

Asher Zachman

Dr. Matt Altman

PHIL 354

5/20/2024

Nietzsche Commentary

“Alas, the faith in the dignity and uniqueness of man, in his irreplaceability in the great chain of being, is a thing of the past – he has become an *animal*, literally and without reservation or qualification, he who was, according to his old faith, almost God (‘child of God,’ ‘God-man’)” (Nietzsche, *On the Genealogy of Morals*, pg. 155).

Despite resting comfortably in the philosophical corpus as the most pernicious critic of religion to ever put pen to paper, Nietzsche simultaneously outlines some of the most profound strengths of faith systems in contradistinction to the scientific atheism that was growing in prominence all around him which he saw to be equally bound to the post of slave morality. As a philosopher of the future and a self-proclaimed immoralist, Nietzsche aimed to demonstrate the voidity of the life-denying juxtaposition between good and evil, and he saw the scientific obsession with absolute truth as a shadow of religious faith that needed to be abandoned before mankind could truly take ownership of their lives. The above passage touches on one of the greatest strengths Nietzsche saw in the religious framework: that of the perceived closeness of mankind to divinity; the higher ordering of the human being in relative dominion to the subservient world of decidedly non-Sapient

flora and fauna. Having stabbed God with the lance of rational progression, specifically facilitated through the Copernican turns preceding the writing of Nietzsche, the earth was first reduced to the status of any other planet, then humanity to the rank of any other animal. As much as Nietzsche values anything, and I believe he does present ideals however closeted they may be, this self-affirming confidence in one's superiority of species was a grand cornerstone of master morality as well as the religious fervor towards oneself that accompanied such a self-positing of teleological and moral goodness. Thus, the great loss perpetrated by systematized science is the sense of divinity sourced in one's own being, and the Nietzschean project aims to reclaim this self-positing without the valueless distinction between good and evil; between sanctity and profanity.

“As the will to truth thus gains self-consciousness – there can be no doubt of that – morality will gradually *perish* now: this is the great spectacle in a hundred acts reserved for the next two centuries in Europe – the most terrible, most questionable, and perhaps also the most hopeful of all spectacles” (Nietzsche, *On the Genealogy of Morals*, pg. 161).

In this passage Nietzsche foretells of the development of post-modernism and ethical subjectivism that followed as a consequence of his revaluative project; his proclamation of the singular truth of un-truth; his frantic waving of the morning lantern in light of a dead God's persistent shadows. Would Nietzsche see his mission completed in the 21st century? It appears that this equally terrifying and hopeful sea change has veritably taken root in mainstream academics, yet slave moralist frameworks have continued to increase their foothold, especially in relation to the uncertainty of sustainable material conditions (the petri dish of fascism). As we stare into the arguably bleak future through a

Nietzschean lens, it appears that his reevaluation of values has taken effect in direct proportion to one's level of higher education, and even in those of us who are critical and cautious of slave morality often have deeply entrenched psychological distinctions of this kind that require much more than mere awareness to transcend. Where does the contemporary sojourner turn to in such a void of arbitrariness and individual perspectives? Many cling steadfastly to absolutism, often in open *self-deception* as Nietzsche defines faith, and many turn to atheistic versions of this self-same nihilism. This is a question I aim to tackle before the end of this fortnight, for the good of my own psyche just as much as my reader's.