

Nietzsche "god is dead" essay sample



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Nietzsche agreed with Schopenhauer that there is no God, and that we do not have immortal souls. He also agreed that this life of ours is a largely meaningless business of suffering and striving, driven along by an irrational force that we can call will.

He also rejected Schopenhauer's view that this world is only a part, and what is more an unimportant part, of total reality: he believed it to be the whole. Furthermore, Nietzsche rejected Schopenhauer's conclusion that we should turn away in disgust from such a world, reject it, and withdraw from it. On the other contrary, he believed that we should live our lives to the full in it, and get everything we can out of it.

According to Nietzsche, existing morals and values, derive very largely from ancient Greece plus Judaeo-Christian tradition, he says, which means they come from societies quite unlike any that exist today and from religions in which many if not most of us do not believe. ' We cannot base our lives on value systems whose foundations we repudiate. It makes our lives, and us, bogus. We must either find a basis that we really do believe in to support our values, or else abandon these values and find others that we can honestly espouse'.

What enabled human beings to emerge from the animal state, he says, and to develop civilisation, including everything we mean by the work culture, was the perpetual elimination of the weak by the strong, the incompetent by the competent, and the stupid by the clever. The very processes by which

man had been raised above the animals, and civilisation brought into being, were then put into reverse.

The imaginative, the daring, the creative, the bold, the courageous, the curious and brave, nature's leaders of all kinds, should be free, untrammelled by slave moralities - free to live life to the full and to fulfil themselves. Nietzsche called their drive to do this their "will to power", which he was thinking not only of politics or conquests but of cultural activities as well.

"Superman" was the term given by Nietzsche to a human being who thus develops his maximum potential becomes a sort of super-human being. By this term Nietzsche meant not only people like Napoleon but also people like Luther and Goethe - even Socrates, who, although Nietzsche so powerfully disapproved of what he did, undeniably, carried out his life-project with immense personal strength and bravery. This will therefore bring a double benefit:

* First, the creative potential of the human race will be given a free rein, so that in every area of life the highest achievable goals will be attained.

* Second, the most gifted individuals will be able to live fulfilled lives, and this experience personal happiness instead of frustration.

'Good' is that which asserts life or assists life-assertion. Even 'true' is that which is on the side of life, and not against life. Nietzsche gives a twofold reply to critics of him that don't follow his ways. Firstly, his prescription is for a life which is fulfilling on its own terms, and therefore, worth living for its

own sake. Such a life does not seek to derive any of its meaning or significance from outside itself, and is not to be understood in terms of anything else. The second part of his twofold reply is that everything, far from going down into eternal annihilation, is going to come back eternally: the passage of time moves in vast, cosmic epicycles, so that everything that has happened before will eventually come round again and then again after that at another he distance of time.

Indeed, Mussolini a present of the collected works of Nietzsche at their historic meeting on the Brenner Pass in 1938. The Nazis themselves, in their propaganda, made repeated use of Nietzsche's words, such as "superman" and the "will to power". He has become to be regarded as the representative voice of Fascist philosophy by both Fascists and their opponents.

Many elements of Nietzsche's philosophy were misappropriated by the Fascists and Nazis before World War II. The Fascists is to power in Italy was due mainly to extreme poverty and in Germany the Nazis preyed upon people's fears caused by a weak civilian democracy. There were many aspects of Fascism that Nietzsche despised including nationalism and state authority: but his name is inextricably linked with Fascism in people's minds.