richness to the work that I'm not capable of really explaining to you. You just have to experience it for yourself and come away with your own interpretation. Be careful, because Nietzsche is easy to misunderstand. Charges of being the grandfather of Nazism are misplaced (he was a fierce critic of the Germanic people and

Europeans in general), and it is false that he is an anti-Semite. If you read carefully, he has reverence for Jews and their angry god. It's Christians that he can't tolerate. There are ironies that cannot be ignored while reading this, especially if you know something about Nietzsche's life. He was sick most of the time during his productive years, an opium addict, and a spurned lover. One gets the sense that Nietzsche writes about power the way he does because he lacked it. In a way, he does admit this, that he is not the superhuman he wants to come forth. He's the herald, sketching out what the new man freed from what we call morality would look like. He also freely admits (in another book, *Beyond Good And Evil*) that philosophy is a confessional on the part of the philosopher. Nietzsche believes in atheism, yet admires the gods of antiquity. At times, Nietzsche is unreadable when he talks about things like race and sex. The relative inferiority of this group or that are stupid prejudices passed off as noble privilege. Beware of his work if you can't get past this. Nietzsche's work is rather destructive in general, and he's not shy in describing it as such. This is philosophy that stings and challenges your values. You will either come out with your convictions stronger than ever, or find yourself suddenly adrift with no meaning in your life. Me, I'm happy I'm a modern man. The fondness for atheism and distaste for Christianity is something I have in common with Nietzsche, but I think his love for power and deception are all wet. I don't feel sick because I believe in the transformative power of goodness and inquiry. For me, that is how we become the supermen, men that can save the world from wretchedness. I'm not too concerned about the history of my values, and furthermore I am the causa sui of the ones I hold. There is plenty of meaning in understanding the truth about reality, however evasive it might be. We overcome our animal selves in this manner. That is not sickness, everything we know today is awe inspiring, not depressing as Nietzsche tries to argue. It's exciting to be alive when we know so much, and know that there is yet more discovery to come. And it belongs to everybody, not just a select few. So I disagree with Nietzsche's characterization of people like me. I don't subscribe to his more atavistic ravings. But if you love words and like to be challenged, you will be hard-pressed to find anything like Friedrich Nietzsche. Five stars for the incredible reach of this work even if its conclusions are appalling at times.

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