

Nietzsche's Perspective on "Truth" and its positive aspect

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Abstract: - Friedrich Nietzsche, the philosopher and psychologist, represents a major historical event whose ideas have had repercussions in recent history. He has been assigned a great place in the grand tradition of western thought and his fame has spread like wild fire. He sought to counter the positivistic challenges from across the channel by developing a new picture of human dignity. His mission is to sweep away the shibboleths behind which western man had been sheltering. Nietzsche puts forth his philosophy, which is "Truth"--- the reality behind all things. He gave the name "Truth" to "Will to Power".

"Truth", Nietzsche adds, "is thus not something which is there in existence and which has to be found out---- but something to be created, will to overcome, which in itself has no end."The central idea in Nietzsche's philosophy is expressed by his phrase "The Will to Power." Thus, "Will to Truth" is a mask worn by the "Will to Power". It is the motive force behind all life---- "Only where there is life is there will, not will to life but will to power."

Key words: Iconoclast, Truth, Will to Power, Will to Truth, Positivist, Will to Life.

INTRODUCTION

"Philosophy is the tyrannical drive itself the most spiritual will to power, 'to creation of the world', to cause prima."1 (Nietzsche, 1989)

Friedrich Nietzsche, the distinguished German and existentialist philosopher, declared himself as the destroyer of old values to clear the way for the virtues of strength against weakness. His ideas are concerned not only to the members of one nation or community, but to men everywhere. His mission is to sweep away the shibboleths behind which western man has been sheltering and aim to strip men of their illusions. Nietzsche was one of those who sought to counter the positivistic challenge from across the channel by developing a new picture of human dignity. Modern man finds that his values are worthless, that his ends do not give his life any purpose, and that his pleasures do not give him happiness. Nietzsche confronts the basic problem about happiness and enquires whether a new goal can be found that will give an aim to human life. He tries to solve them where he discovered 'Truth' to 'Will to power'.

II. TRUTH:

"Truth", Nietzsche adds, "is thus not something which is there in existence and which has to be found out – but something to be created."2(Reyburn, 1948).It is an endless process, a will to overcome which in itself has no end but a

word for 'will to power'. Will to power means that our mental life is secretly directed by our instinctual drive. Even our so called 'will to truth' is a mask worn by 'will to power'. The will to power is the fundamental principle of human nature. It is the reality behind all things.

Truth is the name which is given to that which agrees with one's instinctual preferences and it is what one calls explanation of the world. Nietzsche's skepticism about truth is a consequence of his insight into the will to power. According to Nietzsche, there are no everlasting facts there are only interpretations, orchestrated by the will to power. Nietzsche offers will to power as a principle capable of justifying existence in general and life in particular. He says that, "all driving force is will to power, that there is no other physical, dynamic or psychic force except this."3 (Nietzsche, 1881).He ascribes to the concept of force in the mechanistic interpretation of the world an inner will- the will to power.

Nietzsche approached the conception of a will to power from two points of view. First, he thought of it as a craving for worldly success, which he repudiated as harmful to man's interest in perfecting himself. Secondly, he thought of the will to power as a psychological drive in terms of which many diverse phenomena could be explained, example, gratitude, pity and self-abasement. In Zarathustra Nietzsche explains that will to power is proclaimed as the basic force underlying all human activities. Nietzsche's interpretation of human nature the truth to will to power is the chief factor in man's evolutionary struggle. It is the motive force behind all

life, from animal upwards, and every instinct is the expression of it, disguised or otherwise. Thus, “ wherever I found a living creature, there found I the will to power.”⁴(Nietzsche 1997).

III POSITIVE AND NEGATIVE ASPECT:

The two cardinal psychological phenomena ‘Fear’(negative) and ‘will to power’(positive) explain our strong consideration for the opinions of men.⁵(Kaufmann : 1974). Fear is considered as the negative motive which would make us avoid something and will to power is the positive motive which would make us strive for something. Primarily fear is nothing but our attitude toward power or in other words, the negative aspect of our will to power. A privation of power gives rise to both fear and the will to power. Nietzsche adds that wherever there is fear, there is also will to have the power to cope with what is feared. The two are still employed as separate principles. Thus will to power is that truth where one can overcome or in other words it is conceived as the will to overcome oneself.

IV STRUGGLE FOR EXISTENCE:

Nietzsche opposes Darwin’s conception of “struggle for existence” and gives way to the struggle for power. According to Nietzsche, the struggle for existence would be meaningless, unless there is a desire for existence, an active will to exist. This will to exist is really a will to dominate. The power does not mean domination over others, but can be achieved in creative way. Thus man’s will to live, becomes the will to power which is identical to the will to live. In Zarathustra, Nietzsche adds “Only where there is life is there also a will: but not will to life – rather: will to power.”⁶(Nietzsche,1997)

V CONCLUSION:

An adequate appraisal of Nietzsche’s view on man is possible only within the framework of his total philosophical perspective. Nietzsche’s genuine philosopher can never say, ‘No’ to life. Indeed acceptance of life in its totality (Amorfati) is the Zenith of philosophical excellence in his view. Thus, Nietzsche’s ‘Labyrinth of Truth’ draws to the conclusion that will to truth is actually a mask worn by the will to power. He took a bold step of identifying truth to will to power. Rejecting pessimism as being alien to the ethos of tragic art, Nietzsche sees that one can face the terrors of history and nature with unbroken courage to go forward in life with positive aspect and say ‘yes to life’. But what is ‘Life’: “Life is will to power”⁷ (Nietzsche, 1881). That is why Nietzsche always says that will to power is “the

primitive affective form” from which all other feelings derive or it is said “will to power is not being, not a becoming, but a pathos.”⁸ (Nietzsche, 1881). So, he believed truth is that by this will to power the world can be described and defined. This impulse to turn one’s back on ‘Truth’ or the pursuit of truth changes and only the pursuit of some fresh ideas remains. Thus, Nietzsche maintained, what is really good is neither truth nor pursuit of truth, but rather a perpetual flux of errors (Santayana, 1939)⁹. Yet that everything, even in truth, is an expression of the living will, the will to power, the corner stone of Nietzsche’s philosophy.

NOTES:

- [1] Nietzsche, Friedrich, *Beyond Good and Evil*, Vintage Books, New York, 1989. P16.
- [2] Reyburn, H. A, *Nietzsche: The Story of a Human Philosophy*, London, Macmillan and Co Ltd, 1948. P393.
- [3] Nietzsche, Friedrich, *Will To Power*, Vintage Books, New York, 1881. P366,para 688.
- [4]Nietzsche, Friedrich , *Thus Spake Zarathustra*, Wordsworth Edition Limited, 1997. Para 34.
- [5] Kaufmann, Walter, *Nietzsche: philosopher, Psychologist, Antichrist*, Princeton University Press, 1974.P179.
- [6] Nietzsche, Friedrich, *Thus Spake Zarathustra*, Wordsworth Editions Limited, 1997.P 113
- [7] Nietzsche, Friedrich, *Will To Power*, Vintage Books, New York, 1881.
- [8] *Ibid*, para635,P 339.
- [9] Santayana, George, *Egotism in German Philosophy*, London, J.M. Dent and Sons Ltd, 1939.P 110.

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1. Kaufmann, Walter, *Nietzsche: philosopher, Psychologist, Antichrist*, Princeton University Press, 1974.
2. Nietzsche, Friedrich, *Will To Power*, Vintage Books, New York, 1881.
3. Nietzsche, Friedrich, *Will To Power*, Vintage Books, New York, 1881.
4. *Ibid*
5. Nietzsche Friedrich, *Thus Spake Zarathustra*, Wordsworth Edition Limited, 1997.
6. *Ibid*
7. Nietzsche, Friedrich, *Beyond Good and Evil*, Vintage Books, New York.
8. Reyburn, H. A, *Nietzsche: The Story of a Human Philosophy*, London, Macmillan and Co Ltd, 1948.
9. Santayana, George, *Egotism in German Philosophy*, London, J.M. Dent and Sons Ltd.