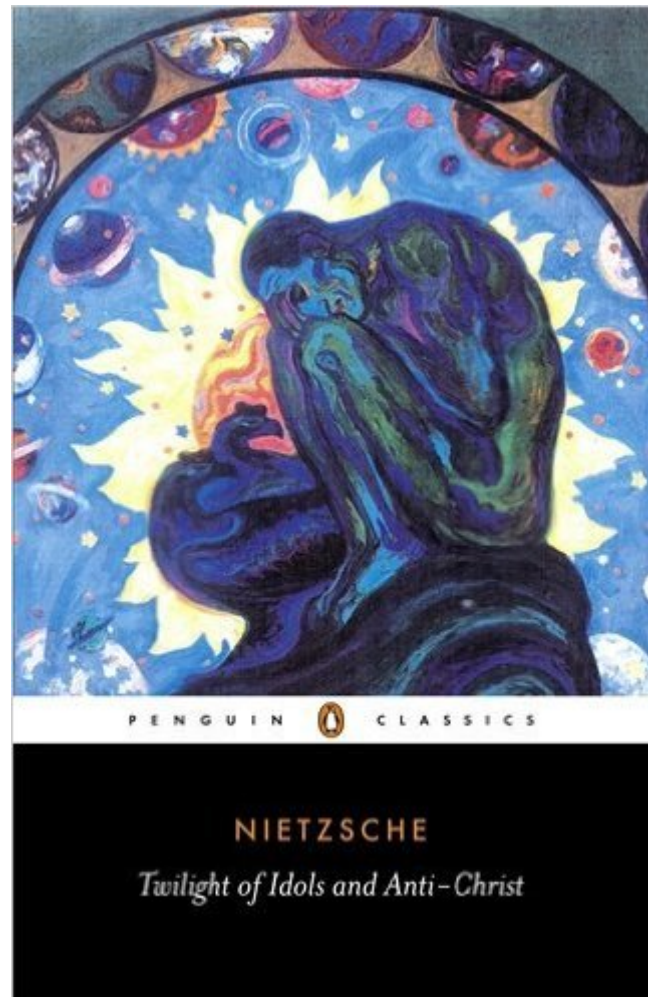


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The Twilight Of The Idols And The Anti-Christ: Or How To Philosophize With A Hammer (Penguin Classics)



Synopsis

'One must be superior to mankind in force, in loftiness of soul' in contempt. In these two devastating works, Nietzsche offers a sustained and often vitriolic attack on the morality and the beliefs of his time, in particular those of Hegel, Kant and Schopenhauer. *Twilight of the Idols* is a grand declaration of war on reason, psychology and theology that combines highly charged personal attacks on his contemporaries with a lightning tour of his own philosophy. It also paves the way for *The Anti-Christ*, Nietzsche's final assault on institutional Christianity, in which he identifies himself with the 'Dionysian' artist and confronts Christ; the only opponent he feels worthy of him. In his introduction Michael Tanner discussed the themes of Nietzsche's argument and places the works in their historical and philosophical context.

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Customer Reviews

"*Twilight of the Idols*" and "*The Anti-Christ*" are two of the last books, both composed in 1888, that Nietzsche wrote before his final descent into syphilis-induced madness which occurred during the first week of 1889. They continue themes he had developed in his earlier work, and "*The Anti-Christ*" especially approaches Christianity with a particularly ferocious and critical eye. As anyone who has thumbed through a volume of Nietzsche can tell you, his work isn't composed of clear, well-defined propositions to be ultimately accepted or rejected; instead, his arguments have a kind of ravishing rhetorical force to them. His writing is less apothegmatic here than in other work, but is still never syllogistic or ratiocinated in such a way that we usually associate with philosophy.

This isn't a mistake; he intended his work to speak as much if not more through the force of style than anything else. In his "attack" on Socrates in the first book, he calls reason itself a "tyrant," and wonders if Socrates enjoys his "own form of ferocity in the knife-thrust of the syllogism." The greatest part of "Twilight of the Idols" is the chapter called "Morality as Anti-Nature" in which he says that all moral systems up until now, and particularly Christianity, are wrong precisely because they try to deform and reshape human nature to their own image. For Nietzsche, the moral is the natural, but Christianity - and this is really an attack on all religious systems, though some more than others - stops being moral when it tries to impose concepts that are completely foreign to human beings like the idea that "everyone is created the same" or a selfless Christian charity.

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