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Phil 490

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Final Paper Abstract

Thesis:  
 In this paper, I will explain Nietzsche’s view of how ressentiment causes the value inversion described in his book *On the Genealogy of Morality*, I will propose an alternative genealogy based on his story of the lambs and the birds of prey, and I will consider the ramifications of the alternative genealogy.

Abstract:

Nietzsche’s explanation of ressentiment causing the value inversion from noble morality to herd morality described in *On the Genealogy of Morality* leaves room for alternative explanations. He does not give an account of the history in between the time before and after the values were inverted. His telling is also unsatisfactory in describing how and why the noble morality has come to be triumphed over. Using his own proposed analogy of the birds of prey and the lambs in his genealogy, I will describe an alternative explanation of how the value inversion occurs, which addresses the aforementioned problems. In this alternative telling, anthropological evidence will be used to show that the value inversion occurs because of people’s need to resist and prevent domination and not because of ressentiment as described in Nietzsche’s genealogy. In my genealogy, the values of herd morality come about not because it is reactive in being opposed to whatever the values of noble morality are but rather because its collectivist nature provides it the organizational power to triumph over the more individualistic noble morality. Moreover, in my telling, the hypocrisy present today in herd morality is explained by people’s perception that there is no longer an active need to ensure it is strictly adhered to due to a perceived absence of domination. After providing the alternative explanation, I will examine its various ramifications.

Sources:

1. Nietzsche, *The Genealogy of Morals*
   1. Main text
2. Hobbes, *Leviathan*
   1. Use to depict a similar state of nature
3. Anderson, *The Problem of Equality from a Political Economy Perspective: The Long View of History*
   1. Use this paper or its sources to consider anthropology and the ambivalence of humans as a whole to have the dual desire to dominate and be opposed to domination – will use as evidence for the state of nature I construct
4. Max Scheler – *Ressentiment* 
   1. Critiques the psychological and social effects of the concept
5. Maudemarie Clark – *Nietzsche on Ethics and Politics*
   1. Gives a different explanation than Nietzsche of how Ressentiment arises
6. Walter Kaufman – Nietzsche: Philosopher, Psychologist, Antichrist
   1. Analyzes Nietzsche’s view of the concept
7. Ratcliffe, *Genealogy: A Conceptual Map* - ramifications section
   1. Might be used for the ramifications section of the essay
8. Queloz, *The Practical Origins of Ideas*
   1. Might be used for the ramifications section of the essay as well as a reference for how I construct my genealogy

Outline

1. Intro – ½ of page
2. Nietzsche’s view of ressentiment and the value inversion – 2 pages
   1. Explain the values in noble and master morality
   2. Explain his view of ressentiment
      1. Its psychology
      2. Its reactive nature
3. Problems with his view of ressentiment causing the value inversion – 2 pages
   1. There is room for an alternative explanation as to the cause of the value inversion
   2. He does not give a satisfactory explanation as to how masters lose their power
4. Amending the birds of prey and the lambs genealogy – 4 pages
5. Ramifications and Conclusion - 2 pages