

Reading Questions: Nietzsche I, *On the Genealogy of Morals*, Preface, First and Second Essays

1. What is Nietzsche's genealogical method? What is its aim? Is it trying to convince the reader of a thesis or encourage them to see familiar things in a different way and reconsider them?
2. How has punishment been used historically? How has its use and meaning changed? What does this example reveal about Nietzsche's genealogical method?
3. What accounts of the origin of our moral beliefs does Nietzsche reject? What account of the origin of morality does he consider to be the most likely one?
4. What is *ressentiment* and what role does it play in the development of morality according to Nietzsche?
5. What, according to Nietzsche, is the fundamental transformation that has taken place during the historical evolution of our moral beliefs? Why is this a fundamental transformation?
6. What is noble morality? What is slave morality? What dichotomy characterizes each? How, when and where did these two moralities originate?
7. According to Nietzsche, what is required in order to instill in us a sense of personal responsibility? Why does Nietzsche claim that the categorical imperative "smells of cruelty?" How might Kant respond? Given his account of the historical development of humanity, what would Rousseau think about Nietzsche's argument?
8. How does Nietzsche explain the origin of the concept of justice?
9. What role does the priestly class play in the origin of the slave morality? What do the terms 'good' and 'bad' or 'evil' mean for each form of morality? Which is the basic concept of each morality? What is the "signpost" that led Nietzsche to these insights? Is this a valid inference or line of reasoning?
10. How does Nietzsche think the concept of guilt developed from the debtor/creditor concept?
11. What is "bad conscience?" What does Nietzsche's statement that "The bad conscience is an illness ... but an illness as pregnancy is an illness" mean? Does bad conscience contribute anything valuable according to him?
12. How does Nietzsche think bad conscience originates? What does he think is ultimately "born" as a result of the development of the bad conscience? Why does Nietzsche think that bad conscience is not common in criminals and was not extensively developed in prehistoric times?
13. What is "guilt before God?" What feelings are associated with it? How does it develop? How does the idea of the "holy" God develop according to Nietzsche? What happens to natural human inclinations with the emergence of these ideas?
14. What alternative does Nietzsche sketch at the end of the Second Essay?