CHAPTER - VI
CONCLUSION

Michel Foucault is the first post-war philosopher to take Nietzsche seriously as a great thinker. In his, 'The Order of Things' Foucault observes, "Nietzsche marks the threshold beyond which Contemporary philosophy can begin to start thinking again; and he will no doubt continue for a long while to dominate its advance". Nietzsche alienates himself from the European philosophical tradition in order to preserve his own authenticity and intellectual integrity as a thinker. For him, an authentic philosopher is in the predicament of having to swim upstream. To be carried downstream by the sheer force of tradition is to be a prisoner of the inherited framework of values. A genuine philosopher can never reconcile himself to this.

Modern existentialism has received its name and fame with its two originators. Nietzsche and Kierkegaard and developed in two distinct directions -- atheistic and theistic. Heidegger and Sartre have taken the Nietzschean line whereas Marcel and Jaspers developed it along kierkegaardian way. All

1. Loc. cit. PP. 353 - 354
others have enriched its folds by their constant consonance, filled in it with contents in abundance and developed it between the lines.

For atheistic existentialists, the empirical man is competent enough to carve his life out of the odd situations in which he finds himself. Theists, on the other hand, believe in the idea of God towards which man transcends. Since man is not a finished or fixed being, he goes ahead of what he becomes in the process of realising God head. Unlike theists, atheists believe in complete potentialities of man and as such proving or disproving of God's existence does not arise for them. The achievement of the status of Superman (Nietzsche), realisation of being (Heidegger) and attainment of authenticity (Sartre) are some of the ideals to man's striving. Thus man's striving for Transcendence (theists) or his striving for making himself by exercising his own free choice (atheist) is the very core and crux of the existentialist thinking.

Existentialism, therefore, is an attitude of looking at life. It begins with the problem of human existence, spreads its message --- to be a man is to become a man (Jaspers) and will continue to spread it as long as the thinking being lives on this earth. It is a philosophy of striving. Existentialism as a philosophy of life, therefore, projects the ideal of striving, a striving for higher and greater ideal even than the man himself. If Nietzsche's statement that man is created to be surpassed, be taken in its true sense, then man can attain his fullness only by rising above himself. This is the true existentialist message, a
living and undying message for mankind. Nietzsche’s ideas are of concern not only to the members of one nation or community, nor alone to philosopher, but to men everywhere. His ideas have had repercussions in recent history and literature as well as in psychology and religious thought. He has been assigned a great place in the grand tradition of western thought and his fame has spread like wild fire.

Nietzsche observes that his philosophy cannot be the revival of Hegel’s view. There is no possible compromise between Hegel and Nietzsche. According to Nietzsche, one must consider many perspectives and a philosopher should not imprison his thought in one system. Nietzsche objected to this that the systematic thinker starts with a number of primary assumptions from which he draws a net of inference and deduces his system. But he cannot from within his system establish the truth of his premises. Systems, says Nietzsche, are good in so far as they reveal the character of a great thinker but this goodness must be independent of the truth of the system. These basic assumptions give expression to the mental make-up of the philosopher. Nietzsche criticises Hegel for he is concerned with the opinions of others and Hegel has found the overwhelming truth of all preceding systems and philosophies. But Nietzsche doubts the systems of the past as overwhelmingly true. Many philosopher are impressed by Nietzsche’s ideas that instead of deducing a system from accepted premises one must be engaged in the pursuit of independent problems and showing
them to their astonishment what they had presumed in formulating their problems.

Nietzsche, unlike Aristotle, Aquinas and Hegel does not mark the culmination and conclusion of a long development as it were, a great harvest. Rather he marks the beginning of a new period. Many of his most promising insights have been developed after his death by other writers. Friedrich Nietzsche has a undoubted influence upon the Contemporary German philosophy. The works of Simmel and Scheler, Jasper and Heidegger, when compared with those of Husserl, Dilthey and Weber, reveal profound changes both in attitude and in them. There arises a clear distinction between philosophy and science, and a tendency to attack philosophical problems in a new way, namely by abandoning the epistemological approach and starting from a fundamental phenomenon — either "Life" or "Existenz". Such changes are due to their assimilation of the thought of Nietzsche. Thus the specific character of Contemporary German philosophy cannot be understood without an acquaintance with Nietzsche or who have decisively influenced its course.

Nietzsche's main importance for Contemporary Philosophy is based upon the attempt to give, in his Philosophy of Life, a new interpretation of existence. This Philosophy of Life is founded upon a comprehensive critique of the history of western civilization. For Nietzsche, western civilization is Christian and Christian values are no longer tenable. Anyone who continues to believe in them is
dishonest or inauthentic. The worship of science is replacing Christianity. But people will see the emptiness of this new value and a terrible form of pessimism would result. "Western Philosophers have fooled themselves into believing in the possibility of absolute and total kinds of knowledge. They have brought forth escapist fantasies about transcendent worlds. It was a philosophical tradition that Nietzsche was determined to finish off."\(^2\)

In his later works, Nietzsche has reached the conclusion not only that science in its autonomy has a very limited significance and that the ideal of a humanistic culture is impossible of realisation, but also that the highest values in religion, morals and philosophy, after dominating and shaping European life for 2000 years has begun in time to lose their power. Thus, feeling of general insecurity, and the more conscious tendencies of scepticism and pessimism, are spreading rapidly. Nietzsche's early critique of the world view presented by Socrates and Plato, and his subsequent critique of Christianity, are isolated, these do not appear in their full significance. And thus at the end of his life Nietzsche has become a "critical historian" who has tried to dispose of a past in order to prepare room for the future. But Nietzsche's intention is not to be a critic. His historical analysis of philosophy, christianity and morals is only to be the starting point for his positive search.

\(^2\) Dave Robinson, *Nietzsche and Post Modernism*, P. 10
Generalising by degrees, he later more and more is inclined to assume the "Will to Power" as the all-determining principle in the individual, in society, in the development of the mind, in art and even in organic and in inorganic nature. This attempt towards a theoretical interpretation of the world points out, against the threat of rising Nihilism, new valuations which might spring from a return to earthly life and to all fruitful forms of activity. Nietzsche maintains that only that life is worth living which develops the strength and integrity to withstand the unavoidable sufferings and misfortunes of existence without becoming hardened and without flying into an imaginary world.

Thus Nietzsche's attempted Philosophy of Life is the first full expression of the fact that, with Hegel's philosophy, the old philosophising has come to an end and a new philosophising is beginning. The powerful personality of Nietzsche with his revolutionary appear and his new problems make itself felt in academic as well as in non-academic life. For philosophy, the influence of Nietzsche, combines with the effects of the war and the socialist revolution has brought many disadvantages, but also some gain. It has led to a sterile sensationalism, to the rise of strange sects, whose leaders claim to show the true way to wisdom. More or less influenced by Nietzsche, they are not philosophers in his exemplary sense, but they realise a new and more independent philosophical attitude. As representative of this type of thinking who are influenced by Nietzsche are Simmel, Scheler, Spengler and Klages who, though
They develop independently of each other, are all characteristic of this tendency. They develop their understanding of individuals under the influence of Nietzsche.

But Nietzsche's philosophy has often been misunderstood. Nietzsche is most misunderstood in relation to the question of power. Every time one interprets will to power as "wanting or seeking power" one encounters platitudes which have nothing to do with Nietzsche's thought. If it is true that all things reflect a state of forces then power designates the element, or rather the differential relationship, of forces which directly confront one another. This relationship expresses itself in the dynamic qualities of types such as "affirmation" and "negation". Power is therefore not what the will wants, but on the contrary, the one that wants in the will. And "to want or seek power" is only the lowest degree of the will to power.

Nietzsche's conception of the eternal return is also badly misunderstood as the will to power. Every time one understands the eternal return as the return of a particular arrangement of things after all the other arrangements have been realised, every time one interprets the eternal return as the return of the identical or the same, and replaces Nietzsche's thought with childish hypothesis.

Many readers misunderstand Nietzsche by (1) seeing the Nietzschean "slave" as some one who finds himself dominated by a master, and deserves to be; (2) understanding the will to power as a will which wants and seeks
power, (3) conceiving the eternal return as the tedious return of the same and
lastly (4) Imagining the overman as a given master race. W.H. Werkmeister
aptly observes, "And yet it remains true that Nietzsche's philosophical intent
has hitherto been largely misunderstood; that his conception of 'Superman', in
particular, has been falsified; and that his whole approach to values and mat-
ters of morality has been placed into perspectives, which, like distorting mir-
rors, have warped even his noblest ideas. Few philosophers in the past have
suffered so much as has Nietzsche from his would--be followers who made a
travesty of his doctrine and lacked the sensitivity and perceptiveness requisite
to seeing his genuine contributions to the problem of morals."³

Though his philosophy has been criticised yet his philosophy has im-
pressed or has a undoubted influence upon many philosophers. He creates his
own method: dramatic, typological and differential. He turns philosophy into
an art; the art of interpreting and evaluating. His philosophy of will to power is
the principle of multiple affirmation, the donor principle. The sense of Nietzsche's
philosophy is that multiplicity, becoming and chance are objects of pure affir-
mation. The affirmation of multiplicity is the speculative proposition, just as the
joy of diversity is the practical proposition. Thus affirmation remains as the sole
quality of the will to power, action as the sole quality of force, becoming-active
as the creative identity of power and willing.

3. W.H. Werkmeister, Theories of Ethics: A Study in Moral Obligation, PP. 239-240
Therefore, the aim of his thought is to uncover a secret concealed in men's minds, he wishes to change men's minds and the world and his literary style reflects a way of thinking --- indeed, a method which has philosophic significance.

Is Nietzsche a nihilist? If a challenge to the prevailing value-framework is regarded as nihilism, then Nietzsche's critique of Christianity and morality shows that he is a nihilist. But if a nihilist is a person without a perspective and has no world-view to offer, then of course Nietzsche is not a nihilist. His constructive philosophical endeavours are directed at the creation of a new world-view. He uses the word 'nihilism' to refer to life negating world-views. A philosophy which says 'No' to life and seeks to ground its ultimate meaning and purpose in the transcendent is nihilistic. For Nietzsche, "the question whether not-to-be is better than to be is itself a disease, a sign of decline, an idiosyncracy." It betrays a distrust of man. The collapse of the inherited world view which discovers the source of values in the transcendent can push into the precipice of nothingness only those who have no faith in man. According to Nietzsche, the challenge is to be met by the agonising process of conceiving and shaping the order of values. As Nietzsche observes, "That is precisely how we find the pathos that impets us to seek new values. In sum, the world might be far more

4. F. Nietzsche, The Will to Power, 12A
5. Ibid, 38
valuable than we used to believe, we must see through the naivete of our ideals, and while we thought that we accorded it the highest interpretation, we may not even have given our human existence a moderately fair value.\textsuperscript{6}

Heidegger (M. Heidegger, Nietzsche, vol. I, P. 31) and Schacht (R. Schacht, 'Nietzsche and Nihilism', Journal of the History of Philosophy, Vol. XI, Jan. 1973, No. 1, PP. 65-90) maintain that Nietzsche's central doctrines of will to power, eternal recurrence and Superman are metaphysical in the sense that they express characteristics of reality as a whole. Heidegger places Nietzsche in the tradition of philosophers of Being. Nietzsche for him is not a philosophy of life.\textsuperscript{7}

According to Schacht, the will to power is for Nietzsche the truth about the world. He refers to Nietzsche's statement in the last section of 'The will to power': "This world is the will to power - and nothing besides! And you yourselves are also this will to power --- and nothing besides!"\textsuperscript{8} Schacht therefore holds that Nietzsche is not a metaphysical and axiological nihilist. Rather Nietzsche advocates a profound metaphysical truth and speaks of transvaluation of values. For him, the will to power is the fundamental principle. The joy of creation is a privilege only of the genuinely free.

\textsuperscript{6} ibid. 32
\textsuperscript{7} Loc. cit, PP. 4-5
\textsuperscript{8} Loc. cit, 1067