

An Evaluation of The Morality of The ‘Urbersonch’ in Friedrich Nietzsche

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ABSTRACT

There has been so much deception and exploitation of people in contemporary religious and political society. The ignorance or fear to reason, reflect, and ask some questions concerning certain religious and traditional beliefs or morality is one of the major problems among some people in the world today. Many people are being exploited or deceived in the name of religious and traditional beliefs but are either ignorant of it or afraid to ask questions. This always hinders the development of their best instincts as they continue to rely on what they were/are taught by their religion and tradition. The German Philosopher and Philologist, Friedrich Nietzsche brought about the idea of the ‘Urbersonch’ (Superman) as an eye opener to humanity. The ‘Urbersonch’ is a German word which means ‘the over man’ or ‘the superior man’ but usually translated as the “Superman”. In his two major works, *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* and *Ecce Homo*, Nietzsche

brought the idea of the 'Übermensch' who would shift from other worldly Christian and traditional values and manifest the grounded human ideal. In presenting this morality of the 'Übermensch', this work adapted the qualitative research design where data were sourced from books and magazines. The work further employed the expository, evaluative and analytic methods of philosophical research. The use of the expository method was to establish Nietzsche's concept of the 'Übermensch'. The evaluative method offered a critique of the morality of the 'Übermensch' on contemporary society; while the analytic method was employed to advance the effects of the morality of the 'Übermensch' on contemporary society. The theoretical aim of this work is that the 'Übermensch' is an eye opener to those who are still blindfolded by the religious and traditional doctrines or beliefs that deny human freedom or exploit them and prevent them from developing their best instincts and the practical aim is for people to rise and ask questions concerning such doctrines or beliefs and if possible, reject those that trample on their freedom or prevent them from developing their best instincts.

Introduction

We live in an age where some people are still exploited and manipulated in the name of religion, politics, and tradition. Some people still stand arms akimbo and nod their heads like agama lizard to whatever they are taught by their religion or tradition without reflection or questioning. They rather believe in fate or predestination or tradition such that there is no room for struggle and new discoveries. Such people hold unto what they were taught or knew in the past and anything new is just like a red rag to a bull before them. There is therefore every need to re-evaluate the religious, traditional or conventional moral codes that trample on the rights and freedom of individuals and often make them look like sub-humans to others with a view to helping such people to

have a new way of reasoning and acting. This takes us back to the days of the German Philosopher and Philologist, Friedrich Nietzsche when people solely relied on the traditional moral values chiefly taught by the Christian religion. Many who dared come out of that circle to reason differently were often put to death by the Church, like Galileo Galilee, Nicolaus Copernicus, and others. Even today, many people are still killed as infidels and some as rebels who refuse to follow a particular ideology, religion, tradition, or political party and the like. Nietzsche took a dim view of such doctrines which debased man and made him rely on such conventional moral doctrines rather than developing his best instincts. In his *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* and *Ecce Homo* among other works, he put forth the idea of the *Übermensch* (Superman) who would shift from other worldly Christian and traditional values and manifest the grounded human ideal. This 'Superman' would replace the old morality believed to have come from God. For Nietzsche, the traditional morality has gone; meaning the God who gave it is no longer there therefore the 'Superman' has to replace him.

Brief Profile of Friedrich Nietzsche

Friedrich Wilhelm Nietzsche, who openly announced that *God is dead* was born on October 15, 1844 at Bocken in the province of Saxony. He was the son and grandson of Lutheran ministers. He was named after the reigning king of Prussia (Stumpf, 378). His father died when Friedrich was four or five years old and he grew up under the care of his mother Fran Nietzsche and his sister, Elizabeth. At the age of fourteen, he was sent to the famous Pforta School where he studied classics, religion and German literature. In 1864, he went to the University of Bonn and studied theology. But having lost his faith in Christian religion in 1865 he abandoned theological studies, left Bonn and went to Leipzig where he studied philology. Here, also he came upon Schopenhauer's works, *The World as Will and Idea*, which had an influence

on him and confirmed his atheistic standpoint. He was also influenced by the Wagnerian music he came in contact with. His outstanding intelligence merited him the appointment as a lecturer at the age of twenty, and later at the age of twenty-four, he was yet appointed to the chair of classical philology at the university of Basle. He was at this school until heath forced him to resign his professorship in 1879. It was during this period that he came close to a relationship with Wagner but they later separated. From 1880 to 1889, he lived life of solitude. He surprisingly became insane in 1889 and remained in that state of mental and physical paralysis until his death on August 25, 1900 at the age of fifty-five.

Nietzsche was a prolific writer and wrote extensively even while ill. His major works include: *The Birth of Tragedy*, which he wrote in 1872. Between the periods of 1873 to 1876, he published the *Untimely Meditations* and *Human, All-too-Human*. Then, again between the periods of 1881 to 1887, he wrote these five books: *The Dawn*, *The Gay Science*, *thus spoke Zarathustra*, *Beyond Good and Evil* and *Genealogy of Morals*. In 1888, he yet produced these books: *The Case of Wagner*, *Twilight of Idols*, *Anti-Christ*, *Ecce Homo*, *Nietzsche contra Wagner* and uncompleted work, *The revaluation of all Values (The Will to Power)*.

An Exposition of the Morality of the 'Übermensch' (Superman)

The word, 'Übermensch' according to Laurence Lampert in his, *Nietzsche's Teaching* is a German word which means "the over man" or the "superior man" but usually translated as "the Superman" (2). Stanley Rosen in his, *The Mask of Enlightenment* adds that, this represents a shift from other worldly Christian values and manifests the grounded human ideal. The 'Übermensch' is someone who has "crossed over" the bridge, from the comfortable "house of the lake" (the comfortable, easy, mindless acceptance of what a person has been taught, and what

everyone else believes) to the mountains of unrest and solitude (21). (It is held that when Zarathustra was thirty years old, he left his home and the lake of his home and went into the mountains to have a different view of the world apart from what he used to know at home...) (22).

All human life, according to Nietzsche would be given meaning by how it advanced a new generation of human beings. A woman's aspiration should be to give birth to an 'Übermensch', for example, her relationship with men would be judged by this standard (Zara. 118). In his *Ecce Homo*, Nietzsche vehemently denies any idealistic, democratic, or humanitarian interpretation of the 'Übermensch'. The word, 'Übermensch' designates a type of supreme achievement, as opposed to 'modern' men, 'good' men, Christians and other nihilists (325).

Nietzsche introduces the concept of the 'Übermensch' in contrast to his understanding of the other-worldliness of Christianity: Zarathustra proclaims the will of the 'Übermensch' to give meaning to life on earth, and admonishes his audience to ignore those who promise other worldly fulfilment to draw them away from the earth (Zara. 44). In his original words, "I like those who do not first seek beyond the stars for reasons to go down and to be sacrifices: but who sacrifice themselves to the earth, that the earth may one day belong to the Superman" (Zara. 44). He further links the 'Übermensch' to the body and to interpreting the soul as simply an aspect of the body (Zara. 61).

Nietzsche's famous quote, "God is dead" means that the idea of God can no longer provide values. Nietzsche in his *"The Will to Power"* refers to this crucial paradigm shift as a re-evaluation of values. The 'Übermensch' is therefore someone who overcomes the constraints of traditional morality and has embraced his/her own values and desires. The 'Übermensch' creates his own values based on his own experiences and desires, and he is not bound by constraints of traditional morality. The 'Übermensch' has these attributes: self-determination,

creativity, becoming, overcoming, discontent, flexibility, self-mastery, self-confidence, cheerfulness, and courage (96).

In *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, Nietzsche introduces the 'Last Man' as the antithesis of the 'Übermensch'. The 'Last Man' seeks comfort, avoids challenges, and lives a life devoid of ambition. On the other hand, the 'Übermensch' embraces challenges, creates values, and soars beyond the ordinary. The 'Übermensch' will transcend the limitations of society and its morality and no longer be defined by them. However, he is not beyond morality; he is even more moral than normal people because he has transcended the conventional moral codes of the society. The 'Will to Power' is a will to master one's own instincts, one's own evils and resentments, and has nothing to do with subjugating others. In the process of perpetual self-overcoming, the 'Übermensch' transcends the limits of human existence; man becomes a lord upon himself (Zara, 124).

The 'Übermensch', according to Lampert is a human that has outgrown himself/herself, that is, no longer burdened by the sorrows of ordinary people. The 'Übermensch' is a symbol of power and superiority, a man-god in place of Nietzsche's 'dead God' enforcing his own justice under no authority other than his superior might and his personal moral compass (3). With the freedom to define himself, man also takes on the responsibility to define himself in an ideal way. Nietzsche's idea of the 'Übermensch' is an idea of humans who create their own values based on their experience of life. "This new person ('Übermensch') will not reject morality; he/she will reject only the negative morality of the herd" (The Will, 412).

Basic Themes in the Morality of the 'Übermensch'

The basic themes in Nietzsche's 'Übermensch' are: the revaluation of all values, anti-Christ, the death of God, and master morality versus slave morality.

A. Revaluation of all Values

Nietzsche wanted to replace the traditional morality with new values. However, his positive recommendations are not so clear as his critical analysis. But we can infer much of the content of his new values from his rejection of the *slave morality*. If the slave morality originated in resentment and revenge, there must again occur a *revaluation* of all values. By *revaluation* Nietzsche did not mean the creation of a new table of moral values. He meant rather to declare war upon the presently accepted values, as Socrates, “applying the knife vivisectionally to the very virtues of the time” (Revaluation, 386). Since traditional morality is a perversion of original natural morality, *revaluation* must consist in rejecting traditional morality in the name of honesty and accuracy. Revaluation implies that all the “stronger motives are still extant, but that now they appear under false names and false valuations, and have not yet become conscious of themselves” (387).

It is not necessary to legislate new values but only to reverse values once again; just as “Christianity was a revaluation of all the values of antiquity” (388), so today the dominant morality must be rejected in favour of our original and deepest nature. Therefore, Nietzsche’s plan of *revaluation* was essentially a critical analysis of modern human ideals. He showed that what modern people called “good” was not at all virtuous. Their so-called truth was disguised selfishness and weakness, and their religion was a skilful creation of psychological weapons with which moral pygmies domesticated natural giants. Once the disguise is removed from modern morality, then the ‘Übermensch’ will emerge with true values.

Nietzsche’s final analysis has it that moral values must be built upon our true human nature and our environment. Unlike Darwin, who laid great stress upon external circumstances when describing the evolution of species, Nietzsche focused on the internal power of an individual, which is capable of shaping and creating events

– “a power which uses and exploits the environment” (Genealogy, 223). Nietzsche’s grand hypothesis in *The Will to Power* was that everywhere and in everything the Will to Power seeks to express itself. “This word;” he says, “is the Will to Power – and nothing else” (87). Life itself, according to him, is a multiplicity of forces, “a lasting form of processes of assertions of force” (234). People’s psychological makeup shows that our preoccupation with pleasure and pain reflects a striving toward an increase of power. Pain can be the spur for exerting power to overcome an obstacle, whereas pleasure can involve a feeling of increased power.

Nietzsche in his work, *The Birth of Tragedy* also connects these ideas with his other doctrine of the eternal recurrence of all things. The world, according to this doctrine, is going through a process of eternal recurrence. This means that everything that happens now has happened before and will happen again. The world is going through an endless process of repetition of the same things in a cycle. In his words:

To think it in its most terrifying form: existence, as it is, without meaning or aim, but inevitably returning, without any finale in nothing – ‘eternal recurrence’. This is the most extreme form of nihilism: nothingness (meaninglessness) Eternal (45).

Nietzsche’s critique of morality was based on the fact that morality is a question of interpretation and not an absolute principle or originating from a supernatural source. This represents his attack on the ontological status of morals – an attack on the metaphysical foundation of morality. He further stated that philosophers lack intellectual integrity to recognize morality for what they (philosophers) are, and have often failed to see that a faith in morals is not a proof of morality.

Nietzsche remarked that his purpose is to

demonstrate how everything praised as moral is identical in essence with everything immoral and was made possible, as in every development of morality, with immoral ends (*The Will*, 155). He argued that the nature of morality with respect to their justifiability is hopeless. This is because, in his view, they not only cannot stand in the absence of another worldly, religious or metaphysical grounding and sanctioning, but also can only be defended by reference to any such set of beliefs; since the latter do not survive critical examination. Thus, he maintains in his "*Gay Science*" that the whole of objective morality is a part of what must now collapse with the recognition that the belief in the Christian God is "unbelievable" and needs to be abandoned; for the former was built upon this faith and propped up by it (199).

B. Anti-Christ

It is beyond a shadow of doubt that Nietzsche was anti-Christ because he rejected everything in connection with Christ. He hated Christ because, according to him, he (Christ) undermines man and has led him astray, even to the point of self-destruction. In his *Anti-Christ*, he says this of Christ, "I do not like at all anything about that Jesus of Nazareth... He put many ideas into the heads of little people, as if their modest virtues were of any consequence..." (122). He felt Christ was/is a stumbling block to the emergence of the 'Übermensch' or 'Superman'. In his attack on Christ, he is found in the paradox of uncertainty. In one place, he conceived Christ as the only Christian that ever existed and on the other, Christ is not the founder of the Christian religion since what he has labelled Christianity today is the very opposite of his life: "What did Christ deny? Everything that is today called Christian" (98). He was against Christ because according to him, Christ advocated a type of life that is full of the symptoms of decadence and suitable only for the weakling. Jesus did not bring new knowledge or new faith, he only fashioned in himself a new way of life. For Nietzsche, the message of Jesus when he used the words *Light or Life*

referred merely to the inner world, nature and reality. This led him to conclude that Christ was anti-realist.

In the same vein, Nietzsche also criticized Christ's humility. He wanted Christ to be a man with great power (the 'Übermensch'). So, when he saw the opposite, he regarded it as weakness. For instance, Jesus should have retaliated, resisted and fought back the injuries- calumny, mockery, bearing of the cross meted on him, but he suffered, entreated and rather loved those who punished and did evil to him. Thus, Nietzsche in "*The Will to Power*" could not comprehend how one cannot defend oneself, grow angry or even resist the evil one. Jesus therefore paid dearly for it, "... This bringer of glad tidings, died as he lived, as he taught not to redeem mankind but to demonstrate how one ought to live" (24 and 162); and the death was even a shameful one "the fate of the evangel was determined by the death, he hung on the cross... a shameful death" (162).

C. The Death of God

Nietzsche believed that, it is the belief in God that hinders the potentialities of man to becoming the 'Übermensch' or 'Superman'. The death of God will therefore mean the reassurance of man's energy and freedom, which will now be geared towards this realization of the subject ('Übermensch'). God stands in the way of the will to power. He is also antithesis to any thesis. Furthermore, Nietzsche, a philosopher of the future and a prophet of nihilism, based on the decline of the belief in the Christian God, hence proclaimed the death of God, *God is dead*. In his book, *The Gay Science*, a mad man makes this proclamation. The madman lit a lantern and ran to the market place, and cried incessantly; "... I seek God, I seek God!" (95). As many of those who do not believe in God stood there, he provoked laughter. He was cajoled and mocked: Why did he get lost? Is he afraid of us? Or is he hiding? But the madman decided to tell them where God was: "God is dead. God remains dead, and we have killed him. All of us are his murderers." (96). He

continues: We have killed him – you and I. Do we not hear anything yet of the noise of the gravediggers who are burying God? Do we not smell anything yet of God's decomposition? God remains dead (125).

The madman could not understand the reason behind the killing of God and was bewildered. To show his annoyance, he threw his lantern on the ground and it broke and he went away. To mourn God therefore, he entered diverse churches and intoned his *requiem aeternam Deo*. When he was called for explanations, he asked: "What are churches now if they are not the tombs and sepulchres of God?" (96). Nonetheless, he was of the opinion that man killed God to free himself from nihilism - nothingness. Bordy Wayne, quoting Nietzsche in his work, *The Defence of Personal Freedom in the Birth of Tragedy* says that, man had to take this noble and head blowing task to murder God and make himself God ('Übermensch'), "... God could not die a natural death. In order that the world, for so long darkened by this vast shadow, might at last emerge into the light, man had to take upon himself the impossible crime..." (8).

Supposing we ask this question, "Did God ever exist?" Nietzsche's answer is 'No', because He would be one if there was and it is only an illusion proceeding from man's weakness and inability to transcend himself. Nietzsche in "*Ecce Homo*" (Behold the Man) continues that God is a mere fabrication of weak Christians to manipulate men's mind and turn them towards the beyond; "The concept God was invented as the counter concept to life: everything harmful, poisonous, slanderous, all deadly hostility to life..." (932).

But with the death of God, he thought he had been able to deliver humanity from the corruption of God and the emergence of the 'Übermensch'. He had thought ended the prehistoric period of nihilism and opened a new era. Consequently, this liberation from nihilism ushers man to his destiny- auto transcendence. With the death of God, morality and religion have no foundation.

D. Master Morality Versus Slave Morality

According to Nietzsche, there are two kinds of morality, the master morality and the slave morality. He rejected the notion that there is a universal and absolute system of morality that everyone must obey. For him, people are different, and to conceive of morality in universal terms is to disregard basic differences between individuals. In this respect, Judaism and Christianity are the worst offenders. Judeo-Christian ethics, he argues in *Beyond Good and Evil*, is so contrary to our basic nature that its anti-natural morality debilitates humanity and produces only “botched and bungled” lives (64). He argued that there is a “twofold early history of good and evil,” (64) which shows the development of two primary types of morality. These are the master morality and the slave morality. In the master morality, (i.e. the morality of the ‘Übermensch’); ‘good’ always meant ‘noble’ in the sense of “with a soul of high calibre” (65).

According to Joseph Omoregbe, in his work, *A Simplified History of Western Philosophy: Volume Three: Contemporary Philosophy*, ‘Evil’ by contrast meant ‘vulgar’ or ‘plebeian’. Noble people (‘Übermensch’) regard themselves as the creators and determiners of values. They do not look outside of themselves for any approval of their acts. They pass judgement upon themselves. Their morality is one of self-glorification. These noble individuals act out of a feeling of power, which seeks to overflow. It is not out of pity that they help the unfortunate, but rather from an impulse generated by an abundance of power. They honour power in all its forms and take pleasure in subjecting themselves to rigor and toughness. They also have reverence for all that is severe and hard. By contrast, the slave morality originates with the lower elements of society: the abused, the oppressed, the slaves, and those who are uncertain of themselves. The slave morality is the morality taught by Christianity. It is the morality that preaches love, meekness, humility, kindness, self-denial, sympathy, etc. (168). All these are

considered as virtues by the slave morality. It encourages weakness of character, and fears the strong and the powerful. It sees weakness as a virtue and strength of character as a vice. The slave morality wants to bring all men to the same level through absolute and universal moral laws applicable to all men. It prevents people from developing into strong and powerful men ('Übermensch'), for it fears such people as dangerous and 'evil'. It therefore means that the slave morality is an obstacle to human development.

Nietzsche therefore attacked Christianity which preached such morality in his *Beyond Good and Evil*. For him, Christianity is only fit for the ignoble species of men, for it is a religion that stifles intellectual pursuit and destroys the best part of man. He gave example of people who would have been great men but Christianity destroyed them. One of such people, according to him is Blaise Pascal. He says Christianity:

...aims at destroying the strong, at breaking their spirit, at exploiting their moments of weariness and debility, at converting their proud assurance into anxiety and conscience-trouble; ... it knows how to poison the noblest instincts and infect them with disease, until their strength, their will to power, turns inward against themselves – until the strong perish through their excessive self-contempt and self-immolation: that gruesome way of perishing, of which Pascal is the most famous example (65).

For him, Christianity does all these deplorable things in the name of God whose commands and prohibitions it claims to hand down to men. This slave morality, Nietzsche argues, is essentially the morality of utility, since moral goodness involves whatever is beneficial to those who are weak and powerless. According to Samuel Stumpf, in his work, *Socrates to Sartre and*

Beyond: A History of Philosophy, Nietzsche's great protest against Western morality was that it exalted the mediocre values of the 'herd,' which knows nothing of the fine impulses of great accumulations of strength, as something high, or possibly as the standard of all things (384). Incredibly, the "herd mentality" in time overcame the master morality by succeeding in making all the noble qualities appear to be vices, and all the weak qualities appear to be virtues. The positive affirmation of life in the master morality was made to seem "evil" and something for which one should have a sense of "guilt." The fact, according to Nietzsche in his *The Will to Power* is that:

... men with a still natural nature, barbarians in every terrible sense of the word, men of prey, still in possession of unbroken strength of will and desire for power, threw themselves upon weaker, more moral, more peaceful races ... At the commencement, the noble caste was always the barbarian caste: their superiority did not consist first of all in their physical, but in their physical power – they were complete men (67).

This slave morality, according to Nietzsche is "a will to the denial of life, a principle of dissolution and decay" (68). But he goes on, a skilful psychological analysis of the 'herds' resentment and its desire to exact revenge against the strong will show what must be done. That is, according to Samuel Stumpf in *Socrates to Sartre and Beyond: A History of Philosophy*, we must resist all sentimental weakness: life is essentially appropriation injury, conquest of the strange and weak, suppression, severity, obtrusion of

peculiar forms ... and at the least, putting it mildest, exploitation (385).

A Critique of the Morality 'Übermensch' on Contemporary Religious Society

Nietzsche rightly pointed out in his *Anti-Christ* that what is labelled as Christianity today is the very opposite of the life of Jesus Christ (98). This is a fallacious statement but it contains some elements of truth. It is not untrue that some of the teachings of certain Christian leaders often fly in the face of what Jesus Christ himself taught, as Nietzsche rightly pointed out. All the same, such Christian leaders always compel their followers to hold them in high esteem or as demi-gods and to exercise unquestionable obedience. For example, in the gospel of Matthew (16:24) Christ commands that anyone who wants to be his follower should renounce himself and take up his cross and follow him. At another place, Christ commands the rich young man to go and sell everything that he has and give the money to the poor and then come back and follow him (cf. Matt. 19:21). These original teachings of Christ are watered down by some of the Christian leaders today as they keep emphasizing prosperity in the name of tithing and seed-sowing to the detriment of morality. For example, here in Nigeria, the General Overseer of the Living Faith World Outreach (Winners' Chapel), Pastor David O. Oyedepo, in his book, *The Covenant Wealth*, as quoted by Ngbea in *The Influence of Syncretism among Catholics in Lafia Diocese* writes:

Accepting Christ is synonymous to abundant blessings, health, prosperity, and success. The name of God, "I AM" has financial implications. It is an acronym that means integrity, anointing and money... since wealth speaks of comfort and fulfilment, God desires that exactly for His children (16).

This is not far from what Nietzsche referred to as "the most fatal and seductive lie that has ever yet existed" (The Will, 117). This kind of teaching goes contrary to the teaching of Christ. At another place, Oyedepo, continues, "Jesus was very rich; He had enough money to own a ship, employ 12 disciples and the services of a treasurer" (16). Yet, in another work, *Releasing the Supernatural*, Oyedepo with a view to letting his congregants know that his is superior to them says, "I have not found any reason why anybody in the church I pastor should be richer than me because it was Jesus who rode on the colt; the disciples were following him on foot" (83).

Following the same line of thought, Oritsejafor, the former president of the Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN), in his book, *Walking in Unity*, writes:

The accommodation of Jesus was very comfortable and attractive that is why some disciples of John refused to return to John when he sent them to Jesus ... The disciples of Jesus were wealthy too. They lacked nothing and had no bills to settle. This is because Jesus bountifully provided for them (7).

However, this statement as beautiful as it appears is another form of fatal and seductive lie. In the gospel passages (Matt. 8:20 and Lk. 9:58) Jesus Christ states clearly that "Foxes have holes and the birds of the air have nests, but the son of man has nowhere to lay his head." So, who is telling people the truth about Jesus' accommodation here, the gospel writers or Oritsejafor?

It is also pertinent to mention that some of the contemporary Christian leaders often explore the underworld to acquire powers and use them in the form of "divine miracles" with a view to becoming wealthy people and exploiting ignorant congregants. For example, on 17 June 2020, the *Vanguard Newspaper* reported the case of one Reverend Paul Abam, the popular prophet of *World*

Based Prophetic and Deliverance Ministries (a.k.a. *City of Deliverance*) who was paraded around *Itigidi* in Abi local government area of Cross River State, here in Nigeria for planting a charm in a house with a view to removing it later and extorting money from the householder. He confessed that he used to plant charms in people's houses and business places or farmlands to lure them into seeking miracles in the course of which he extorted money from them in order to remove such charms and "set those people free" from such bondage. People would pay him fifty-five thousand Naira (N55,000) for the removal of the charms. This is what Nietzsche refers to as "a fatal and seductive lie!"

One of the greatest oppressions of the uncritically minded nowadays is blind and foolish obedience. We have so many 'sheeples' both in the religious and political arenas who are always ready to swallow hook, line, and sinker whatever the religious or political leaders say and even at the point of killing and abducting people on their behalf or in their name. Both religious and political institutions have become places of exploiting the 'sheeples'. It was in view of this that Marx wrote in *A Contribution of the Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Right* that "...religious suffering is, at one and the same time, the expression of real suffering and a protest against real suffering. Religion is the sigh of the oppressed creature, the heart of a heartless world, and the soul of soulless conditions. It is the opium of the people" (2). Marx continues that, "The criticism of religion disillusions man, so that he will think, act, and fashion his reality like a man who has discarded his illusions and regained his senses, so that he will move around himself as his own true Sun. Religion is only the illusory Sun which revolves around man as long as he does not revolve around himself" (2). Marx's thought was in line with his contemporary, Andreas Ludwig Feuerbach who in his *The Essence of Christianity* holds that man strips himself of his best qualities and projects them (the qualities) over there as

God (30). These two gave rise to Nietzsche's idea of the 'Übermensch'.

Even though Nietzsche's assertion has some elements of truth concerning exploitation and deceit that are imbedded in the Christian religion, it nevertheless falls into the fallacy of hasty generalization. It is true that some Christian leaders often use religion to cheat, exploit and extort money and wealth from the ignorant congregants, this does not mean it is every Christian leader who is guilty of these crimes. There are many Christian leaders who are honest and always use everything they have to help the poor. Such Christian leaders include Francis of Assisi, Elizabeth of Hungary, Mother Theresa of Calcutta, to mention but a few.

In the same vein, Nietzsche has exaggerated the concept of the 'Übermensch'. Inasmuch as the 'Übermensch' is an eye opener for people to react to the religious and traditional morality or beliefs, the 'Übermensch' in the words of Heidegger is essentially a being-with-others; for man is by his very nature a social being who can neither live nor be conceived in isolation (Being and Time, 169). There are certain objective and societal moral values that one cannot tamper with in the name of being a 'Superman'. Even though Nietzsche earlier said that the 'Übermensch' will not reject morality in totality; he will reject only the negative morality of the herd. This implies that the 'Übermensch' will always use his subjective views to ascertain what is positive (good) and what is negative (bad). This follows that different 'Supermen' will be acting differently on the same course of action because people see and judge things differently. This will be the annihilation of standard morality in the society.

Evaluation

People have to be exposed to reality so they can develop their best instincts. When one relies on what one has been taught or known for a long time, one does not develop

one's best instincts but one remains a historian. One has to always reflect or ask questions on certain religious and traditional beliefs that go contrary to freedom and human development. To play the role of "Boxer" in George Orwell's 'Animal Farm' by always repeating that "Comrade Napoleon is always right" is to live an inauthentic life. One does not need to live one's life based on the projection of others but according to how one has projected it by oneself. This is what makes one the 'Übermensch' or 'Superman'. However, to be the 'Übermensch' or 'Superman' does not mean one should live an immoral life but to have a serious reflection on religious or traditional morality or beliefs and expose the areas that are detrimental to the growth of one's best instinct.

Conclusion

This work is an exposition of Nietzsche's concept of the 'Übermensch' (the Superman) and the morality it entails. It is an attempt to call into questions certain religious and traditional beliefs that deny the freedom of man/woman or those that do not give room to the development of one's best instincts. The work explored the meaning of the 'Übermensch' and how Nietzsche presented it. The work further gave a critique of it based on what is happening in this contemporary era; pointing to Nietzsche's strengths and weaknesses of this concept. The work ended by adding that the 'Übermensch' or 'Superman' has to rise, reflect and question some of the religious and traditional moral beliefs that have to do with the denial of human freedom as well as human exploitation and doctrines that prevent humans from developing their best instincts. However, the 'Übermensch' or 'Superman' is still a being in the society and as such should not trample or reject certain religious and traditional beliefs that are for the good of man and the society as Nietzsche did by condemning the whole of Christianity.

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