5-2017

Nietzsche's Genealogy: An Historical Investigation of the Contingency of Moral Values

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Acknowledgements

I would like to take this space to offer my sincere thanks and appreciation to those individuals who made this work a possibility:

Dr. Allen Coates for all of his work as my mentor to this project.

Dr. Leslie MacAvoy for sparking my interest in Nietzsche as well as for agreeing to serve as a reader.

Dr. William Douglas Burgess Jr. for his services as a reader.

Dr. David Harker for his help in the senior seminar class.

Paul Tudico for introducing me to philosophy.

Dr. Jeffrey Gold for his assistance in my career as an honors student.

1. Introduction

Often, it is easy to take for granted many of the things we find ourselves lucky enough to have. This applies to all aspects of life, which includes things such as: getting as a decent job, a good car, or perhaps even the simplicity of sitting on the back porch on a nice evening. Many people think it's necessary to give thanks to some higher power for these blessings of life. Further, some think it immoral *not* to give thanks; indeed, for these folks, it is through faith in this higher power that we are able to do anything in the first place. The passage, "I can do all things *through* Christ which strengtheneth me,"[1] sums this sentiment up in a simple and concise way. Sentiments such as these lay the foundations for certain moral attitudes and values. In some cases, these values lay the foundations for asceticism. Typically, ascetic values are founded in ideas of "poverty, humility, [and] chastity."[2] For those people who believe in such things, moral values are precisely what is needed for one to have a "good" life. For Friedrich Nietzsche, though, these are exactly the sentiments that one must avoid if one wants to live a flourishing life. For the purposes of this paper, I will take flourishing to mean whatever one needs to do in order to make his or her life go well.

In order to begin a study into the possible error of this mode of thought, Nietzsche writes a "genealogy" of this typically Judeo-Christian idea. But what is a genealogy? Further, how is it that a genealogy can provide a critique if it is only an explanatory project of how we arrived at our current systems of valuation? In this paper, I will examine multiple positions of how to properly interpret Nietzsche's *On the Genealogy of Morals* in order to constitute an understanding of the main ideas of the work. For example, examining the works of Gilbert

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[1] *The Holy Bible. Authorized King James Version,* Thomas Nelson, 2001. Print. P. 762. Emphasis Added.

[2] Nietzsche, Friedrich. "On the Genealogy of Morals." *On the Genealogy of Morals and Ecce Homo.* Trans. Walter Kaufmann. New York: Vintage Books, 1989. 3-163. Print. P. 108.

Harman and Michel Foucault will be helpful in understanding how genealogy works. This will

provide us with a firm grasp of Nietzsche's methods and ideas regarding how we arrive at our

respective concepts of morality. Next, I will proceed into a discussion of how Nietzsche intends

to set up a critique of morality using his *Genealogy* as a foundation. P.J.E. Kail, for instance,

argues that the *Genealogy* helps to destabilize our faith in morality rather than providing a full-

on critique of morality. This will help to answer the question of whether or not Nietzsche is

successful in his genealogical work of setting up a full critique of morality. Further, this will help

one decide if it is valuable to adopt a Nietzschean view regarding morality. Ultimately, these

considerations will demonstrate that the typical justifications given for morality fail in their

efforts to establish morality as a system of "true," or "given," values. Rather, these values are

contingent upon a great number of relative factors which actually provide support *against* typical

justifications of morality. Further, it will be argued that the *Genealogy* brings to light a major

concern for Nietzsche: that moral values might hinder the ability of people, especially his

"higher types" to flourish. These factors allow for the *Genealogy* to provide ample reasons to

pursue a fuller critique of moral values in order to fully investigate their possible detrimental

effects.

2. What is the *Genealogy of Morals?* What Methods Does Nietzsche Employ?

To begin, we must first consider what Nietzsche is trying to accomplish from a general

standpoint. Very broadly stated, one could summarize the project as a naturalistic account of the

history and origins of morality. This is quite an undertaking, and Nietzsche emphasizes that his

original "question of where our good and evil really *originated* . . . soon transformed [the]

problem into another one: under what conditions did man devise these value judgments good and

evil? *and what value do they themselves possess?"*[3] His *On the Genealogy of Morals* ties

together three separate essays that each give an account of how this phenomenon occurred at

various stages in history. So, what exactly *is* genealogy? Foucault writes that "[g]enealogy is

gray, meticulous, and patiently documentary. It operates on a field of entangled and confused

parchments, on documents that have been scratched over and recopied many times."[4] In essence,

genealogy is a historical method that involves investigation into how ideas and practices have

gathered various interpretations over time. Guess writes that the genealogical method of history

exposes that a given practice, idea, or value "has a bi-partite structure: a set of antecedently

existing practices, modes of behaviour, perception, and feeling which at a certain time are given

an interpretation which imposes on them a meaning they did not have before."[5] How, then, does

Nietzsche proceed in giving a genealogy of *morality?*

2.1 Breakdown of the *Genealogy*

Each essay of the *Genealogy* provides an account of how various aspects of morality

have descended through time to arrive at their current valuations. The first essay, entitled "'Good

and Evil', 'Good and Bad,'" explains the "slave revolt" in which "noble" values are inverted by

groups of people rebelling out of *ressentiment* towards their oppressors. This essay begins by

examining the social situations under which these resentful valuations begin, and how, over time,

they begin to constitute certain psychological states and character traits.

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[3] *GM,* P. 16-17.

[4] Foucault, Michel. "Nietzsche, Genealogy, History." *The Foucault Reader.* Ed. Paul Rainbow. New York: Vintage Books, 2010. P. 76-100. Print. P. 76.

[5] Guess, Raymond. "Nietzsche and Genealogy." *European Journal of Philosophy.* P. 274-292. Cambridge: Basil Blackwell Ltd., 1994.

In order to re-valuate the values of their oppressors, the slaves observe what is "good" in the nobles and invert them thereby making those values "evil." What is "good" for the slave, then, are those values which would normally be considered "bad" by the nobles, e.g. humility, meekness, and self-sacrifice.

What is important to note is that the original judgments of good and bad were not moral judgments. Nietzsche is particularly concerned with how these judgments *became* moralized. Clark points out that the idea that good and bad consisted of a set of moral judgments, as Kaufmann suggests, is misleading.[6] Nietzsche's story in the first essay examines the evaluations of the nobles as values of good and bad that particularly regard certain character traits; for example, a noble would probably have certain traits such as pride and high-mindedness. "Good" in this sense refers to a positive valuation which the nobles acquire by looking at their own positions in the world and seeing them as value-worthy. On the other hand, character traits such as being lowly and meek would receive "bad" valuations from the nobles because they are opposite the traits which they see in themselves. The slaves are not worthy of any kind of moral reproach for their status; rather, the masters simply look at them with a sense of disdain. When the slave class becomes fed up with their situations at the hand of the nobles, their *ressentiment* fueled revolt "invents" morality. On this scheme, to be "evil" is necessarily to be immoral and vice versa. For the slaves, this is redeeming and empowering because they are now "good" for accepting their conditions and living humbly and meekly; the nobles, however, are "evil" for their prideful, vengeful, and otherwise "sinful" behavior. If the nobles "can be *blamed* for what they are, they can be thought deserving of punishment on that basis. Indeed, if one acts are *evil,* then such actions certainly seem worthy of reproach and condemnation. On the other hand, since

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[6] Clark, Maudemarie. "Nietzsche's Immoralism and the Concept of Morality." *Nietzsche, Genealogy, Morality: Essays on Nietzsche's On the Genealogy of Morals.* Ed. Richard Schact. Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1994. P. 15-34. Print. P. 23.

it seems natural to regard the good as deserving of reward for being as such, it will be much easier for to convince themselves that they really are superior and do not want to be like the nobles at all."[7] Here we fully see the genealogical method at work in its ability to uncover the explanations for how moral judgments developed through the slave revolt.

The second essay follows a similar structure. Very briefly stated, it provides a genealogical account of how debt and guilt are related in the development of bad conscience. For Nietzsche, the idea of guilt evolved from feelings of indebtedness; if one is unable to repay his or her debt, then the creditor would be able to extract what is owed in the form of punishment. Punishment, in its ancient form, was an act of cruelty which served the purpose of making right on debts that were owed. Further, Nietzsche argues that this practice of punishment also served a very human instinct for aggression and cruelty. However, this instinct is not conducive to a peaceful and humble people who seek mercy and cooperation. In an effort to better serve the interests of slave morality, guilt is *moralized* into an act of self-cruelty. What this means is that the instincts for cruelty still exist, but they cannot be vented on one's neighbors in a modernized, or civilized, society. Consequently, cruelty is turned inward towards oneself. This moralized form of guilt is referred to as "bad conscience." Again, we see Nietzsche giving a naturalistic explanation of a nonmoral practice, i.e. guilt, that is revaluated and given a moral interpretation.

Lastly, the third essay seizes upon the meaning of ascetic ideals. Recall that Nietzsche characterizes these ideals as upholding values such as poverty, humility, and chastity. So far, we have seen how slave morality inverted noble values and latched onto the idea of bad conscience in order to promote moral values through acts of self-cruelty. The issue, then, is how one is supposed to explain his or her suffering if he is living a pure and good life. Nietzsche writes that the problem of the human animal "was . . . that there was no answer to the crying question, '*why*

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[7] Clark, P. 25.

do I suffer?' . . . The meaninglessness of suffering, *not* suffering itself, was the curse that lay over mankind so far."[8] Recall that the original slave revolt stemmed from *ressentiment* towards the nobles because of the suffering the slaves endured. However, even when one lives morally he or she is still subjected to meaningless suffering.

One can easily imagine how one might despair over the suffering he or she endures even when performing at "maximum moral capacity." The ascetic ideal offers itself as a solution to this problem; the ascetic priest presents the ascetic ideal as a medicine for the sick and afflicted masses. Nietzsche explains how the ascetic priest uses the idea of sin as the explanation for suffering.[9] This means that misfortune is the result of one's sinful human nature and suffering can be understood as a sort of punishment for these shortcomings. Therefore, to remedy the meaninglessness of suffering in the world, one should practice the ascetic ideal. Nietzsche writes in §28 of the *Genealogy*: "The meaninglessness of suffering, *not* suffering itself, was the curse that lay over mankind so far – *and the ascetic ideal offered man meaning!*"[10] This does not solve all of the problems of suffering, however; in fact, Nietzsche says that the guilt associated with such beliefs brings about new forms of internalized, "life-destructive" suffering.[11] This is the primary reason why Nietzsche is critical of the ascetic ideal as a means to answering the "big questions" of life.

In some respects, these summaries are certainly oversimplifications of Nietzsche's nuanced stories and arguments from the *Genealogy;* nevertheless, they make grasping certain important features of Nietzsche's philosophy easier to understand. In particular, they illuminate his anti-realism, his naturalist viewpoint, and the ideas of emergence and descent, as elaborated

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[8] *GM,* P. 162.
[9] *Ibid,* P. 139-141.
[10] *GM,* P. 162.
[11] *Ibid,* P. 162.

by Foucault. These concepts are crucial to an understanding of the *Genealogy* and how it operates as a historical account of the origins of morality.

2.2 Genealogical Methods

Anti-realism is a relatively straight-forward concept. Since Nietzsche's project specifically targets morality, anti-realism in this sense means that there are no universal moral facts. This means that any position which maintains that a particular moral system which is meant to apply to each and every individual is misguided. Leiter writes that "anti-realism about value is *explanatory*: moral facts don't figure into the 'best explanation' of experience, and so are not real constituents of the objective world. Moral values, in short, can be 'explained away.'"[12] It should be noted that Leiter's use of "objective" here should be approached with caution. Although there may be no "universal" moral truths, it may be the case that there are things which are objectively true in the world. For example, the noble values of the First Essay are directly at odds with the values of slave morality. In order for one to have precedence over the other, one would have to make some sort of realist appeal to universal moral standards; however, Nietzsche's view is that no such moral facts exist. Still, it may be objectively true that slave morality does serve the interests of the slaves despite the absence of universal truth. This point might be illustrated well with an example from horticulture. Generally, it might be considered universally true that plants need plenty of water to survive. However, we can certainly find instances where such a claim is false. In my own limited experience, my overwatering of small cacti and jade plants have resulted in the plants withering away. So, while this maxim of "plants need plenty of water to survive" might hold true for certain species, such

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[12] Leiter, P. 120.

as irises and hibiscus, it cannot be said to apply each and every plant, such as the long-gone

succulents I attempted to cultivate. However, it is *objectively* true of irises that they indeed need

plenty of water to thrive.[13] This idea is true with regards to a person's individual values and

standards as well. If two individuals are arguing over which of their principles is superior to the

other's, it might be tempting to make some sort of realist appeal to universal moral standards;

however, Nietzsche's view is that no such universal moral facts exist. His position regarding the

anti-realism regarding universal morality is further illustrated by his naturalist viewpoint.

Naturalism is "a *methodological* view about how one should do philosophy:

philosophical inquiry, on this view, should be continuous with empirical inquiry in the

sciences."[14]With regards to issues of morality, Nietzsche writes that "[t]here are no moral

phenomena at all, but only moral interpretation of phenomena."[15] In order to unpack what

Nietzsche means by this, consider the following thought experiment:

> If you round a corner and see a group of young hoodlums pour gasoline on a cat
>
> and ignite it, you do not need to *conclude* that what they are doing is wrong; you
>
> do not need to figure anything out; you can *see* that it is wrong. But is your
>
> reaction due to the actual wrongness of what you see or is it simply a reflection of
>
> your moral 'sense,' a 'sense' that you have acquired perhaps as a result of your
>
> moral upbringing?[16]

In other words, when one witnesses a certain phenomenon, it is unclear whether that occurrence

by itself has any given moral properties. It could be the case, as Nietzsche suggests, that you

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[13] Special thanks to Dr. Leslie MacAvoy for helping construct this example.
[14] Leiter, P. 2.
[15] Nietzsche, Friedrich. *Beyond Good and Evil.* Trans. Walter Kaufmann. New York: Vintage Books, 1989. Print. §
108.
[16] Harman, Gilbert. *The Nature of Morality: An Introduction to Ethics.* New York: Oxford University Press, 1977.
Print. P. 4.

don't "see" the moral wrongness of anything. Instead, any moral content would be provided by the observer's moral beliefs.

For Nietzsche, a naturalist approach is the best method of explaining one's psycho-social type. Each person's type is constructed by various factors such as the social context in which he or she is raised as well as certain conscious, and even subconscious, attitudes towards the world. In order to explain a given moral judgment, then, it is unnecessary to appeal to some universal moral position; instead, the judgment can be explained naturalistically in terms of the agent's psycho-social type-facts.[17] One of Nietzsche's goals in the *Genealogy* is to explain how one might arrive at his or her set of values as a result of his or her particular type. For example, recall the values of the slaves: humility, meekness, and forgiveness are considered praiseworthy to these people. For Nietzsche, their psycho-social type plays a large role in this valuation. Were the slaves more powerful and able to lash out against their masters in more aggressive fashions, then their values would be much different. However, the First Essay suggests that their inability to overthrow the masters led to the development of a psychology of *ressentiment*. The moral judgments of Good and Evil, as proposed by slave morality, are products of a resentful psycho-social type. In order to fully comprehend Nietzsche's naturalist explanation of these types and the beliefs they hold, one must be able to understand the way in which values and beliefs develop, emerge, and change over time. For this, Michel Foucault's essay, *Nietzsche, Genealogy, History*, will be most useful. Foucault notes the importance of understanding two key concepts of the genealogical method: descent and emergence.

Descent and emergence refer to the ways in which we arrive at whatever systems of value we have. Foucault states that genealogy "opposes itself to the search for 'origins.'"[18] This is

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[17] Leiter, P. 188-120.
[18] Foucault, P. 77.

because finding a singular "origin" of a value or idea is impossible; rather, genealogy seeks to find how a certain value, e.g. morality, arises given a plethora of separate lines of ancestry that have no single historical stopping point or "origin."[19] In order to provide a naturalistic account, one must look into various social phenomena that have occurred throughout time. Descent, then,

> "is the ancient affiliation to a group, sustained by bonds of blood, tradition, or social class. . . But the traits it attempts to identify are not the generic characteristics of an individual, a sentiment, or an idea . . . rather, it seeks the subtle, singular, and sub individual marks that might possibly intersect in them to form a network that is difficult to unravel. . . [Genealogy] is to identify the accidents, the minute deviations . . . the errors, the false appraisals, and the faulty calculations that gave birth to those things that continue to exist and have value for us."[20]

The idea here is that this part of genealogy studies these networks of history to learn more about the minutia of influences that are at play in the history of our values. Emergence is described as "a place of confrontation, but not as a closed field offering the spectacle of a struggle among equals. . . it is a 'non-place,' a pure distance, which indicates that the adversaries do not belong to a common space. Consequently, no one is responsible for an emergence; no one can glory in it, since it always occurs in the interstice."[21] In these instances of emergence, certain forces dominate others, and, later, are subject to domination themselves. Through the emergence of the "victorious" forces, values are established, norms are set up, and culture adapts. In the cases of the three essays of Nietzsche's *Genealogy,* both of these factors, i.e. descent and emergence, play an important role in deciphering how practices such as punishment (*GM*, 2nd Essay) come to

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[19] Guess, P. 276.
[20] Foucault. P. 81.
[21] Foucault, P. 84-85.

have the social status they carry now. This also demonstrates how values are very contingent upon the social milieu in which the values were established; they are contingent upon all of the minute influences of centuries of social change and development. All of these factors play important roles in the mindsets of a certain people's psycho-social type as well.

As society grows and develops, people's attitudes and belief systems will change. Consider, for example, the attitudes held in America during the 1950's with regards to rock and roll music as opposed to contemporary attitudes. The famous appearance of Elvis Presley on the Ed Sullivan show resulted in a great deal of controversy at the time because many evangelicals thought that The King's dancing was inappropriate and lewd. The evangelical type would probably include values and psychological attitudes such as reverence for tradition and conservatism, modesty, and fear with regards to the moral degeneration of society. However, despite these concerns, public opinion regarding rock and roll quickly changed and Elvis' dancing is now considered to be quite tame when compared to contemporary pop music videos. Now, these changes in judgment took place within a mere century's time, and they are still developing today. A contemporary evangelical type would probably still hold many of the same beliefs with regards to immoral behaviors and their effects on society, but their focus is directed towards other issues such as whether they should have to bake cakes for homosexual couples rather than popular music. In this instance, we see a general form of a certain personality type, and how various cultural phenomena influence the development of their attitudes and judgments.

If one considers the vastness of human history, then we will see that cultural and psychological factors have very important influences on what sort of value judgments one might have. As a consequence, this complicates the work of the genealogist by requiring deep study and consideration of the vast number of dynamics at play in the descent and emergence of

values. However, since it is such a rigorous method, it does bode well for what a properly constructed genealogy discovers. Such findings are certainly significant and deserve due consideration. So, what might one learn from the findings within Nietzsche's *On the Genealogy of Morals*?

3. What Does the *Genealogy* Provide?

We have seen how genealogy is supposed to work as an explanatory method of discovering how certain values change and are given new interpretations over time. Nietzsche's *On the Genealogy of Morals* specifically demonstrates a naturalistic view of the descent and emergence of "modern morality" and its interpretive values. What are we to take away from this project? Often it is suggested that the *Genealogy* is an essential element to Nietzsche's project of the critique of morality and the revaluation of values. The critique of morality and the naturalistic account of its growth are interconnected aspects of Nietzsche's philosophy; the latter helps to inform the former so that a critique is possible. The question we must ask at this point is: how does the *Genealogy* work to set up such a critique of morality? First, we must discover what Nietzsche is referring to by "morality." Next, it will be necessary to see how morality is questionable and why Nietzsche feels that a critique is necessary. Lastly, we will see how the *Genealogy* serves as the groundwork for a full critique.

3.1 Defining the Scope of Morality

So what is morality for Nietzsche? Why does he go so far as to call himself an *immoralist*? Perhaps it will be useful to begin with the distinction between morality and ethics. Ethics can be stated as

> "'any scheme for regulating the relations between people that works through
> informal sanctions and internalized dispositions' . . . Morality, on the other hand,
> is a particular ethical orientation, or a 'range' of such outlooks, which is 'so much
> with us,' according to Williams, 'that moral philosophy spends much of its time
> discussing the differences between these outlooks, rather than the difference
> between all of them and everything else' . . . This is precisely Nietzsche's
> position. He thinks that morality is 'so much with us' because it presents itself as
> the only object of ethical life."[22]

Nietzsche's point is not to jettison all of ethics; however, he is certainly suspicious of the value of one's moral interpretations. Clearly, then, we will need to understand a bit more about what morality *is* for Nietzsche before moving on to why morality might be questionable.

In determining the scope of Nietzsche's critique, perhaps a helpful place to turn for this subject is Brian Leiter's explanation of Morality in the Pejorative Sense (MPS).[23] What would qualify as an instance of MPS for Nietzsche? According to Leiter, the scope of the critique refers to general characteristics that are shared by MPS. Any particular MPS is

> "an ethical system that has a pro-attitude toward, among other things, happiness,
> altruism, and equality. . . A culture permeated with a pro-attitude toward
> happiness and a con-attitude towards suffering will make it difficult for creative
> human beings, great artists and thinkers - Nietzsche's higher types, according to
> Leiter - to fulfill their potential: to endure and even welcome the suffering

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[22] Clark, Maudemarie. "Nietzsche's Contribution to Ethics." *Nietzsche on Ethics and Politics.* Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2015. Print. P. 63.
[23] Leiter, P. 58-61.

necessary for the realization of that potential, instead of squandering themselves in the pursuit of happiness."[24]

With morality defined in terms of MPS, it might not be entirely clear to see how ascetic values of poverty, chastity, and humility are subject to Nietzsche's investigation, but MPS does expand the investigation further into values such as happiness, pleasure, and comfort. Leiter explicitly states the qualities of any given MPS, and, generally, MPS is defined in terms of certain normative attitudes; for example, a "pro-attitude" toward happiness, altruism, pity, and selflessness are all qualities which could lead a particular ethical system to be labeled as an instance of MPS. On the other hand, a "con-attitude" towards suffering, self-interest, and taking enjoyment in satisfying one's instinctual inclinations are other qualifications of MPS.[25] One issue this characterization of Nietzsche's position faces, though, is that it leaves out certain aspects of Nietzsche's view which are important to a proper understanding of the scope of morality.

According to Leiter, the reason that MPS constitutes the scope of what Nietzsche intends in his discussion of morality is that the attitudes maintained in MPS undermine the potential flourishing of "higher types." I will save the discussion of higher types for later in the paper; for now, it is important to note that this characterization of morality is not sufficient to encompass all of what Nietzsche intends in his discussions of morality. Specifically, MPS, as it has so far been characterized, leaves out the notion of moral blame; for Nietzsche, moral blame is one of the means by which a practitioner of a certain morality would accuse another of immoral actions in order to elicit certain psychological states within the supposed offender. Let's return to the distinction between good/bad and Good/Evil for a moment. The masters of the First Essay make their judgments in terms of their own "goodness;" Nietzsche writes that "the noble, powerful,

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[24] Clark, P. 64.
[25] Leiter, P. 103.

high-stationed and high-minded, who felt and established themselves and their actions as good, that is, of the first rank, in contradistinction to all the low, low-minded, common and plebeian."[26] This means that good, in the noble mode of valuation, is self-affirming. In order to determine what is good, the masters look to themselves and affirm goodness as being those qualities which they perceive themselves as possessing. On the other hand, "bad" on this mode of valuation is simply what masters *are not.* This illuminates a couple of points which deserve elaboration.

First, Nietzsche writes that there is a "ranking" involved in the noble mode of evaluation. Often described as a *pathos of distance*, this ranking involves one group of people affirming themselves as "higher" than another. This means that one group sees itself as superior to the other in some important way. In the *Genealogy,* this pathos of distance is described as a "fundamental total feeling on the part of a higher ruling in retaliation to a lower order, to a 'below,' – that is the origin of the antithesis of 'good' and 'bad.'"[27] It is clear how this selection from the First Essay illuminates the judgments of those on the "higher" end of this spectrum. Such people would be powerful and capable of acquiring the objects of their desires. On the other hand, those who happen to fall on the low end of the spectrum, upon having their desires thwarted by those who are more powerful, would certainly find themselves in an undesirable position. Indeed, they would have a great deal of incentive in re-working the existing evaluations that originated in the minds of those who are powerful. This leads us to the second important point regarding the pathos of distance: the normative consequence of the invention of Good and Evil.

The entire moral scheme of Good and Evil, as it was described in the discussion of the First Essay, was created in order to provide a means by which to undermine the evaluative mode

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[26] *GM,* P. 26.
[27] *GM,* P. 26.

of the masters. In order to "get ahead" in any way, the slaves of the First Essay had to create some cunning way to invert the noble values, thereby stripping the nobles' values of any perceived worth. This was achieved by praising those qualities which served the slaves best: for example, humility, being neighborly, graciousness, and meekness. But the masters would not simply abandon their sense of virtue; rather, this "inversion of the value-positing eye"[28] would have to be achieved through cunning and clever means on the part of the slaves. A consequence of this would of course be that this change did not occur overnight. Instead, it was a very long nuanced process (indeed, this is a major point of the entire *Genealogy*). This inversion occurs as a consequence of the effects of *blame*. This factor is the key component of the slaves' attempt to invert the values of the masters. This inversion allows for the slaves to have a means by which they can undermine the value judgments of the masters by imposing moral norms upon them. If the inversion of values is successful, then the masters will begin to abandon their value system to avoid reproach and condemnation. Indeed, once moral blame becomes an effective tool of morality, then bad conscience can be utilized to induce feelings of guilt within the minds of offenders. The remainder of the *Genealogy* is, in a sense, devoted to showing how these feelings of bad conscience and guilt are moralized in such a way that the ascetic ideal, a stark opposite to ideals of power and nobility, take hold.

Let's consider what might be a silly example: there has been a decades-long debate in the world of soda. Coca-Cola and Pepsi Cola are two very popular brands which have been in competition with each other for years. There have even been famous "challenges" which are intended to display the superiority of one brand over the other. Let's say that you are a Coke fan; this means that you consider Coke "good," and Pepsi "bad." This valuation is somewhat akin to the masters' non-moral mode of evaluation. More importantly, there is no real sense in which

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[28] *GM,* P. 36.

you can *blame* Pepsi for what you consider to be an inferior product. Rather, you simply look at

Pepsi with a bit of disdain because it does not meet the standard of goodness you find in Coke.

Nietzsche says that the noble mode "seeks its opposite only so as to affirm itself more gratefully

and triumphantly – its negative concept 'low,' 'common,' 'bad' is only a subsequently-invented

pale, contrasting image in relation to its positive basic concept."[29] In the example, then, the

Coke-drinker does not consider Pepsi to be bad in any kind of moral sense; importantly, Pepsi is

not blame-worthy for its product. Rather, Pepsi is simply a lesser drink in the eyes, or taste buds,

rather, of the Coke-drinker. The slaves, however, lead to the growth of these notions of bad

conscience and guilt as a result of their *ressentiment*-driven inversion of the nobles' values.

   In a way, we can think of the noble mode of evaluation as that which is self-affirming.

On the other hand, "slave morality from the outset says No to what is 'outside,' what is

'different,' what is 'not itself' . . . in order to exist, slave morality always needs a hostile external

world; it needs, physiologically speaking, external stimuli in order to act at all – its action is

fundamentally reaction."[30] What Nietzsche intends here is that in order for slave morality to

work, it needs something to direct its *ressentiment* towards; there needs to be some external

factor affecting one's person in such a negative way that the stimulus could be condemned on

moral grounds. In one rather scathing passage, Nietzsche writes that

> "[t]hey monopolize virtue, these weak, hopelessly sick people, there is no doubt
>
> of it: 'we alone are the good and just,' they say, 'we alone are *homines bonae*
>
> *voluntatis*.' They walk among us as embodied reproaches, as warnings to us – as
>
> if health, well-constitutedness, strength, pride, and the sense of power were in
>
> themselves necessarily vicious things for which one must pay some day, and pay

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[29] *GM,* P. 37.

[30] *Ibid,* P. 36.

bitterly: how ready they themselves are at bottom to *make* one pay; how they

crave to be *hangmen.*"[31]

In this passage, we see how those who are weak and oppressed, or otherwise "sickly," might look to those with power and health and, in order to redeem themselves, cast blame and condemnation on those with power. So, on this mode of *moral* evaluation, the slaves not only consider the actions of the powerful to be oppressive and detrimental to their own social standings, they go further by saying that the nobles are "vicious;" the slaves can feel a sense of righteous vengeance in thinking that their oppressors will one day get their just deserts for their actions and lifestyles.

What all of this demonstrates is that the content of what Nietzsche means by morality is a pretty far-reaching concept. Not only is it characterized by what is outlined by MPS, it also invloves those important notions of guilt and blame. Morality, for Nietzsche's purposes, could then be summed up as any evaluative system which has a pro-attitude towards happiness, a con-attitude towards suffering, and incorporates a notion of blame in order to devalue the lifestyles of those who do not conform to the moral scheme. For Nietzsche, such moralities are, as it has been presented, something worthy of a fuller, more in-depth critique. However, simply from what has been argued so far, perhaps there is not a compelling enough reason to seek out such a critique. Indeed, what if morality, even in this pejorative sense, could still be a *good* thing which serves to benefit humanity? Perhaps Nietzsche's mission, instead of providing us with reasons to reject morality, has given us reason to believe that there are certain aspects of morality which we should keep intact rather than subject them to critique. To answer these issues, we must see what the truly questionable aspects of morality are and why *Genealogy* demonstrates the need for a fuller account of its detrimental effects.

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[31] *Ibid,* P. 123.

3.2 Interpreting the *Genealogy*

With a general idea of what Nietzsche has in mind when he speaks of morality, one can

better understand how the *Genealogy* works in his project of the critique of morality. It has been

shown that the *Genealogy* is "primarily an explanatory account of the emergence of some

distinctive set of beliefs, practices, and associated phenomena."[32] However, it has not yet been

shown if there are any normative consequences that can be drawn from such an account. There

has been a considerable amount of debate as to whether or not the *Genealogy* offers any sort of

immanent critique of morality. Nietzsche does not appear to include any sort of revaluation of

moral values within the context of the *Genealogy*; there are, however, various accounts of what

role the *Genealogy* plays in the larger context of the critique of morality.

3.2.1 Problems with Fallacious Reasoning

One possible interpretation could suggest that the questionable origins of morality

demonstrate that morality itself is a questionable set of values. At first glance, this might appear

to be a sufficient explanation of how the *Genealogy* could work to unsettle one's faith in

morality. However, this position fails because it presents a genealogical fallacy. This fallacy is

committed by claiming that the effects of a certain cause are condemnable solely on the basis

that the cause is condemnable. To demonstrate the ineffectiveness of this explanation, consider

the case of Henrietta Lacks: her case is quite controversial in modern bioethics because she is

considered to have suffered breaches of medical autonomy. During her treatments for cervical

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[32] Kail, P.J.E. "'Genealogy' and the *Genealogy.*" *Nietzsche's On the Genealogy of Morality: A Critical Guide.* Ed. Simon May. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2014. P, 214-233. Print. P. 214.

cancer, some of her cells were taken and used in research without her knowledge nor her consent. These cells, it was discovered, could be easily reproduced and used to perform various experiments. To this day, what are known as HeLa cells are still used in labs. In fact, these cells were instrumental in the creation of the polio vaccine. Unfortunately, Henrietta was unable to be saved, and her family never saw a dime of the vast amount of money that has been made from the reproduction and sale of her cells.[33] Now, the way that these cells were acquired and used was certainly questionable by modern medical standards and deserves being subject to exposure; however, the life-saving polio vaccine has been a great discovery that has benefitted countless lives, and condemning this vaccine solely for its questionable origins just does not make logical sense. The genealogical fallacy can be summarized as the error in reason in which the origins of a belief or value shows that the belief itself is wrong.

3.2.2 Kail's Epistemological Destabilization Effect

We have seen that Nietzsche, if he intends to use the *Genealogy* as a set-up for the critique of morality, cannot be committing the genealogical fallacy. So, what other account might be given for how the *Genealogy* should be interpreted? According to P.J.E. Kail, "Nietzsche's genealogy has the consequence of *destabilizing* the moral beliefs it explains, namely by motivating the requirement to seek some further justification for those beliefs."[34] In order for this to work,

> "[the *Genealogy*] must dislodge the privileged status of these central normative beliefs . . . Nietzsche's account of the emergence of the beliefs distinctive of MPS destabilizes the beliefs by uncovering the fact that the mechanisms productive of the beliefs are epistemically unreliable. Knowledge of this fact provides a reason

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[33] Skloot, Rebecca. *The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks.* New York, Broadway Books, 2011. Print.
[34] Kail, P. 215.

to treat such beliefs with suspicion unless and until some further justification for them is forthcoming."[35]

In other words, the *Genealogy* shows that there are naturalistic explanations for moral phenomena, and these naturalistic origins call into question the justifications typically given for moral values. If one takes values such as altruism, charity, selflessness, and pity as good and morally upright behavior, then he or she will have to go deeper than citing these values as simply being moral truths if the destabilization is effective. The *Genealogy* shows that such values actually are born out of feelings of *ressentiment* and guilt rather than out of "true" moral worth. Therefore, these beliefs "become not moral phenomena, but yet another interpretation of them. This leaves the questions of *what* justification and value they have wide open; as Nietzsche says, a 'morality could even have grown *out of* an error, and the realization of this fact would not as much as touch the problem of its value.'"[36] Given that morality can no longer be "taken for granted" as truths that simply *are*, we certainly have reason to question the need for morality.

Kail describes his account as an epistemological one. This means that he intends to show that the stories of the *Genealogy* destabilize morality as a firmly rooted set of beliefs. In the *Genealogy,* Nietzsche says that the supposed value of moral beliefs is taken "as given, as factual, as beyond all question; one has hitherto never doubted or hesitated in supposing 'the good man' to be of greater value than the 'evil man,' of greater value in the sense of furthering the advancement and prosperity of man in general."[37] What Kail is arguing is that the *Genealogy* demonstrates that such an assumption regarding moral values is epistemologically suspicious if Nietzsche's version of their development is correct. This is a result of the destabilization effect mentioned above. Kail writes that "[a] *destabilizing* account involves an awareness of causes of

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[35] *Ibid,* P. 228-229.
[36] *Ibid,* P. 230.
[37] *GM,* P. 20.

the belief that motivates a requirement to provide further justification for that belief."[38] According to this interpretation, the *Genealogy* achieves this by showing that morality is borne not of actual content which supports moral claims, but by showing that moral claims are just interpretations of phenomena. Kail argues that "[k]nowing that beliefs have such sources destabilizes the beliefs . . . because they emerge regardless of any evidence in their favor, or indeed in the case of *ressentiment's* operation in the slave revolt, *despite* the presence of what should be evidence to the contrary."[39] What Kail is getting at is that the origin of moral values such as selflessness, meekness, forgiveness, and the like are epistemically shaky because of a lack of evidence to actually support such values. They are especially suspect because they rise, not from any actual moral content, but from feelings of *ressentiment* which could be characterized as vengeful and hateful feelings. What is especially important to note here is that Kail's account avoids the genealogical fallacy because it does not argue that moral values are in and of themselves bad values; the destabilization just requires that further justification be given to defend calling them good. However, I do not think that this account is complete according to what Nietzsche is attempting to achieve in the *Genealogy*.

Perhaps, as Kail argues, the origins of morality are indeed epistemologically questionable. However, there seems to be some shortcomings with Kail's account. First, it does not seem like Nietzsche would be satisfied with solely an epistemological account of the questionability of morality. The *Genealogy* does serve the purpose of unsettling our beliefs about morality, but it also seems to go deeper into the realm of the normative questionability of moral values. This leads to the second shortcoming of Kail's account which concerns the way that one might react intellectually to his or her faith in morality being destabilized.

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[38] Kail, P. 228
[39] *Ibid,* P. 229.

The destabilization effect demonstrates that our reasons to believe in morality are no longer justified; as a result, the value of these ideals is open to being questioned. Maybe they will turn out to be valuable after all, or maybe they will turn out to be detrimental in some way. Kail is successful in extrapolating this important part of the *Genealogy*. However, Nietzsche seems to want to provide us reasons for thinking that morality is sinister or detrimental in some way, and the destabilization effect, by itself, does not provide such reasons. If that is the case, then Nietzsche's *Genealogy* could possibly miss its mark in its attempt to set up a full critique of moral values. Consider this example: for many years, you have been a devoted fan of the *Star Wars* franchise. You have acquired many different pieces of memorabilia, attended movie premiers, and even joined fan groups to show your love for the franchise. However, one day your psychoanalyst tells you that your fandom is a product of your hatred towards an old ex-girlfriend who was just as devoted to the *Star Trek* series. He says that your devotion to *Star Wars* is a psychological reaction to lash out at this person who broke your heart many years ago. Now, this calls into question whether *Star Wars* really means that much to you; still, though, the series has been able to help you get over the break-up and move on with your life. Indeed, if the truth is told, you *really* like the movies beyond this mere psychological reason, and you decide that *Star Wars* is something that you want to keep as a part of your life. This example is analogous to how one might evaluate morality post-destabilization. Even though one's original justifications for believing morality is a valuable part of life have been removed by the *Genealogy's* stories, one could still evaluate it as a positive component of his or her life because morality seems to serve his or her interests.[40] Indeed, if it appears that moral values make your life go better, then, despite their questionable origins, it is conceivable that one would choose not to suspend his or

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[40] Special thanks to Dr. Allen Coates for helping construct this example.

her acceptance of morality. In order to properly set up a critique, the *Genealogy* needs to give reasons for believing that morality is an unfavorable set of values.

3.2.3 Historical and Critical Criteria

In his essay, "The Relevance of History for Moral Philosophy: A Study of Nietzsche's Genealogy," Paul Katsafanas says that there are two important features of a proper interpretation of the *Genealogy.* The first criterion we will cover in our investigation is referred to as the "historical criterion." This is important because the questionable aspects of morality cannot fully be appreciated without a proper understanding of the history of their origin and development. The second criterion is the "critical criterion." This can be understood as the element of the *Genealogy* which provides us with a reason to question our accounts of morality. This criterion allows us to go beyond a destabilization effect and provides us a reason to purse such a critique. I will cover each of these in turn beginning with the historical component of Katsafanas' interpretation of Nietzsche.

From the discussions of the essays, it is clear that the *Genealogy* takes a historical form. This is no mistake as Nietzsche intends to show that cultural norms and values are not established overnight. Katsafanas writes that "Nietzsche frequently emphasizes that affects and drives cannot be altered by direct, immediate conscious decisions. Rather, transforming these psychic states takes time."[41] In the paper, Katsafanas utilizes examples to demonstrate how popular opinions change over time. One such example proceeds as follows:

> "Suppose an agent, under the pressure of a religious interpretation, regards
> manifestations of his sex drive as sinful. When he experiences or acts on sexual

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[41] Katsafanas, Paul. "The Relevance of History for Moral Philosophy: A Study of Nietzsche's Genealogy." *Nietzsche's On the Genealogy of Morality: A Critical Guide.* Ed. Simon May. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011. P. 170-192. Print. P. 188.

urges, he feels guilt, shame, and so forth. However, later in his life this individual consciously rejects his religious upbringing: he becomes a committed atheist. Although the agent consciously pronounces his sex drive perfectly good, and rejects completely the concept of sinfulness, it is normal to assume that he will experience lingering traces of the old evaluation. We can imagine that, without being able to justify it, he still experiences residual shame and negative affects when sexual urges manifest themselves."[42]

What this example demonstrates is that one cannot consciously make such drastic changes in his or her affects and expect the new values to completely replace the old immediately. Indeed, we see this effect taking place in the earlier example regarding rock music. Although many people's opinions have been changed, there are still disputes over its moral qualities. Since such affects might not fully be able to take hold within the context of one individual's lifetime, it is easily conceivable how societal values take hold and change in a very slow and aggregative way. This also makes the issue with Kail's account more apparent. Even though the person in the example above has rejected Christian values, he still experiences the guilt associated with Christian morality. How difficult might it be to imagine that under certain circumstances he might feel overwhelmed by these guilt feelings and return to his faith. This certainly would not satisfy Nietzsche as he wants to provide us with reasons to further question the value of morality. This example of the atheist specifically demonstrates the need for the *Genealogy's* historical form. Without the historical components of the *Genealogy,* one would not have the proper historical distance to understand the way in which moral values originated, grew, and developed. This historical distance provides a means by which one can perceive how moral values are contingent upon numerous factors including social conditions and psychology.

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[42] *Ibid*, P. 189.

In cases such as this we see how Nietzsche's views regarding psycho-social types play a large role in his explanations of the growth of moral values. In one instance, Nietzsche writes that "moralities are . . . merely a *sign language of the affects.*"[43] In other words, whatever one considers to be a moral value can be signified by the feelings toward certain phenomena. Recall, however, that these feelings are simply a result of one's culture and moral upbringing. They are able to change, though,

> "when new evaluations are coupled with habituation into new forms of life. This would include the acceptance of new interpretations of what one's affects mean (e.g. interpreting the affect of bad conscience as guilt), new inducements to certain forms of activity (e.g. through religion and custom), and new conceptions of agency and responsibility (e.g. viewing the self as something distinct from the deed). These factors when coupled with the change in evaluative judgments, would gradually reconfigure our affects and desires."[44]

The historical criterion makes sense of these processes of change and the way they impact one's moral beliefs and feelings. Further, this makes it clear that the issue for Nietzsche goes further than simply an epistemological problem. Indeed, Nietzsche not only intends to show that morality has questionable origins, but he is also concerned with the value of the growth and development of morality. For this aspect of our interpretation, we turn to Katsafanas' critical criterion.

According to Katsafanas, the critical criterion "must explain why the *Genealogy* constitutes (or enables) a critique of modern morality."[45] In other words, this criterion provides the reasons why one should seek a fuller critique of moral values themselves, not just their

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[43] *Beyond Good and Evil*, P. 100.
[44] Katasafanas, P. 190.
[45] *Ibid,* P. 171

origins and growth. If successful, the critical criterion will demonstrate why the *Genealogy* does more than deliver a destabilizing account by providing reasons why morality could be a detrimental set of values. Rather than investigating the epistemological reasons for questioning morality, the critical criterion investigates what sorts of effects moral values might have and how they influence one's ability to flourish.

3.2.4 Nietzsche's Higher Types and Flourishing

We have seen morality's epistemically questionable origins and development in Kail's account of destabilization; however, this position could fail to give us a proper reasons to consider why morality itself should be considered worthy of a full critique. However, what if it were the case that morality *hindered* one's life in some significant way? Perhaps this possibility is not of concern to someone who feels like making personal sacrifices for the sake of morality is the right thing to do. Consider a contemporary case: in his famous essay, *Famine, Affluence, and Morality,* Peter Singer argues that one ought to give to charitable causes to the point of marginal utility. His principle states that we are required "to prevent bad things from happening unless in doing so we would be sacrificing something of comparable moral significance," and this principle, he argues, "require[s] reducing ourselves to the point of marginal utility."[46] For Singer, marginal utility is the point at which by giving anymore you would place yourself in as bad, or worse, a situation as the people you intend to aid by doing so.[47] Per this view, to be moral one must act in accordance with a very selfless set of values which would more than likely fall into those included under MPS. Further, this assertion would mean that those who do not abide by

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[46] Singer, Peter. "Famine, Affluence, and Morality." *The Right Thing to Do: Basic Readings in Moral Philosophy, 2ⁿᵈ Edition.* Ed. James Rachels. McGraw-Hill, 1999. 167-176. P. 174.
[47] *Ibid,* P. 174.

such a principle could be blamed for failing to do the right thing. Indeed, if this principle was widely accepted, then it does not seem like much of a logical leap to assume that those who abstained from doing so would be seen as greedy, selfish, and indifferent towards the suffering of others. It seems like moral values could be problematic for those individuals who have self-interested (not necessarily *selfish*) aspirations. Such a moral code could be especially detrimental to the flourishing of Nietzsche's "higher types."

Recall from our earlier discussion of MPS that Leiter claims the values of morality undermine the flourishing of higher types. A number of questions can now be raised regarding these people in relation to what aspects of morality are subject to large-scale scrutiny. Firstly, who are the "higher types?" And secondly, what features of morality could potentially undermine their ability to flourish? Let's take each one of these questions in turn.

First, in order to understand how the values of morality could be detrimental to the higher types, we must first address *who* the higher types are. Leiter outlines five criteria which could be said to encapsulate Nietzsche's meaning. These criteria are:

> (1) The higher type is solitary and deals with others only instrumentally . . .
>
> (2) The higher type seeks burdens and responsibilities, as he is driven towards the completion of a unifying project . . .
>
> (3) The higher type is healthy and resilient . . .
>
> (4) The higher type affirms life, meaning that he is prepared to will the eternal return of his life . . .
>
> (5) The higher [type] has a distinctive bearing toward others and especially toward himself: he has self-reverence.[48]

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[48] Leiter, P. 92-97.

In the higher types, we see a psycho-social type characterized by feelings of self-worth, courage to seek out difficult tasks and take pride in their completion, ambitiousness, and strength. Examples of higher types, for Nietzsche would include people like Goethe, Beethoven, and (probably) Nietzsche himself.[49] Higher types, for Nietzsche, exemplify what it means to be "great," and he is worried that moral values might undermine such people from achieving their greatness as a result of their normative demands. This leads us to our second question: how might morality potentially undermine the flourishing of such higher types?

According to Katsafanas, an analysis of how morality could be detrimental would be to examine the concept of the will to power. This concept is central to Nietzsche's philosophy, but for the purposes of this paper I will paint a simple picture of the will to power in order to demonstrate the importance of the critical criterion to a proper interpretation of the *Genealogy*. For Katsafanas, the will to power can be understood as "perpetually *seeking* and *overcoming* resistances to one's ends. For example, an agent wills power in the pursuit of knowledge by striving to encounter and overcome intellectual problems in her pursuit of knowledge; or, an ascetic wills power by willing to encounter and overcome his body's own resistances to self-inflicted suffering."[50] Recall that one of the primary features of being a higher type is seeking out daunting tasks and overcoming them. The danger here is "the ways in which [morality] falsifies perceptions of power."[51] According to Kastafanas' definition of the will to power, moral values could distort one's perception of what it means to achieve power. For example, consider the moral value of humility. According to this value, one is properly exercising the will to power when one avoids being arrogant and achieves a lack of self-importance. However, it seems odd how values like this serve to *increase* one's conception of his or her power. Morality distorts

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[49] *Ibid,* P. 92-93
[50] Katsafanas*,* P. 176.
[51] *Ibid,* P. 188.t

these perceptions of power in three ways: 1) morality "promotes weakness and demonizes power;" 2) morality "associates negative emotions with manifestations of actual power and positive emotions with manifestations of actual weakness;" and 3) morality "employs a conception of agency that enables the weak to see their weakness as chosen, and hence as strength."[52] We see all three of these distortions at play in Nietzsche's genealogical account of morality; consider the slaves again from the first essay: they invert the values of the powerful nobles, they deem the values of the nobles "evil," and they consider themselves as being more worthy of moral praise for *choosing* their lives while *blaming* others for not choosing the same. However, for the higher types, one must constantly seek out and overcome new and more challenging obstacles to achieve the fullest expenditure of his or her will to power.

The danger that exists for higher types, then, is the possibility that such a person might fall victim to a moral system which distorts perceptions of power. Nietzsche considers this in the preface of the *Genealogy* when he asks: "What if a symptom of regression were inherent in the 'good,' likewise a danger, a poison, a narcotic through which the present was possibly living *at the expense of the future? . . .* So that precisely morality would be to blame if the *highest power and splendor* actually possible to the type man was never in fact attained?"[53] Here, I think, lies the crux of the issue for determining the critical criterion: if the ability of the higher types to flourish and drive humanity forward is hindered, then this would be an undesirable consequence of the growth of morality. Further, as we have learned, the values of MPS do not uphold those same values as a higher type would embrace. Consider the fact that in order to overcome certain obstacles, one must endure a certain amount of suffering. Nietzsche writes that "[w]hat does not

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[52] *Ibid,* P. 183.
[53] *GM,* P. 20.

destroy me, makes me stronger."[54] Despite this quote being used by many pop figures such as

Kelly Clarkson or Marvel's Ultron in trivial ways, it still demonstrates an important aspect of the

higher types' mentality: that one must suffer to some extent to achieve his or her greatness.

However, according to our account of morality, such an evaluation of suffering should be

disvalued in favor of a more pro-happiness view. Indeed, the most basic components of a higher

mode of evaluation, such as the pathos of distance, are staunchly opposed by the values of MPS

in favor of values of equality and humility. In doing so, the proponents of morality claim to be

serving the interest of mankind. This is a problem for Nietzsche as he thinks such an account

could lead to a contemptible state of life: what he calls the "last man."

In Nietzsche's *Thus Spoke Zarathustra,* Nietzsche describes his concept of the last man.

The last man in this story represents what Nietzsche fears will become the norm for humanity if

the higher types are unable to flourish. For these reasons, it serves as a good example for

representing the dangers of what happens when one's perceptions of perceived power are

distorted by means of moral values. In Zarathustra's speech, he says:

> "'We have invented happiness,' say the last men, and they blink. They have left
>
> the regions where it was hard to live for one needs warmth. One still loves one's
>
> neighbor, for one needs warmth. . . 'Everybody wants the same, everybody is the
>
> same: whoever feels differently goes voluntarily into a madhouse'. . . 'We have
>
> invented happiness,' say the last men, and they blink."[55]

Here we see how the last men uphold values such as equality, neighbor-love, eradication of

suffering, and happiness as ultimate goods. However, Nietzsche wants to say that these people

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[54] Nietzsche, Friedrich. "Twilight of the Idols." *The Portable Nietzsche.* Ed. And Trans. Walter Kaufmann. Penguin Books, 1954. 463-564. P. 467.
[55] Nietzsche, Friedrich. "Thus Spoke Zarathustra." *The Portable Nietzsche.* Ed. And Trans. Walter Kaufmann. Penguin Books, 1954. 103-439. P. 129-130.

are contemptible because they are missing out on certain essential components of what it means to flourish. Certainly, we can see how a higher type would not be able to pursue his or her ends in the society of the last men. Due to this, we have found an effective means of fully destabilizing morality from its privileged status as well as a reason to pursue a full critique of moral values in order to determine how they systematically undermine the will to power.

4. Conclusion

In the study of moral philosophy, investigations of all sorts take place. Nietzsche's *Genealogy* is particularly interesting because it is not trying to find some justification *in favor of* moral values. For instance, Kant argues that morality is justified on the basis of human rationality. Mill argues that morality serves humanity by increasing the amount of happiness in the world. Even Aristotle argues that the moral life is the ultimate way to achieve flourishing in life. Nietzsche rejects all of these views by demonstrating how these values are 1) not grounded in any sense of "truth;" and 2) by demonstrating how moral values are questionable in terms of what makes one's life go well. In other words, moral values have been taken as true by many philosophers before Nietzsche, and then they move on to persuade one to be moral beings. Nietzsche says that these values should not be adopted by everyone because doing so might result in a society which prevents the best and brightest from fulfilling their potential.

Nietzsche's *Genealogy* serves Nietzsche's goal of dislodging morality's privileged status through various means. First, it displays anti-realism regarding moral truth. Nietzsche's anti-realist viewpoint argues that universal claims regarding morality are misguided. Attempts to institute "one universal morality for all" would necessarily hinder some peoples' ability to flourish while serving the interests of others. Rather, than any sort of "real" and universal claims regarding morality fail to have substantive content on this view. Second, Nietzsche's naturalism

shows how values are instilled as a result of one's upbringing, psychology, and culture. These aspects of one's life which constitute one's psycho-social "type." There are numerous factors at play in the construction of one's type, and these factors are historical in nature. This is demonstrated by Foucault's notions of descent and emergence. These two factors allow for the genealogist to track the origins of various values and sentiments, and they also establish what constituted their growth and development. These methods allow for us to gather certain normative consequences from Nietzsche's genealogical project.

We saw from Kail that the privileged status of morality's origins is questionable due to the fact that evidence against the existence of morality are ignored. Kail argues that faith in morality is epistemically untenable because the typical justifications given for them are removed upon understanding their genealogical origins. However, Nietzsche seems to be doing more than trying to destabilize our faith in morality from an epistemological standpoint. For one, Nietzsche's anti-realist viewpoint demonstrates that he is not solely concerned with moral "truths." Second, the *Genealogy* is not solely concerned with the epistemically questionable origins of morality, but Nietzsche also is concerned with the possible detrimental effects that morality could possibly have. The combination of a historical criterion alongside a critical criterion demonstrates how the

> "acceptance of modern morality was causally responsible for producing a dramatic change in our affects, drives, and perceptions. This change caused us to perceive actual increases in power as reductions in power, and actual decreases in power as increases in power. Moreover, it led us to experience negative emotions

when engaging in activities that constitute greater manifestations of power, and

positive emotions when engaging in activities that reduce power."[56]

Ultimately, Nietzsche fears that this systematic distortion in our perceptions of power could

undermine the flourishing of the higher types. This effect can only be appreciated by assuming

the proper historical distance from its causes. Here we see the importance of the *Genealogy's*

historical form. The discovery that morality could hinder the flourishing of these higher types

constitutes the critical element of the *Genealogy*. The destabilization our faith in morality by

investigating its historical origins combined with a critical criterion goes further than a solely

epistemological account by showing how morality could actually have important normative

consequences. The combination of these features allows for the *Genealogy* to achieve

Nietzsche's goal of providing a preparatory work which can serve as the basis for a full critique

of moral values.

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[56] Katsafanas, P. 191.

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