

**A STUDY OF NIETZSCHE'S TRANSVALUATION OF VALUES:
TOWARDS A CRITIQUE OF THE FILIPINO VALUE SYSTEM
WITH THE VIEW OF PRESENTING AN ALTERNATIVE
APPROACH TO ETHICS**

A Thesis

**Presented to the Graduate Faculty
of the College of Arts and Sciences
University of San Carlos**

**In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Arts in Philosophy**

by

JERRY PESCADERO

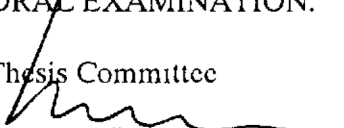
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APPROVAL SHEET


This thesis entitled "A STUDY OF NIETZSCHE'S TRANSVALUATION OF VALUES: TOWARDS A CRITIQUE OF THE FILIPINO VALUE SYSTEM WITH THE VIEW OF PRESENTING AN ALTERNATIVE APPROACH TO ETHICAL STUDY" prepared by JERRY F. PESCADERO in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of MASTER OF ARTS IN PHILOSOPHY has been examined and is recommended for acceptance and approval for ORAL EXAMINATION.

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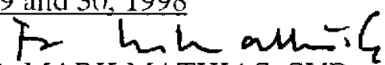

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ABSTRACT

For Nietzsche humanity is divided between masters and slaves, in a sense the fortunate and the unfortunate. Each group has its own corresponding moral perspective: master morality and slave morality. Master morality distinguishes "good" from "bad." "Good" refers to the characteristics of the nobles: power, strength, independence, happiness, pride and other positive traits. Since those characteristics are "good," lack of them is not good, or simply "bad." Thus, weakness, herd-mentality, misery, low self-esteem and other negative traits are "bad."

Slave morality on the other hand distinguishes "good" from "evil." "Evil" refers to those characteristics that are foreign to the slaves, the unfortunate people. Power, strength, independence, pride and the rest of what master morality calls "good" are condemned by slave morality as "evil." In contrast, the characteristics of the slaves, being the opposite of "evil," are called "good" in slave morality. Slave morality judges morality of an act according to how it alleviates the plight of the weak. Believing that humility is "good" provides relief to a person with low self-esteem. Making the strong believe that "good" consists in helping the weak benefits the latter. Altruism is deemed a virtue because it is the impotent person who ends up the beneficiary of the unselfishness of the well-off. Slave morality subjugates the strong for the advantage of the weak, undermining the promotion and enhancement of the former's positive characteristics.

Nietzsche advocates master morality, which is a celebration of the inherent richness of life and an exaltation of noble traits. He harshly criticizes such utilitarian approach to ethics that equates "good" with whatever that makes a miserable life more bearable. It is premised on a gloomy view of life and it reduces morality to a mere coping mechanism.

The Filipino value system is geared towards three goals: economic security, social mobility and social acceptance. Underlying these goals is the pursuit of self-esteem. Filipinos in general have a fragile ego that should always be guarded from personal affront, insults and criticisms. Self-esteem is attained through social acceptance. Norms of right and wrong are relative to their tendency to make the individual acceptable to other people, especially the significant others such as family, relatives and friends. Rejection is a serious punishment for a person whose sense of self-worth is dependent on other people's acceptance. Acceptability is attained by maintaining smooth interpersonal relationship with the significant others while avoiding conflicts and hurting their feelings. The Filipino value system is pragmatic in the sense that the end justifies the means. An act is "right" if it is useful in maintaining harmony, preventing conflict and above all making the individual acceptable to the group. An action is 'good' if it boosts a person's weak ego.

Nietzsche's view is useful in criticizing the Filipino value system. The lack of self-esteem as evident in the latter runs counter to natural pride as a noble characteristic. The Filipinos' desire for harmony with others makes them strongly dependent on the group in deciding right and wrong. Even when they

are able to think for themselves oftentimes they still follow the group, despite their conflicting views, for fear of being cast out. In Nietzschean perspective, the Filipino value system is a form of slave morality. It is a means of flattering the unworthy.

Among the outstanding features of Nietzsche's view is his focus on the person rather than on the act or the purpose of the act in moral judgments. "Godness" is a personal characteristic. Acts are "good," not so much as to how they serve to lessen suffering, but more so as to how appropriately they express the joy of living. Living is primarily about cherishing, not coping.

Despite outstanding features, Nietzsche's view does not have to be taken as the ultimate basis of moral judgment since it has weaknesses as well. Among the weaknesses is Nietzsche's denial of free will, a contradiction of a basic presumption in ethics. Also, Nietzsche's preference of master morality is not an assertion of its objectivity. Nietzsche fails to escape from relativism.

Neither does the Filipino value system escape from relativism. Its inherent pragmatism justifies sacrificing other values for the sake of social acceptance. Truth is not deemed a value in itself. It can be offered as a sacrifice on the altar of consensus. Lying is deemed right when honesty could hurt somebody's feelings. Sincerity is not a priority in interpersonal relation.

The purpose of this thesis is to come up with a criterion for ethical judgment that is reasonably acceptable as objective. Humanism is presented as a basis for an objective approach to ethics. Humanism here means that the purpose of a person's life is the full development of his potentials as a human being.

Consequently, the ultimate “good” is the holistic development of the individual. An ethics that emphasizes one part of human life while neglecting another produces a fragmented personality and a stunted society.

The basis of judgment is health. A healthy person’s motivation is satisfaction of needs. A person has to satisfy various levels of need corresponding to different aspects of life. Each level of need has to be satisfied before going to a higher level. Momentary deprivation on one level has to be overcome instead of resorting to defense mechanism. Once physiological, security, love, acceptance and esteem needs are satisfied, a healthy person is motivated towards growth. Growth needs refer to the individual’s intellectual interests, urge to have aesthetic experiences and finally self-actualization. Self-actualization is the culmination of the exploration, finding and refinement of oneself. The individual becomes the best he can be. A self-actualized person is healthy.

Along this line of thought is virtue ethics. The full development of human potential – the attainment of holistic health – includes refinement of character, the attainment of virtue. Virtue is the natural inclination to what is right and aversion, at least indifference, to vice. In line with Nietzsche, goodness is a personal characteristic. It is the internalization of values. Actions are just external manifestations of character. A virtuous person acts out of spontaneous goodness and yet he remains conscientious not to unduly offend someone.

Virtue is health; vice is the opposite.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Title Page	i
Approval Sheet	ii
Acknowledgment	iii
Thesis Abstract	iv
Chapter 1: The Problem and Its Scope	
Rationale	1
Review of Related Literature	6
Statement of the Problem	7
Significance of the Study	8
Methodology	9
Definition of Terms	9
Organization of the Study	11
Chapter 2: Nietzsche's Transvaluation of Values	
Master Morality	13
Slave Morality	16
Chapter 3: The Filipino Value System	
Beliefs and Conventions	22
Aims and Aspirations	23
Social Norms and Principles	28
Chapter 4: A Critique of the Filipino Value System	33
Chapter 5: Overcoming Moral Relativism	46

Chapter 6: An Alternative Approach to Ethics	58
Chapter 7: Summary and Conclusion	76
Bibliography	
Curriculum Vitae	

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Rationale

Humanity has gone a long way since the dawn of history. Science and technology have made contemporary life much easier, faster and more efficient than ever before. Global commerce has brought people, products, and services from different parts of the world together in a cosmopolitan market. Now there is so much information, but less truth. There are so many goods, but less goodness.

Every person needs security. There is the need to be in command of one's self and immediate environment. One might not control everything yet there is the need for general stability and consistency. When a person reaches the limits of his capacity, society is there to help. The individual can seek refuge in the company of others.

Familiarity breeds contentment. People are heirs of habits in thought and action. They are recipients of beliefs and attitudes passed on through generations. People think and act according to socially accepted standards. They expect the customary; they anticipate the expected. They find safety in predictability.

Culture unites the individuals in a society to a common set of beliefs, values, norms and customs. Culture influences the formation of the people's way of thinking as well as it regulates their behavior. Shared values keep the people together in the pursuit of common objectives. Corollary to values, which are abstract, are norms, which are concrete guidelines of behavior. Norms make people's behavior uniform and predictable.

There is security in the observance of the customary. For social order to last beliefs and norms have to be perpetuated by the institutions. The primary institution is the