

An Analysis of the Impact of Nietzschean Thought on 20th-Century Society: A Case Study of *The Will to Power*, *Beyond Good and Evil*, and *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*

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Human beings have always been the central focus of Western philosophical thought. How individuals interact with the world, the scope and nature of knowledge of objects, and the ways of relating to fellow humans have shaped the framework of Western philosophy. The idealistic emphasis of Western philosophy on the individual led to an inflated sense of self and, eventually, the dissolution of the objective world. Nietzsche's philosophy emerged as a protest against this trend. He criticized the established foundations of previous philosophies and proposed a new philosophy aimed at restoring balance to existence and promoting evolution. To achieve this, Nietzsche first dismantled the existing foundations and then sought to rebuild them based on his own premises, giving rise to the concept of the Übermensch (Overman). Nietzsche's process involves the "descent of man" followed by his "transcendence." He aimed to destroy the elevated subject created by modern and pre-modern rationality and replace it with his model of the Übermensch, declaring, "I teach you the Overman." This research explores and analyzes Nietzsche's theory of the Will to Power and its impact on 20th-century society through a descriptive-analytical method, relying on library sources.

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Introduction

Humanity has long been the focal point of Western philosophical thought, shaping the discourse on knowledge, ethics, and existence. Traditional Western philosophy, particularly its idealistic dimensions, frequently emphasized human reason to the extent that it overshadowed the material world. Friedrich Nietzsche's philosophy emerged as a critique of this trajectory. Seeking to restore balance and provide a path for evolution, Nietzsche systematically dismantled established foundations to propose a new framework. Central to his thought is the transformation of the "human" into the "Overman" (*Übermensch*). This research aims to analyze the theory of the "Will to Power" and its implications for 20th-century society, focusing specifically on three key works: *The Will to Power*, *Beyond Good and Evil*, and *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*.

Method

This study employs a descriptive-analytical methodology, relying on library research to examine the selected texts. The author analyzes Nietzsche's core concepts—namely the Will to Power, the Overman, and nihilism—to evaluate their influence and relevance within the cultural and philosophical landscape of the 20th century. By comparing these works, the study identifies shared themes and distinct nuances in Nietzsche's critique of modernity and traditional metaphysics.

Results

The analysis highlights several foundational elements of Nietzschean thought:

- **The Will to Power:** Nietzsche posits this as the primary driving force of existence. He argues that the world is a network of power relations. Rather than seeking objective truth, Nietzsche suggests that knowledge and morality are expressions of the Will to Power. This concept serves as the foundation for his critique of traditional values, including Christianity and formal logic, which he views as tools of the weak to suppress the strong.
- **The Overman (*Übermensch*):** The Overman is the culmination of Nietzsche's philosophical endeavor. He is the one who transcends

human limitations, rejects traditional morality (the “slave morality”), and creates new values. The path to becoming an Overman involves two stages: a descent into “animality” (breaking free from artificial societal constructs) and a subsequent transcendence. The Overman embraces the world as it is, accepts the “eternal recurrence,” and takes responsibility for meaning in a world where “God is dead.”

- **Nihilism:** Nietzsche distinguishes between passive and active nihilism. Passive nihilism represents weakness and the refusal to accept the lack of absolute meaning. In contrast, active nihilism is a creative force; it involves the destruction of old, exhausted values to clear the ground for a new, life-affirming existence. The 20th-century crisis of values is, for Nietzsche, a logical outcome of the Christian-Socratic tradition, which he argues has finally exhausted itself.
- **Rejection of Metaphysics:** Nietzsche rejects the dualism of the material and the spiritual, arguing that the “body” is the true locus of existence. He critiques modernity for privileging the “mind” over the “body” and advocates for a return to the earthly and the tangible.

Conclusion

The research concludes that Nietzsche’s impact on 20th-century society lies in his provocation to move beyond traditional, life-denying values. By championing the “Will to Power,” Nietzsche does not advocate for mere domination, but for a fundamental shift in perspective: valuing life-affirmation over transcendental promises. The study finds that the Overman serves as an archetype of the individual who, upon realizing the “death of God” and the inherent lack of objective meaning, does not succumb to despair (passive nihilism) but instead uses this awareness to creatively establish new, self-determined values (active nihilism). Ultimately, Nietzsche’s philosophy acts as a bridge for the modern individual to reclaim their potential by prioritizing creativity, vitality, and an unyielding commitment to earthly existence.