

THE GENEALOGY OF MORALS

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Book Review: The Genealogy of Morals

It is evident that people behave differently in different situations and environments. Every person looks at issues differently. Similarly, it is clear that people have varying thoughts that often differ in one attribute or the other. Such differences have resulted to categorizing aspects as good and bad. While an item may be good for one, it is bad for another. Under such a perception, morality has been defined differently; and is thus, a highly debated topic. People may agree on one side of morality and differ in another. *Friedrich Nietzsche's book resolves to develop an intense understanding based on morality of how men think differently concerning various issues in society: an issue that requires elaboration on the purpose of the book as put forward by the author.*

With a considerable background in psychology, the author points out a number of issues that possibly drive the thoughts and actions of man. Nietzsche argues that people's mindsets and lifestyles are primarily because of nature.¹ In his discussion, he realizes the various features of man that determine resultant habits and reactions. He mentions of ideas that arise because of religious backgrounds and other principles that govern human life. For instance, the response towards life's seasons can be a resultant effect of one's belief in religion. Alternatively, people can differ in opinion concerning moral values. While Christian's moral values may be defined according to faith, another religion may oppose and take an opposite direction.

The book, *The Genealogy of Morals* is a clear depiction of the inconsistencies of man. Human beings do not understand themselves. They are creatures that cannot comprehend their wants and needs, or how to quench them. They are creatures continually seeking for something that cannot be found even in eternity. While one item is found, another one is sought after. In this

1. Friedrich Wilhelm Nietzsche, *The Genealogy of Morals* (New York: Courier Dover Publications, 2003), 10.

context, the author highlights that human beings must “find themselves”.² This is evident in the way people continually move from one place to another to search for adventures, experiences, and knowledge. However, knowledge being sought every day does not stop the quest and thirst to know more. Even after learning new concepts and theories, an individual's character or habit cannot define morality.

The author's message is traceable to the place where the book was written: done and edited in a relaxed mood. It reflects on the different behaviors that people express in free and bound atmospheres. Nietzsche tries to explain that human behaviors are a product of free minds' for instance, the differences that arise from psychologists' debates.³ Such discussions can hardly be followed yet they still define certain behaviors each in diverse perspective. Moreover, Nietzsche reflects on the meaning of justice as a product of human behavior. He explains that a person may respond only because of certain pressures laid on him or her.

The ideas that come to an individual's mind often result in certain experiences that drive his or her thinking. While psychology is likely to influence the resulting reactions, experience and knowledge open a different phase of understanding that can equally determine morality. Nietzsche discusses that a person can as well train his or her thinking to follow some desirable truths or facts. Hence, it can be explained that every person only does what is acceptable to him or her as morally right; otherwise, it can be termed as a deception from a different perspective.⁴ At this point, both good and bad is in the perception of an individual and differs remarkably in another person.

2. Ibid., 1

3. Ibid., 3

4. Ibid., 10

The author, from a negative point of view, highlights an opposing thought. It is common knowledge that every good thing is acceptable. On the other hand, what is bad is often described as unacceptable and morally wrong. Nonetheless, it can also be highlighted that the good can also have an aspect that may be unacceptable in the society.⁵ For instance, most values that result from religious perceptions are considered morally right yet those associated with politics are often disregarded. Even so, the two-principle basis can result in a significant negative and positive change. The determining factor is the person who embraces the idea. On this thought, the author includes that a person can cling on a certain good only as a slave to it. Alternatively, an individual can practice what is morally wrong in the society but is extremely free and happy. These two conflicting ideas then clash with the moral essence of good and bad.⁶

In conclusion, Nietzsche has evidently raised a significant argument, which is primary in everyday life. The discussion brought up is critical to a person because it is a revelation that can lead to a change in perception and character. In an informative book, the author provides consistent arguments, which can cause an individual to reflect on various values and principles of living. Consequently, it is a beneficial and directive literature. The importance of such a critical analysis of psychological thinking comes in handy when one is reflecting on particular behaviors. For instance, the author illustrates the time when the book was wrote. Nietzsche was in a reflective mood that led him to such a prevailing analysis. Therefore, the content can contribute to a change in people to become good or bad in the end.

5. Ibid., 6

6. Ibid., 15

Bibliography

Nietzsche, Friedrich W. *The Genealogy of Morals*. New York: Courier Dover Publications, 2003.