

**WHEN SOCIETY MEETS THE INDIVIDUAL, MARX *CONTRA* NIETZSCHE:  
ANTIPODAL VIEWS ON SOCIETY, MORALITY, AND RELIGION**

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**INTRODUCTION**

Karl Marx and Friedrich Nietzsche would certainly have a lot of things in common. At first glance, one would think that both of them are looking at a similar direction. They seemed to quarrel on the same side against morality and religion. Indeed, both of them rejected morality and religion. They can both be considered as “immoralists” in the same manner as they proclaim to be unbelievers.<sup>1</sup> Both Marx and Nietzsche had their own taste of a sordid attack against Christianity, and recognized it as a religion of the suffering. And, thus both of them call to abolish religion.<sup>2</sup>

In our day, the two of them are labeled as “masters of suspicion.”<sup>3</sup> They are both Germans. In fact, they had studied in the same German university. (Both of them were one time students at the University of Bonn. Marx took up Law in 1835 before he transferred a year later to the University of Berlin to study Philosophy. Nietzsche took up Theology in 1864, nearly just three decades after Marx. Then he also transferred a year after to the University of Leipzig to study Philology).<sup>4</sup> In addition, they both received their doctoral degrees in their early youths (Marx at 23, Nietzsche at 25). And finally, both created a major impact in the history of philosophical thought by creating a major influence in the modern times. Thereafter, Marx’s name became a battle cry for many social reformists and revolutionaries, while Nietzsche’s thoughts had anticipated many of the views of the Post-modernists and existentialists.

At around 1891 to 1900, at the early stage of Nietzsche’s fame (also the same period of Nietzsche’s insanity, by the way) a great number of socialists found association with Nietzsche’s name. First of all, there was the German National Socialists who erroneously misinterpreted Nietzsche’s writings as supporting their cause. In the pre-revolutionary Russia, for instance, there was an attempt to create a “Nietzschean Marxism” or a “Socialist Nietzscheanism” by socialist or communist authors like Maxim Gorky, Alexander Bogdanov, and Anatoly Lunasharski.<sup>5</sup> “The common good for such endeavors is obviously the battle against the existing order of bourgeois-Christian society and the striving for a new form of humanity, a new man.”<sup>6</sup>

Moreover, in London, there was the Fabian Society, a socialist organization of intellectuals proclaiming the emancipation of the working class and equality of women. The most prominent member of the Fabian Society was the playwright George Bernard Shaw, who helped develop the Fabian Nietzscheanism and “even integrated this type of Nietzscheanism into his own ‘Shavian’ style of life.” Shaw even wrote a philosophical comedy in 1903 entitled, *Man and Superman*, after Nietzsche’s conception of the *Übermensch*.<sup>7</sup> Nietzsche seemed to have found easy access to a group of people with a highly developed social consciousness.<sup>8</sup>

An irony, however, is that although Nietzsche had read extensively important philosophers of his time, and in fact, had been known for his *ad hominem* criticisms on his predecessors, there is an astonishing silence on Marx in the Nietzsche literature, as if Marx is unheard-of in Nietzsche’s time despite the very close world they lived in as though neighbors, and also despite the growing influence of socialism in Nietzsche’s time. Nietzsche openly utters his strong disgust to the German National Socialist Party which was later commonly referred as the Nazis. In this connection, he never mentioned the name of Marx as though it did not exist in his vocabulary.

Although at first glance, they appear similar in the sense that both of them revolted against morality and religion, and made a distinction of society into opposing classes. But, in truth, they are worlds apart. They lived on two opposite worlds. Nietzsche is from the start an antipode of Marx. Aside from presenting a clear contrast of these two thinkers, here I also come up with a Nietzschean critique on the Marxian thought. But before that, I am going to present their respective views on society, morality, and religion. I’ll start with Marx, then, Nietzsche.

## **KARL MARX**

Karl Heinrich Marx (1818-1883) was a revolutionary and social theorist. He studied philosophy at the University of Berlin and became part of the young radical Hegelians who saw in Hegel’s approach to philosophy the key to a new understanding of humanity, the world, and history. At the age of 25, Marx went to Paris, and with some friends, they undertook the publication of the radical periodical *Deutsch-Französische Jahrbucher*. In Paris, Marx met many radical revolutionaries and utopian thinkers and confronted the ideas of such people as Fourier, Proudhon, Saint-Simon, and Bakunin. Of lasting significance was his meeting with Friedrich Engels, who owned a textile mill in Manchester, England. In 1845, Marx was expelled in Paris and went to Brussels to organize a German Worker’s Union, which eventually united with several other similar groups in Europe to form an international Communist League, whose first secretary was Engels. In 1848, Marx and Engels wrote the Manifesto of the Communist Party. Marx returned to Paris to take part in the Paris Revolution and was again exiled in 1849. Finally, he went to London with his family, where he would spend the rest of his life,

living in a penurious life, and depending financial support from Engels and from his writing regular articles on European affairs for the New York Daily Tribune. He spent most of his time writing at the British Museum and in 1867 published the first volume of his principal work *Das Kapital*. The remaining two volumes were compiled by Engels from Marx's literary remains.

## **ON SOCIETY**

Marx analyzes the different kinds of societies through the five epochs of history. The very central issue apparent in Marx's analysis of society is his concern on private property. First in line was the primitive society which practices a crude kind of communism.<sup>9</sup> According to Marx, private property is not practiced in this epoch since everything is owned collectively by the members of this society. Hence, it also follows that there is no conflict of interests that can be conceived.

Next is the ancient society which marks the start of the existence of private property. As a result, there also exists two clashing people, in which case the masters and the slaves that are in conflict and in opposition to each other. Worst of all, the masters even considers the slaves as part of their private property.<sup>10</sup> As society progressed, people also learned to till the land. Yet the same conflict continues and now between the landlords and tenants. This conflict arises because the tenants are the ones who do all the work in the farm, while the landlords exploit a bigger share out of the produce that the tenants make. Marx refers to this epoch as the feudalistic society.<sup>11</sup>

As industrialization comes in, the growing conflict heightens between the capital owners (bourgeoisie) and the working class (proletariats). Marx contends that the proletariats are alienated from their produce, and hence from their own selves since they are used and exploited by the bourgeoisie to achieve their own interests. Marx calls this the capitalistic society. To resolve the prevailing conflict, Marx proposes that we go back into communism and abolish the ownership of private properties. But to be able to do this, society must first undergo a state of socialism. In this society, the socialists, which are the reactionary forces, are out to destabilize, or destroy and replace the existing establishment or government. In this transitory stage, the conflict is between the socialists and the then existing establishment or government.<sup>12</sup>

## **ON MORALITY**

K. Vorlander wrote "The moment anyone started to talk to Marx about morality, he would roar with laughter."<sup>13</sup> Being an advocate, or, in fact, as one of the founders of modern communism, it is indeed difficult to find in Marx anything to moralize about. For him, a society's moral beliefs are mere "false consciousness" produced by certain economic forces.<sup>14</sup> This morality actually only reflects the interests of the economically

dominant social class which are the bourgeoisie. Marx claimed that the bourgeoisie, consciously or unconsciously, use their control over law, education, the judicial system, and even the press or media to inculcate and enforce a morality which is to the advantage of the bourgeoisie. Thus, virtues such as; being sober, industrious, punctual, being content with one's station in life, being respectful in the presence of one's superiors, all these favors the bourgeoisie for it secures for them a cheap, reliable, and docile workforce.

Thus, for Marx, even if the prevailing morality tells to forbid a rebellion, the socialists must do so to defy such moral delusions for the proletariat inculcated by the bourgeoisie. "The only salvation for the proletariat is to trample over morality, overthrow the bourgeoisie, and set up the dictatorship of the proletariat."<sup>15</sup>

## **ON RELIGION**

Marx's views on religion is deeply influenced by Ludwig Feuerbach who earlier contends that "Religion is essentially emotion" and that if we carefully analyze our conceptions of God apart from human feelings and wants, there are indeed no ideas of God. Thus, our conception of God is simply a projection of the human mind and emotions.<sup>16</sup> So following this line of thought, Marx is deeply convinced that it is not God who created man, but rather the reverse, "it is man who created God."<sup>17</sup>

Marx had come to believe that religion is just another instrument or tool employed by the bourgeoisie "to perpetuate their power in exploiting the poor."<sup>18</sup> In Marx's own words: "Religion is the sign of the oppressed creatures, the feelings of a heartless world...It is the opium of the people."<sup>19</sup> For Marx, religion functions like a drug – an opium of the people – because it makes the hungry poor people forget their suffering for a while. While the rich, the bourgeoisie, enjoys their affluence and abundance, the proletariats, on the other hand, are deeply inflicted with poverty, hunger, and poor health. Yet, the suffering people had no one to turn to – they resort to religion. Thus, religion teaches the people of the after-life, the "pie in the sky" waiting for them. In this hopeless state, the poor people addressed to God all their sorrows and sufferings.<sup>20</sup> And Marx frowns on this because religion makes poor people surrender to God and forgets their real task – and that is, to change this world of oppression that is dominated by the capitalists.<sup>21</sup>

## **FRIEDRICH NIETZSCHE**

Friedrich Wilhelm Nietzsche (1844-1900) was a professor of classics and a critic of culture. At age 14, he attended the famed boarding school at Pforta to undergo a rigorous intellectual discipline, excelling particularly in the classics, religion, and German literature. Here, he was initially influenced by the Greek geniuses, particularly

Aeschylus and Plato. Later, at the University of Leipzig, he was under the spell of two other great geniuses: Arthur Schopenhauer, whose atheism and anti-rationalism deeply influenced Nietzsche and led him into his own revolt against contemporary European culture which he had come to despise as decadent, and; Richard Wagner, a classical musician whom he adored so much for a brief period. Nietzsche recalled later that without Wagner and his music, he could not have endured and withstood his youth. Upon his teacher's recommendation, Nietzsche was appointed a professor at University of Basel at the age of 24.

The University of Leipzig then conferred a doctor's degree on Nietzsche without examination. At Basel, he developed a lasting friendship with his older colleague Jacob Burckhardt, an eminent historian of art with whom he shared a common fascination for ancient Greece and Renaissance Italy. Nietzsche's works began with a study on *The Birth of Tragedy* (1872) in which he developed his distinction between Apollonian and Dionysian (roughly the rational and the emotional) aspects of Greek life, especially as regards drama. In 1879, Nietzsche resigned from his professorship at the age of 34. For the next decade, he wandered through Italy, Switzerland, and Germany. He wrote several books in a six-year period. Nietzsche's best known book is *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, a tale in poetic prose containing his basic philosophic position. Nietzsche holds that the one motive force in human affairs is the will to power. This is best exemplified in a type of human being that has overcome the claims of weakness and attained the status of 'ubermensch.'

## ON SOCIETY

Nietzsche is hardly a social thinker but rather individualistic. Nonetheless, he also traces his observation of society as early as during the tribal period of ancient times. Nietzsche also contends that there are two classes of people that divide humanity. However, Nietzsche does not look at this division in terms of the economic conditions but rather on the property of power that these two classes of people manifest. Thus, for Nietzsche, power is their driving force and the basic motivation of their existence.

Nietzsche generally refers to these two classes of people as the 'strong ones' and the 'weak ones.' Throughout all of history, these two opposing classes of people always manifest. The strong ones refer to: the master race, the ruling tribes, the noble castes, and the aristocrats. While the weak ones refer to: the ruled group, the inferior class, the slaves, and all the dependents of every degree.<sup>22</sup>

The strong ones or the masters are rare and only a few in number in every society. They usually belong to the elite class and enjoy a higher order of rank. While the weak ones or the slaves are always the majority in number. For this reason, Nietzsche has come to regard the slaves as the common 'herd.' The "herd" consists of weak individuals who hide under the name 'society.' Like herd-animals, the slaves always want to hide

themselves in a group. They are, like a sheep that requires a shepherd, for they simply follow other sheep. In the same vein, Nietzsche refers to the masters as the “beasts of prey” like a golden-haired lion that does not need to belong in a herd but rather relies only of its own individual capacity to rule, conquer, and fight.

However, Nietzsche believes humanity is still on its way towards its goal, and history is still about to witness the emergence of some exceptional “free spirits.”<sup>23</sup> Nietzsche refers to these “free spirits” as the *ubermensch*, which is the goal of humanity. Nietzsche contends that “man is something which ought to be overcome.”<sup>24</sup> The *ubermensch* is the goal that humanity can set for itself. Thus, Nietzsche challenges mankind: “What have you done so far to overcome man? ...You have made your way from worm to man, and much in you is still worm.”<sup>25</sup> “What is the ape to man? A laughing stock or a painful embarrassment. And man shall be just that for the overman: a laughing stock or a painful embarrassment.”<sup>26</sup> “All beings so far have created something beyond themselves; and do you want to be the ebb of this great flood and even go back to the beasts rather than overcome man?”<sup>27</sup>

For Nietzsche, the *ubermensch* is the next stage in the evolution of mankind. Yet, there is one condition that would render the emergence of the *ubermensch* impossible, and Nietzsche calls it “the last man” which is a direct contrast to the *ubermensch*.<sup>28</sup> For him, the last man represents the egalitarian modernity which is an alternative goal that humanity might set for itself.

Nietzsche obviously adopts Darwin’s theory of the evolution of life into higher forms. Yet, for Nietzsche, man is not the endpoint of this evolution. It is likewise wrong to interpret Nietzsche’s *ubermensch* as a new form of species higher than man. But rather it remains a human being which exhibits excellent traits of human creativity, self-overcoming, and self-perfection. Humanity must give rise to the possibility of a higher type of individuals – the *ubermensch*<sup>29</sup>

## ON MORALITY

Just as there are two basic types of people, Nietzsche believes there are also two basic types of morality. These he called master morality and slave morality. Nietzsche thus arrived at these conclusions by simply observing on how the concepts “good,” “bad” and “evil” had evolved out of the moralities of the early tribes of ancient times.<sup>30</sup>

The master race, being in the position of power and the highest order of rank, determines what is “good” by simply referring to themselves and their qualities, e.g. strength, power, valor, pride, excellence, happiness, arrogance and beauty. And to raise themselves higher above others, the masters distinguished themselves by regarding those who differed from them as “bad.”<sup>31</sup> Thus, the masters feel contempt to servile traits, the “bad” traits; e.g. cowardice, anxiety, fear, timidity, modesty, humility, obedience, suspicion, submission, pity and sympathy. In this first type of morality, Nietzsche claims

that the contradistinction of “good” and “bad” are simply an equivalent of “noble” and “contemptible.”

The second type of morality, however, which is the slave morality, is simply a sort of reaction to the first type. The slaves have come to regard the values of the powerful, of the master race, as hostile and unfavorable. The slaves, then, simply reversed the values of the masters and have come to see them as “evil.” Nietzsche further argues that only by judging the masters as “evil” that the slaves have come to regard themselves as “good” – in the negative sense of lacking the master race’s “evil traits.” Nietzsche takes note of the transition from the contradistinction “good” and “bad” to “good” and “evil.” Like, for instance, to inspire fear is regarded as “evil” by the slaves, while for the masters to inspire fear is an account of strength and bravery, and that is “good,” but it is “bad” to be contemptible.<sup>32</sup>

Nietzsche further equates slave morality with Christian morality. Nietzsche attacks and frowns upon Christian virtues, e.g. compassion, kindness, warm-heartedness, or forgiveness, and since Christianity had become a dominant morality of modern society, Nietzsche calls for a revaluation of values, a revaluation of all morals. By this, it does not mean society has to create new values out of the existing one – but rather what Nietzsche meant by a revaluation is simply to reverse once again the table of morality and acknowledge the values that was once considered as noble. Nietzsche considers the master morality as even stricter for it involves self-discipline, self-mastery, and self-control.

## ON RELIGION

Nietzsche’s views on religion can be summed up by his philosophical pronouncement: “God is dead.” Any belief that would reduce the concrete mundane reality of actual existence into some kind of a superficial, temporary, transitory reality frowned upon by Nietzsche as something superstitious and fanatical. “God” is, for him, the totality of all “the realm of the suprasensory,” “the realm of Ideas and ideals” – the true and genuinely real world that has been widely accepted and considered since Plato and has continued as a Christian interpretation of Platonic philosophy.<sup>33</sup> “God is dead” means there is no life in such a metaphysical outlook. Thus, Nietzsche accuses, in particular, both the Christian and Buddhist religion as being anti-life and necessarily oppressive.

And as to how religion came about, Nietzsche blames it to human frailty. Man’s weakness brought about the need for a metaphysical solution for his problems – God is the answer. Thus, man becomes a believer and surrenders his self to God. Faith in God, according to Nietzsche, is actually a defect of the “will” and a sort of “hypnotism of the senses and intellect.”<sup>34</sup> Man comes to a conclusion that he needs to be commanded by a God because he does not have an “affect of command” which, for Nietzsche, is the true

measure of power and strength. In Nietzsche's own words: "Once a human being reaches the fundamental conviction that he must be commanded, he becomes a "believer."<sup>35</sup> Nietzsche even makes a parody of the biblical image of a God's flock with a shepherd – a spectacle of the common "herd" that needs to be commanded.

## **NIETZSCHEAN CRITIQUE OF MARXISM IN THE PHILIPPINE SETTING**

### **THE SOCIETY**

In a third-world setting, social classes or class distinctions may practically be reduced into two, i.e., the rich and the poor. This distinction may be based in the social status achieved by an individual, a family clan, or a group in relation to its financial capability, education, fame and popularity, fortune or wealth, influence, leisure or recreation, language, blood relations or political allies. The rich ones could mostly be found in the 'showbiz' circle or entertainment industry, the 'tycoons' of business, also in political and professional sports arena. To mention a few, they are the Zobel de Ayalas, the Cojuangcos, the Pacquiaoos, the datos of Maguindanao.

The poor ones could be the nameless majority of ordinary citizens or individuals which sunk in dire poverty. They may be found in garbage dumpsites digging for recyclable materials, in the slum areas and fly-over roads with their propensity for bad smell, at mid-sea by midnight fishing, or farming under the heat of sun by noon, or in foreign countries serving other families as housemaids leaving behind their own families. Worst of all, they may have no education; hence, less job opportunity.

Who's to blame? Who is the figure we can clutch at to solve what seemed a hopeless case of a country? Is it God? Is it the society? Is it the absence of moral and public conduct? Is it the government? Is it the existing culture? Or, is it just the individual's weakness to cope and find a solution to each problem?

### **THE INSURGENCY**

It can hardly be denied that socialism and communism had continually been a very attractive and influential political ideology. I cannot but mention the Communist Party of the Philippines with its armed wing the New People's Army whose activities are largely and continually heard and seen in many parts of the country. In fact, some political figures are even accused of connections to this group.

Socialism may have lured a lot of young men and women to waste their lives.<sup>36</sup> We ourselves may have personally known or encountered a lot of them in the past and even in the present. They themselves, however, do not consider it a waste. They say it's like some form of anger – a form of a gift, that have coiled inside, burning inside for a longer period and now wanting to avenge our poor countrymen who had been for a long time victims of cruelty, poverty, injustice, and abuses of power. Thus, Marx's inviting



statement: “Let the ruling classes tremble at a communist revolution. The proletarians have *nothing to lose* but their chains. They have a world to win. Workingmen of all countries, unite!” Thus, they see it rather as an opportunity to help the marginal sectors of society, the indigenous groups who had been victims of land-grabbing, the humble peasantry, the exploited majority of working class who had been victims of injustices and misuse of authority.

We could not blame socialism. It is bound to happen. The CPP-NPA, for instance, was the adverse effect of the Marcos tyrannical rule and abuse of power. They continually persist to oppose the still much prevalent culture of corruption and insensitive government in the Philippines – a system that is so malignant and rotten – we have citizens who sell their votes, government employees that refuse to work without grease money, medical or dental practitioners who do not help without sure income or profit and even exploits and take advantage of their patients, clinics and hospitals that refuses to admit dying patients without down-payments, politicians who enrich themselves out of government funds instead of providing health clinics in remote places, very expensive but low quality education, and the list goes on of things that the government must have done something but were blind and have done nothing but politicking despite a very much high taxes on our people. In such a condition, we might realize that indeed an opposition is needed to counteract the shortcomings of an erroneous government. People need to transform themselves into violent masses to destabilize and terrorize the authorities. People must rage against the government and those sitting in power even if their lives are at stake, because, otherwise, without this brave opposition, it would have been a case of a blind submission of an abusive and authoritative power – a situation in which Nietzsche might dread of – an equal case of what he calls as “nihilism.”

## **NIETZSCHEANISM**

On the opposite ground, Nietzsche has a strong disgust upon the concept of liberal democracy or liberal egalitarianism. For him, it is an expression of the “herd” society. This “herd” is afraid to stand alone for only by “herding” that these weaklings triumph. Nietzsche relies rather upon courageous individuals who dare to stand up for themselves and do not hide into abstract conceptions.<sup>37</sup>

Nietzsche does not believe there were true socialists in his day, in the same way that he believes there were no true Christians who truly lived the practices and teachings of Christianity. He wrote: “In truth, there was only one Christian, and he died on the cross.” Rather, he found only the “apes of this ideal.”<sup>38</sup> “If thy eye offend thee, pluck it out!” Fortunately, no Christian acts in accordance with this precept.”<sup>39</sup> In that same vein, Nietzsche believes there are no true socialist who truly lived the precept of “equality.” Again, he found only the ape of this ideal. For Nietzsche, the principle of equality may be likened to the Platonic mold, say, like cookies which equally came up from the same

mold, same ingredient, and same temperature of heat. As a finished product, they come out totally equal. Each came out from the same mold. Nietzsche realized that what socialism wants is to strip humanity off of its individual identity and characteristic. It abolishes differences and possibilities. It disrespects individual diverse potentials and capacities by forcing each one to live in the name of fairness and equality: “From each according to his ability, *to each according to his needs.*”<sup>40</sup>

Nietzsche believes instead in the Greek *agon* or contest as the real state of nature.<sup>41</sup> There is rather a fair chance and an equal opportunity to participate and excel in a healthy competition (free men through free enterprise).<sup>42</sup> Yet, there must be winners and losers that must emerge in the end, or in a Darwinian sense: “let the strongest live and the weakest die.”<sup>43</sup> Hence, one must not disobey the powers that be – “never mess with mother nature!” By advocating the principle of natural selection, Nietzsche appears fatalistic – that one must not go against the laws of nature. He believes in what nature has assigned to the strong – to excel, to surpass, to trample upon the weak.

Marx, on the other hand, built his assumptions upon the principle of action and change. He cannot accept the fatal pre-destination of nature. So he assigned a new concept and meaning to nature. Nature is what man allows things to be. It is a by-product of man’s thoughts and ideas, and his actions towards such. Nature all lies in the power of man.<sup>44</sup>

But in Nietzsche’s mind, socialism remains a blind impulse towards chance: “Let us try luck and accident; let us roll the dice, and thus socialism is born.”<sup>45</sup> Isn’t socialism a combination of the final strength of the weaklings, their last resort against the strong; the culmination of their instinct for revenge which has turned disruptive and violent; a final desperate force? Isn’t socialism a dangerous attempt to confront such powers that be – to confront the superior class of a society? Isn’t socialism likened to a suicide bomber who longs for change yet at the same time seeks to injure itself in the process? Isn’t it a blind madness that only seeks to destroy itself? For Nietzsche, “there is nothing more terrible than a class of barbaric slaves who have learned to regard their existence as an injustice, and now prepared to avenge, not only themselves, but all generations.”<sup>46</sup>

## THE TRUCE

Nietzsche frowns upon teaching the weaker ones of things which seemed appropriate only for the strong. In the mouth of Zarathustra, he spoke:

‘Man must become better and more evil’ – thus I teach. The greatest evil is necessary for the *overman*’s best...But this is not said for long ears. Not every word belongs in every mouth. These are delicate distant matters: they should not be reached for by sheep’s hoofs.<sup>47</sup>

In other words, the proletariats should not be taught to fight or have power for that is beyond their capacity. For Nietzsche, Marx's optimism is indeed blind. It is a blind optimism to encourage freedom for the slaves. Thus, Nietzsche's advice is: "Will nothing beyond your capacity: there is a wicked falseness among those who will beyond their capacity."<sup>48</sup>

Nietzsche attacks socialism and Christianity for both aspire equality. And not only that, because both fights in favor of the suffering. To him, both are ideologies which fight for an equality of the weak and strong. In his *Beyond Good and Evil*, Nietzsche came up with an equation:

$$\begin{array}{l}
 \text{Religion (Equality before God)} \\
 + \text{Morality (Equality under the law)} \\
 + \text{Science (Equality in truth)} \\
 + \text{Socialism (Equality before every man)} \\
 \hline
 = \text{THE LAST MAN (The dwarfing of Man) – NIHILISM}
 \end{array}$$

The "last man," for Nietzsche, symbolizes the mass of workers, and the bourgeoisie, including the aristocracy, now leveled down by liberal democracy and socialism: He is the result of Nihilism – the disappearance of hierarchies – the leveling of society.<sup>49</sup> Socialism is even much worst than Christianity for it is the last step towards 'nihilism.'

Nietzsche despises the arising mass societies of his time with their egalitarian tendencies, while Marx fought for the rights of countless workers who had not even known him nor read his works. He simply desires a society that Nietzsche totally frowns of – a society which has no hierarchy, no order of rank – equality in the eyes of every man. For Nietzsche, that is a total dissolution of the instincts for life. Tracy B. Strong observes correctly that "[Nietzsche] is the thinker who dares to raise again the old political questions of rank, domination, character, and nobility against the leveling dynamics and easy egalitarianism of liberalism."<sup>50</sup>

Could the concept of a "middle class" a mere empty invention by the socialist to set a point of convergence wherein rich and poor could possibly meet – to upstart the leveling dynamics of society? Is there a gauge for such 'middle'? Who are the middle class in the Philippine society? That could mean to any "socialite," "social climber," or a "second rate trying hard copycat" who just have barely enough for a family's daily needs. Yet they are by far not very different from the poor, poor majority. The middle class is a fluid concept.<sup>51</sup> Poor folks may imitate the elite ones in clothes, speech, lifestyle, and arrogance. In the end, the basic difference would still emerge due to a lack of resources or intellectual preparations. But that couldn't be taken as a basis of an apparent case of

unequal opportunity. Take as example the real-life-story of lottery winners whose life returns back to a hopeless poverty and debts after only a few months of wealthy living, how could it be said there is an unequal opportunity when they already have almost everything they want but lost it.<sup>52</sup> If indeed society is to blame, how could we explain that there are also exceptional cases of successful people or individuals whom were able to rise out of such hopeless situations?

In the realm of business enterprise, should the rich entrepreneurs need to be charged of oppression for being rich and having too much for what they need? Business is a risky endeavor; hence, not an easy task at that only of being deprived of the rewards they deserved. Conflict occurs when out of envy the inferior ones turn ambitious and illusions a right for an exchange of position or roles with that of those for the superior ones. I say, worry about the poor only if they too worry about themselves, but if they don't even bother, who could care even more? Sometimes, being poor is just a consequence of the choices we have made, of not taking the risk and the appropriate necessary steps to become otherwise. The rotten system being practiced in a country like ours is enough a reason that one should become smart, intelligent, and competitive; if not, he or she might end up a loser.

## CONCLUSION

Marx is an advocate of socialism and communism – towards a “classless society,” while Nietzsche is an advocate of the “will to power” and the *ubermensch*. Marx thinks morality helps the elite capitalists, while Nietzsche thinks morality favors the slaves. Marx thinks religion favors the rich bourgeoisie, while Nietzsche thinks religion helps the weak, the suffering. Both religion and morality, for Marx, favors the elite upper class. For Nietzsche, they both favor the weak slaves. Marx proposes ‘communism’. Nietzsche frowns upon communism, the ‘last man’ – end of humanity.

Though Marx and Nietzsche use different terms for the opposing classes in society, e.g. bourgeoisie and proletariats for Marx, masters and slaves for Nietzsche, I argue that these refer to equivalent entities. They just differ in approaches and perspective: Marx's is socio-economic, through the collective consciousness; while Nietzsche's is psycho-political, through the individual consciousness. And though they differ in approaches, at bottom-line, both Marx and Nietzsche simply want to encourage and empower humanity to stand up.

Marx too dreads upon Christianity as the religion of the hopeless, and thus put all his hope in communism for the redemption of the proletariats. But, for Nietzsche, both Christianity and communism are ideals which he strongly detests and suspects as being blind to the realities of life. Both gone to the extremes of madness in opposite ends; the former finds solace in the metaphysical and spiritual realms but refuses to address the

ugliness of the material human condition (*puga mundi*), while the latter seeks to control the material destiny (history) of human affairs but denies to look at the nobility and the distinction of our human capacity and achievement with its corresponding rewards.

Like a broomstick that is more effective when there is plenty in number, social action is better than alone. But without a real change that starts from within our selves, the desired change in society could not happen still.

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## ENDNOTES

<sup>1</sup> “[Nietzsche] wished to be called an immoralist in that his project was not to promote any morality but to undermine traditional morality, which he accused of decadence.” Rafael Pangilinan, “Friedrich Nietzsche: A Philosopher of Immoralism?” in *LUMINA*, Vol.20, No.2, October 2009. “The moment anyone started to talk to Marx about morality, [Marx] would roar with laughter.” Steven Lukes, “Marxism and Morality,” in *Challenges to Morality* ed. Jonathan Harrison (New York: Macmillan Publishing Company, 1993), 206.

<sup>2</sup> For Marx, religion functions like an opiate of the masses. Eddie R. Babor, *The Human Person: Not Real But Existing*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Quezon City: C & E Publishing, Inc., 2007), 103.

<sup>3</sup> The three masters of suspicion: Marx, Nietzsche and Freud.

<sup>4</sup> Samuel Enoch Stumpf, *Socrates to Sartre: A History of Philosophy*, 6<sup>th</sup> ed. (Singapore: McGraw-Hill Co., 1999), 390.

<sup>5</sup> Ernst Behler, “Nietzsche in the twentieth century,” in *The Cambridge Companion to Nietzsche* ed. Bernd Magnus and Kathleen M. Higgins (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 291.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, 292-293. Shaw is the originator of the translation in English of *ubermensch* as superman, and which eventually inspired the creation of the comic-book hero, Superman. Walter Kaufmann lambasted this translation in the 1950’s for failing to capture the nuance of the German *uber* and for promoting an eventual childish identification with the comic-book character Superman. Other scholars simply opted to retain the German word. Kaufmann’s preference is to translate *ubermensch* as “overman.”

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>9</sup> Eddie R. Babor, *The Human Person: Not Real But Existing*, 99.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>13</sup> Steven Lukes, “Marxism and Morality,” in *Challenges to Morality*, 206.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, 204.

<sup>15</sup> “It would be wrong to say that such a violent solution is a case of the end justifying the means, for it would be only a bourgeoisie delusion that the means were wrong, and, if rightness is a delusion, the means *cannot* be justified, i.e., *shown* to be right.” Jonathan Harrison, *Challenges to Morality*, 205.

<sup>16</sup> Ludwig Feuerbach, “Religion as Illusion,” in *Classical and Contemporary Reading in the Philosophy of Religion*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., ed. John Hick (New Jersey: Prentice-Hall Inc, 1964), 169.

<sup>17</sup> Eddie R. Babor, *Human Person: Not Real But Existing*, 103.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>19</sup> Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, “Introduction to a Critique of the Hegelian Philosophy of Right,” in *Collected Works*, Vol.3 (London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1975), xiv, as quoted in Eddie R. Babor, *Human Person*, p.103.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, 104.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>22</sup> Friedrich Nietzsche, *Basic Writings of Nietzsche*, ed. Walter Kaufmann (New York: The Modern Library, 1997), 394.

<sup>23</sup> Friedrich Nietzsche, *Human, All Too Human: A Book for Free Spirits*, trans. Marion Faber (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1996), 5-6.

<sup>24</sup> Friedrich Nietzsche, *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, trans. Walter Kaufmann (New York: Random House, 1995), 16.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid.

<sup>28</sup> Marc Sautet, *Nietzsche For Beginners* (New York: Writers and Readers Publishing, Inc., 1990), 145.

<sup>29</sup> The comic-book hero 'superman', when first created by Jerry Siegel, came out as an inspiration from George Bernard Shaw's play "Man and Superman". However, due to the popularity and influence of the comic-book hero, it inevitably overshadows and results into a fancy misconception towards Nietzsche's original concept of the *ubermensch*. The comic-book and the cinema's portrayal of the Superman are very far from Nietzsche's original intentions. They are seriously comic and a death to the original idea.

<sup>30</sup> Nietzsche, *Basic Writings of Nietzsche*, 394.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid., 397.

<sup>33</sup> Eddie R. Babor, "Nietzsche's Concept of Religious," in *Philosophia: International Journal of Philosophy*, De La Salle University, Vol. 34, 2 (May 2005), 171.

<sup>34</sup> Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Gay Science*, trans. Walter Kaufmann (New York: Vintage Books, 1974), 289.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid.

<sup>36</sup> Most of those who joined in the 1980's are university activists, students and professors, social workers, even priests. If only they had a better option, I believe that farmers would be the least to join.

<sup>37</sup> "The masses" is a term commonly abused by Filipino politicians; thus, the slogan "For the Masses". But to whom do we serve when serving the masses, isn't that still boils down back to the individual?

<sup>38</sup> "I sought great human beings, I never found anything but the apes of their ideal."

<sup>39</sup> Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Portable Nietzsche*, trans. Walter Kaufmann (New York: Viking Penguin, Inc., 1954), 486.

<sup>40</sup> "And laid them down at the apostle's feet: and distribution was made unto every man according as he had need" (Acts 4:35, 4:32-35) describes the apostles' lifestyle as communal (without individual possession).

<sup>41</sup> Nietzsche, *Portable Nietzsche*, 477.

<sup>42</sup> "Economic justice can best be won by free men through free enterprise," (from the JCI Creed).

<sup>43</sup> "In the struggle for survival, the fittest win out at the expense of their rivals because they succeed in adapting themselves best to their environment....let the strongest live and the weakest die."

<sup>44</sup> "Human nature, for Marx, does not yet exist, but will exist in the future." Louis Dupre, *Marx's Social Critique of Culture* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1983) 28n.

<sup>45</sup> Nietzsche, *Gay Science*, 40-42.

<sup>46</sup> Marc Sautet, *Nietzsche For Beginners*, 67.

<sup>47</sup> Nietzsche, *Portable Nietzsche*, 400.

<sup>48</sup> Ibid., 401

<sup>49</sup> Marc Sautet, *Nietzsche For Beginners*, 145.

<sup>50</sup> Tracy B. Strong, "Nietzsche's political misappropriation," in *Cambridge Companion to Nietzsche*, 129.

<sup>51</sup> Barbara Ehrenreich defined the middle class as "salaried mental workers who do not own the means of production and whose major function in the social division of labor is the production of capitalist culture and capitalist class relations...despite education and a perception

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of themselves as being middle class, were part of the working class because they did not own the means of production....," available from [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Middle\\_class](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Middle_class); 21 March 2010.

<sup>52</sup> Bayani San Diego Jr., "Vicky Morales and the lotto winner who squandered P80M," Philippine Daily Inquirer [article online]; available from <http://showbizandstyle.inquirer.net/entertainment/intertainment/view/20100220-254379/Vicky-Morales-and-the-lotto-winner-who-squandered-P80M>; 15 March 2010.

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