

Nietzsche and Post Structuralism

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Nietzsche was a 19<sup>th</sup>-century philosopher whose views have had a significant impact on numerous fields. He was optimistic about the progress that humans were bound to make in the future, but he heavily emphasized the need for a change in values. As science progressed, most individuals no longer turned to Christianity for answers meaning its role in peoples' lives had greatly diminished. Nonetheless, although science had displaced the set of values emphasized by Christianity, it had not introduced a new set of values to replace them. But, since individuals continually need a source of meaning, they were bound to turn to other salves like aggressive nationalism. Nietzsche, therefore, sought to discover a way out of this state through the continuous positive affirmation of life. In his publication, *The Twilight of the Idols and the Anti-Christ*, Nietzsche argues that the values Christianity hinges on are opposed to the very essence of life. According to Nietzsche (1990), this religion instead aims to deny all the elements associated with healthy living including human instinct and sexuality. Faith discourages peoples' curiosity and the skepticism that occur naturally, while pity encourages Christians to applaud weakness. Lastly, Nietzsche pointed out that the concept of an afterlife encourages faithful Christians to devalue their current existence for the unconfirmed beyond.

Consequently, Nietzsche's viewpoints were significantly at odds with the conventional way of thinking in the 19<sup>th</sup> century as he did not share the same view as most of the universe's principals. His atheism was reluctant and different from the approaches taken by other philosophers who would often publicly endorse secularity. Nietzsche sought to urge humans to change their ways, especially now that God, the sole deity of the Christian religion, was dead. He acknowledged that with the rise of science, much of that had been pure and honest in faith had sunk along with the deceased deity. As a result, he intended to curb the progression of atheism

and impede human progress towards a democratic existence. Nietzsche's main concerns about secularization, however, revolved around the political consequences. According to Nietzsche, religion had previously served as a superstructure to maintain civility among humans. Therefore, his severe criticism was directed religion's role in undermining the very hierarchies it was supposed to be upholding. He saw the demise of this religion as an opportunity for new values that would ensure social equality instead of authorities. Nonetheless, despite his unsavory thoughts about Christianity, Nietzsche was not anti-religious, instead, he was just critical of Christianity's elitist reputation (Nietzsche, 1990). As a result, although, Nietzsche applauded Christianity's role in maintaining social order, he sharply critiqued its function in keeping its followers under control whom he perceived as slaves.

Although Nietzsche's work may not be as vital now as it was in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, his viewpoints are still crucial in philosophy up to date. His work was from numerous and distinct sources meaning he focused more on the individual than the group. As a result, Nietzsche advocated for individual progress without the influence of messy religion which is ridden with complications. He still serves as an icon for individualism since a single person is still as significant as a whole community. Nietzsche proved that a philosopher has to be willing to stand alone when they remain true to their convictions and ideas. Nietzsche was known for severing connections with an individual whom he deemed fake. Additionally, Nietzsche emphasized that one's existence was meaningless if they did not live it with intent. His questions about what motivates humans most have proven to be useful in dissecting both the postmodern and modernist movements since he provided a platform for both of these schools of thought to develop. His assertions, thus, affected many future philosophers who focused on the meaning of life and the universe. His claims were so controversial and thought-provoking that they are still

referred to in multiple fields including literature and art. Nietzsche's claims provide meaningful discussions whether to deconstruct his ideas, or use them as building blocks for additional thoughts on a topic.

I agree with some of Nietzsche's main arguments in his book as a reader in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. First, the age of science necessitates a restructuring of ethics for humans to associate with. Nietzsche correctly prophesied that without a rethinking of values, individuals would turn to other ideologies for meaning. Otherwise, humankind runs the risk of becoming an atheist—which is the thing the death of God was supposed to prevent. However, I disagree with his claims that the qualities that men and women possess are a result of social arrangements. Many of these qualities, for example, toxic masculinity, are not innate meaning they can be changed, for example, by the recent rising popularity of feminism. Nietzsche, like many men in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, could merely divorce the idea of female intelligence and industrial capacity from the acceptable child-bearing. Consequently, in this domain, Nietzsche may have failed to foresee how human evolution could positively affect humankind. Nevertheless, his claims also complicate the view of the modern world. Nietzsche's claim about resentment being the driving force behind Christianity does not fully explain this religion (Nietzsche, 1990). Furthermore, the bitterness Nietzsche was referring to is not found only in this set of beliefs. As a result, his analysis of unhappiness in one's existence should be changed to more accommodating proportions.

On the other hand, some of his assertions are difficult to understand. For instance, Nietzsche (1990) wrote that Christians were the worst enemies of human progress as they were "the domestic animals, the herd animals, the sick animals" (p.5). He believed that Christianity had failed everything and then made an ideal out of these very elements. Therefore, this religion

had corrupted the spiritual nature of existence as it insisted that most of it were sinful. Consequently, Nietzsche concluded that Christianity together with its beliefs and foundations had made human beings weak. To him, this religion was just another variation of the classic struggle of the weak and botched against the fit and strong. Nietzsche (1990) concluded by deeming faith as “the formula for every slander against the here and now”. I believe what Nietzsche was trying to convey was that Christianity was a hindrance to the liberation that was to spring forth after God’s death. But, this idea is challenging for me to understand since Nietzsche had previously praised Christianity for its values that had maintained social order for a long time. His thoughts are contradictory since he seems to be critiquing Christianity for the very thing he has previously given it credit for. As a result, some of these aspects of thinking are misunderstood in the present. It is difficult to identify his overall stand which leaves room for misinterpretation.

## References

Nietzsche, F. (1990). *The Twilight of the Idols and the Anti-Christ: or How to Philosophize with a Hammer*. *Trans. RJ Hollingdale*. New York: Penguin.

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