

Guidelines for Critiques Intro. to Philosophy (Beals)

The *purpose* of a critique is to demonstrate your ability to *summarize* the arguments of a noted philosopher and *examine* their arguments in light of the ideas of other thinkers who dealt with the same issues. For each critique, you will select an article from the Voices of Wisdom text, drawing on the Invitation text and related articles in Voices to discuss the strengths and weaknesses of the position presented in your chosen article. For example, if your article defends "common sense realism," you might raise some of Descartes' arguments against relying on sense experience.

Your critique should include your own reflections upon the issues being raised (not just expressing an opinion, but examining the arguments). You should note any logical fallacies, inconsistencies or vagueness you find in the article. Be as specific as possible about your objections. For example, if you note an inconsistency, don't just say the article was inconsistent but note the specific passage that reveals an inconsistency, and describe the problem. Just saying an article "doesn't make sense" or is "unclear" won't do. Relating the article to real-life tests of applicability is always encouraged.

Generally critiques will be about 4-6 pages in length, with roughly two-thirds of the paper summing up the article's argument in your own words, with appropriate citations (using any standard form – Chicago, MLA etc.) to clarify their position. The closing will draw on your other reading and reflection to examine the strengths and weaknesses of the article's position in light of available alternatives. You might want to make use of basic reference works beyond the text to assist you in understanding the issues, but extensive research beyond the two texts is neither expected nor required.

Please don't hesitate to check with me for any clarification or questions you might have about the article you're examining (well in advance if you are involved in a class presentation!). If your critiques are submitted when due, one week following the class discussion of the topic being considered, you will have an opportunity to make revisions based upon comments from my teaching assistant and myself. Late papers will be penalized one letter grade for each week they are late, and no papers will be accepted once they are more than three weeks late. Be aware that if you select a topic being discussed late in the semester, there will only be one revision opportunity, since we will need to skip the teaching assistant comment step.

Keep in mind that you will also be selecting one of the articles you are critiquing as the basis for preparing an oral presentation, and be aware of the date of that presentation to avoid scheduling conflicts.

in their own self-interest. Much of the morality we have inherited stresses an altruistic viewpoint (the viewpoint that people ought, at least sometimes, to do what is in the interest of others), and Kant, as we have seen, finds selfishness at the root of immorality.

In order to understand Nietzsche, we must make a distinction between morality and ethics. The word morality can be used in both a wide and a narrow sense. In its wider sense it refers to any code of conduct or system of values. In this sense it is equivalent to the term *ethics*. In its narrow sense morality refers to a specific code or value system. Thus we speak about "honor among thieves" as a moral code, albeit one beyond morality as we normally think of it. In other words, morality in the narrow sense is only one of the possibilities for an ethical life (morality in the wider sense).

The selection that follows incorporates material from two of Nietzsche's most influential books, *Beyond Good and Evil*, first published in 1886, and *On the Genealogy of Morality*, first published in 1887. According to Nietzsche, the *Genealogy* was a "clarification and supplement to my last book, *Beyond Good and Evil*." In both books Nietzsche wanted to show how the life-affirming values of a noble and ruling class were revaluated into life-denying values of a slave class led by priests (Nietzsche singled out the role the Jews played early in this process, but his remarks should not be construed as anti-Semitic) and motivated by hatred directed at the ruling class.

READING QUESTIONS

1. What are some of the basic differences between slave morality and master morality?
2. What is the "English psychologists" theory of the origin of the concept "good" and why is it wrong?
3. According to Nietzsche, what is the real origin of the concepts good and bad?
4. Under what conditions does the opposition between unegoistic (altruistic) and egoistic (selfish) arise?
5. According to Nietzsche, what role does the priestly class play in the development of morality?
6. What role does *resentiment* (grudge-bearing resentment) play in the creation of slave morality?

Beyond Good and Evil

FRIEDRICH NIETZSCHE

260.

In a tour of the many finer and coarser moralities which have ruled or still rule on earth I found certain traits regularly recurring together and bound up with one another: until at length two basic types were revealed and a basic distinction emerged. There is *master morality* and *slave morality*—I add at once that in all higher and mixed

cultures attempts at mediation between the two are apparent and more frequently confusion and mutual misunderstanding between them, indeed sometimes their harsh juxtaposition—even within the same man, within *one* soul. The moral value-distinctions have arisen either among a ruling order which was pleasurably conscious of its distinction from the ruled—or among the ruled, the slaves and

From *Beyond Good and Evil: Prelude to a Philosophy of the Future*, by Friedrich Nietzsche, translated by R. J. Hollingdale (Penguin Classics, 1973). Copyright © 1973, by R. J. Hollingdale. Reprinted by permission of Penguin Books Ltd.

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dependants of every degree. In the former case, when it is the rulers who determine the concept "good," it is the exalted, proud states of soul which are considered distinguishing and determine the order of rank. The noble human being separates from himself those natures in which the opposite of such exalted proud states find expression: he despises them. It should be noted at once that in this first type of morality the antithesis "good" and "bad" means the same thing as "noble" and "despicable"—the antithesis "good" and "evil" originates elsewhere. The cowardly, the timid, the petty, and those who think only of narrow utility are despised; as are the mistrustful with their constricted glance, those who abase themselves, the dog-like type of man who lets himself be mistreated, the fawning flatterer, above all the liar—it is a fundamental belief of all aristocrats that the common people are liars. "We who are truthful"—thus did the nobility of ancient Greece designate themselves. It is immediately obvious that designations of moral value were everywhere first applied to *human beings*, and only later and derivatively to *actions*: which is why it is a grave error when moral historians start from such questions as "why has the compassionate action been praised?" The noble type of man feels *himself to be* the determiner of values, he does not need to be approved of, he judges "what harms me is harmful in itself," he knows himself to be that which in general first accords honour to things, he *creates values*. Everything he knows to be part of himself, he honours: such a morality is self-glorification. In the foreground stands the feeling of plenitude, of power which seeks to overflow, the happiness of high tension, the consciousness of a wealth which would like to give away and bestow—the noble human being too aids the unfortunate but not, or almost not, from pity, but more from an urge begotten by superfluity of power. The noble human being honours in himself the man of power, also the man who has power over himself, who understands how to speak and how to keep silent, who enjoys practising severity and harshness upon himself and feels reverence for all that is severe and harsh. "A hard heart has Wotan set in my breast," it says in an old Scandinavian saga: a just expression coming from the soul of a proud Viking. A man of this type

is actually proud that he is *not* made for pity: which is why the hero of the saga adds as a warning: "he whose heart is not hard in youth will never have a hard heart." Brave and noble men who think that they are at the farthest remove from that morality which sees the mark of the moral precisely in pity or in acting for others or in *désintéressement*; belief in oneself, pride in oneself, a fundamental hostility and irony for "selflessness" belong just as definitely to noble morality as does a mild contempt for and caution against sympathy and the "warm heart."—It is the powerful who *understand* how to honour, that is their art, their realm of invention. Deep reverence for age and the traditional—all law rests on this twofold reverence—belief in and prejudice in favour of ancestors and against descendants, is typical of the morality of the powerful; and when, conversely, men of "modern ideas" believe almost instinctively in "progress" and "the future" and show an increasing lack of respect for age, this reveals clearly enough the ignoble origin of these "ideas." A morality of the rulers is, however, most alien and painful to contemporary taste in the severity of its principle that one has duties only towards one's equals; that towards beings of a lower rank, towards everything alien, one may act as one wishes or "as the heart dictates" and in any case "beyond good and evil"—it is here that pity and the like can have a place. The capacity for and the duty of protracted gratitude and protracted revenge—both only among one's equals—subtlety in requittal, a refined conception of friendship, a certain need to have enemies (as conduit systems, as it were, for the emotions of envy, quarrelsomeness, arrogance—fundamentally so as to be able to be a *good friend*): all these are typical marks of noble morality which, as previously indicated, is not the morality of "modern ideas" and is therefore hard to enter into today, also hard to unearth and uncover—It is otherwise with the second type of morality, *slave morality*. Suppose the abused, oppressed, suffering, unfree, those uncertain of themselves and weary should moralize: what would their moral evaluations have in common? Probably a pessimistic mistrust of the entire situation of man will find expression, perhaps a condemnation of man together with his situation.

The slave is suspicious of the virtues of the powerful: he is sceptical and mistrustful, *keenly* mistrustful, of everything "good" that is honoured among them—he would like to convince himself that happiness itself is not genuine among them. On the other hand, those qualities which serve to make easier the existence of the suffering will be brought into prominence and flooded with light: here it is that pity, the kind and helping hand, the warm heart, patience, industriousness, humility, friendliness come into honour—for here these are the most useful qualities and virtually the only means of enduring the burden of existence. Slave morality is essentially the morality of utility. Here is the source of the famous antithesis "good" and "evil"—power and danger were felt to exist in evil, a certain dreadfulness, subtlety and strength which could not admit of contempt. Thus, according to slave morality the "evil" inspire fear; according to master morality it is precisely the "good" who inspire fear and want to inspire it, while the "bad" man is judged contemptible. The antithesis reaches its height when, consistently with slave

morality, a breath of disdain finally also comes to be attached to the "good" of this morality—it may be a slight and benevolent disdain—because within the slaves' way of thinking the good man has in any event to be a *harmless* man: he is good-natured, easy to deceive, perhaps a bit stupid, *unbonhomme*. Wherever slave morality comes to predominate, language exhibits a tendency to bring the words "good" and "stupid" closer to each other.—A final fundamental distinction: the longing for *freedom*, the instinct for the happiness and the refinements of the feeling of freedom, belong just as necessarily to slave morality and morals as the art of reverence and devotion and the enthusiasm for them are the regular symptom of an aristocratic mode of thinking and valuating.—This makes it clear without further ado why love as *passion*—it is our European speciality—absolutely must be of aristocratic origin: it was, as is well known, invented by the poet-knights of Provence, those splendid, inventive men of the "*j'ai sàber*" to whom Europe owes so much and, indeed, almost itself.—...

On the Genealogy of Morality

FRIEDRICH NIETZSCHE

FIRST TREATISE: "GOOD AND EVIL," "GOOD AND BAD"

1.

—These English psychologists whom we also have to thank for the only attempts so far to produce a history of the genesis of morality—they themselves are no small riddle for us; I confess, in fact, that precisely as riddles in the flesh they have something substantial over their books—they themselves are interesting! These English psychologists—what do they actually want? One finds them, whether voluntarily or involuntarily,

always at the same task, namely of pushing the *partie honteuse*¹ of our inner world into the foreground and of seeking that which is actually effective, leading, decisive for our development, precisely where the intellectual pride of man would least of all *wish* to find it (for example in the *vis inertiae*² of habit or in forgetfulness or in

¹ *partie honteuse* shameful part (in the plural, this expression is the equivalent of the English "private parts").
² *vis inertiae* force of inactivity. In Newtonian physics, this term denotes the resistance offered by matter to any force tending to alter its state of rest or motion.