

Re-Evaluation of Values: Nietzsche and the Mining Struggle in Oriental Mindoro, Philippines

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Abstract – *It is the aim of this paper to explore the possibility that virtues are just created by somebody, for somebody, and for the purpose not beneficial to everybody. To unravel this theme, this paper is divided into two connecting paths, first is the exploration of Friedrich Nietzsche’s ideas, his will to power and critic to religion and morality and the second is putting Nietzsche’s ideas to the of Mindorenoes’ mining problem, to show how virtue is simply made to dominate.*

Keywords - Nietzsche, Mindorenoes, virtue, morality, religion, mining

INTRODUCTION

Man has to follow the values of the community, how they value things and behave in a particular situation. Following entails “goodness” and acceptance. Then the “good” who follows enjoy the privileges of being categorized as “virtuous” man or having good habits and is called a moral human person. Defiance entails “evil” or “bad” which the consequence is rejection or exclusion in the community. So no one wants to be branded as bad or evil. One has to conform to the morality believed by the community.

The question now is “Is what they are believing is really true?” But to evaluate the belief of the community in the realm of truth is not the concern of the researcher. The researcher wants to know and explore the possibility of the question “what if these moralities or virtues are just made to dominate?” Then the “good or bad” that they are believing as founded in truth are just means of those who strive for power in the past in their will to power.

A philosopher named Friedrich Nietzsche contemplated on this matter. His ideas reached far beyond where ordinary people can’t believe or imagine. Cursing him might be a near possibility for some who may able to read him. But the researcher saw his idea in a different way and found beauty on it. That is why he is asking every reader to “listen”. From these points, the researcher will try to expose Nietzsche’s notion on how virtue is made to dominate. Afterwards, the exposition will be followed by the situation of Mindorenos struggle against mining. Then re-evaluation of the situation will be discussed in the light of the said notion of Nietzsche.

I. How Virtue Is Made to Dominate According to Friedrich Nietzsche?

A. Will to Power

Nietzsche’s philosophy even not systematically exposed can somehow be explained through his idea the “will to power” as its summation. So to understand his philosophy is to understand will to power. Arthur Danto as he reflected on will to powersaid that it is the “principle in which everything is to be understood and to which everything is finally to be reduced” [1] in Nietzsche’s philosophy and as his philosophy. It is the fundamental value and the essence of life of every being

Martin Heidegger defines this “will” of Nietzsche as nothing else but will to power and there is no other drive other than will to power. Then this “power” is nothing other than the essence of the will. It follows that will to power is will to will. This can be seen in the mode of every being as they command and the pursuance to be strong for power. There is always the drive to stay in power. Growth is the battle cry of this creative and dynamic act of the will to power[2].

To explain further, Nietzsche said, “Where there is life is there will, not will to life but-thus I teach you-will to power”[3].It simply emphasizes that life or any life manifests will to power. Everything that “is”, in any manner, entails will to power. The whole world is a will to power. But it should be clear that will to power is not something that every being has or something that is achieved, but it is. Something is will to power in itself.

In bringing this idea in the realities of man as particular being, Nietzsche said that man by nature “want(s) to create the world before which you can kneel: this is your ultimate hope and intoxication” [4]. This

entails man has natural drive for dominance. It starts with dominating and putting control on his own self and the environment where he belongs. It also entails his drive to power. Man “is” will to power and has the longing to subdue himself and the other. That is why Nietzsche said”

“Psychologist should think again before postulating the drive to self-preservation as the cardinal drive in organic being. Allowing things desires above all to vent its strength-life as such is will to power”[5].

This simply entails Nietzsche’s conviction that power is what counts for man. This was strengthened by his belief that in the struggle of man “some will risk self-preservation in the drive to expand their power”[6]. Taking into example are the politicians, most of them came from wealthy families. They have sufficient sources to live and preserve their lives. They can survive whatever adversities might come. But why is it that they are still buying to be a leader? They “are” and are move by power.

Man did not acquire this drive, man “is” will to power and will “will” for power. Will to power or to dominate is already there since the beginning. Infact, the very essence of knowing someone’s self as not the other is already a sign of domination although indirect in nature. Someone is already trying to dominate in making a distinction from him and the other. Everyone comes to know himself through the use of the other. Nietzsche said “every man knows that everyone comes to know himself almost solely in regard to his powers of defense and attack”[7], that is always in relation to the other. Others become just means from the very first stage of knowing the self of man.

On the other side, beyond the generalization that all “are” and are striving for power, still many are doubtful. Some are interpreting this will to power as only for the noble, strong, and for the aristocrats. So if that will be the case, the weak are not included on this will to power. However, William Lawhead as he reflected on this notion clarified that “all people whether they are strong or weak manifest will to power” it only happens that the will of the strong are or can easily seen and is revealed in their acts. The weak also manifest will to power but in their acts it is hidden in subtle ways. It follows that in every act of the weak there is also the will to dominate and to overpower the strong[8].

To go farther, the right question at this point is “What are the means of man to pursue this will to power?”

Nietzsche in his book will to power said that morality and religion are the principal means by which one can modify man into whatever one likes; provided one is possessed of an overflow of creative power and can cause one will to prevail the period of time [9].

Then it will surely be followed by the question “How?”

And that will be the subject of the next discussion.

B.) Critic on Religion

In continuing will to power in the level of human being, Nietzsche greatly regarded religion as one of the factors which is disabling the capability of man to will as will and one of the means to attain one’s will to power.

It disabled man’s capability in his quest to power in a way that he [man] created someone greater than him and gave his becoming to this created one. Nietzsche said, “This has been his greatest disinterestedness that he admired and worshipped and know how to conceal from himself that he it was who had created what he admired” [10]. This basically denies the existence of God as the source of all that religion has, in his advocate to face the present life of man he then proclaimed the “death of god” which he meant not to say that “god existed and died” but to proclaim that the idea of god is not already needed at this present life. Man has to take his life alone at this time. God is just a creation of man and not man as the creation of God. In this regard, Nietzsche suspected that psychologically this religion started when the,

“Feeling of power suddenly seizes and overwhelming a man-on this takes place in the case of all passion-, a doubt arises in him concerning his own person, he dare not think himself the cause of this astonishing sensation-and this he posits a strange person, godhead, as its cause”[11].

This view reduced god as just a projection of man. A certain thing created by him to fulfill his longings and shortcomings. But man was conquered by his creation until he feared to stand without it. That is why he made it as a part of his life through religion.

To be specific, going back to the time of Nietzsche, Christianity is one of these religions, which disabled the capability of man. For Nietzsche, the aim of this religion is to destroy the strong and break their spirits, which is done by poisoning the noblest instincts and infecting them with disease until their strength, their will to power, turns inwards, against themselves, then, converts their proud assurance into anxiety and conscience trouble. From this trouble the strong perish [12].

On the other side, religion is a means of attaining someone's will to power too. It can also be proven by going again to a specific religion, Christianity. Like other organizations, one cannot exist without its ministers or agents or leaders- in Christianity the leaders are the priests. They are chosen by God, the Vicar of God on the earth- the advocators of equality and molded under the virtue of humility. But their history needs to be surveyed because those who are considered as impossible to be dangerous always becomes the dangerous one. Just like what Nietzsche said:

"The most poisonous thing against the senses has been said not by the impotent, nor by ascetics, but by the impossible ascetics, by those who are really were in dire need of being ascetics" [13].

As a result, Nietzsche found out that there is nothing in Christianity, which is not used by the priests to foster their, will to power. According to Nietzsche "the priests have taught the kind of morality which considered them as the highest type of men" [14]. If that will be the case, people should follow them for they are the one who found the perfect status of being man as what they have taught. They are the enlighten, and the bearer of truth.

It follows that the notion of improving mankind is to make all men more like themselves (priests) because they are the perfect expression of that perfect man. From these teachings lies the superiority of the priests, their will to power. Since they are perfect men they can say, "Do this and do that. It is right and that is bad". Then together with the elevation of themselves is also the temperament to maintain their power, their position.

These two use of religion as suppressor of the capability of man to will for power and as means of pursuing one's will through its ministers, man is caught in a situation where he is asked to choose whether he will follow or not. Religion only fosters two choices: follow and be saved, or disobey and suffer from eternal damnation. Fear is the principle behind-the gist of the

religions' doctrine. Through this, any religion, through the exercise of its ministers will to power can make any man what they wanted him to be.

From these propositions it follows that religion lowered the concept of man by creating a higher one in the name of god. Then it is just nothing but a means of exercising one's will to power. That is why Nietzsche regarded religion and specifically Christianity as "the most fatal and seductive lie that has ever existed-as the greatest and most impious lie" [15] this created us as:

"A god who punishes and rewards, recognizes and carefully observes the law book of the priests and who is particular about sending them into the worlds as his mouthpiece and plenipotentiaries. 2.) after life, in which alone, the created machine is supposed to be active-to this end the immortality of the soul, was invented. 3.) A conscience in man, understood as the knowledge that good and evil are permanent values-that god himself speaks through it, when ever its counsels are in conformity as the subjection of all phenomena to amoral order as the interpretation to say, the concept of punishment and reward, as the only power and only creator of all transformations. 4.) Truth as given, revealed and identical with the teachings of the priests: as the condition to all salvation and happiness in this and the next world" [16].

C.) Critic on Morality

In relation to Nietzsche's proclamation that "God is Dead" together with the collapsed of religion is also the collapsed of morality. It happened because god is always equated to truth, which is the foundation of good. This denial of the existence of god is also the denial of the existence of truth and of the foundation of good. In other word, this is just the other way of saying that there is no truth, no objective order, nothing which we can acknowledge as higher than ourselves as fixed and eternal and unchanging. As a result, there is nothing now that the morality can claim as its foundation, which is unchanging [17].

From this point like religion, morality also turned basically as means of attaining power or means to dominate and to disable one's capability to will. That is why Nietzsche concluded religion as "life killing instinct". These can be seen clearly in the two types of morality the "master morality and the slave morality" [18]. Knowing these two types of morality is also knowing how morality is made to dominate and to disable one's will to power.

Master morality lies its difference to slave morality in the fact that its agents' will to power is revealed or can be easily seen or perceived. Those people who are higher, more noble, aristocratic, and elite are the main patrons of this morality. They are strong willed people who are embracing the virtue of nobility, strength, courage, power, and pride as good. Then they regard what is contemptible, common, pathetic, cowardly, timid, pity, and humble as bad[19].

But from the fact that they are superior and always in the move to dominate, to prevail, and to suppress, it should be noted that their impulse is not merely to master others but also to master themselves as well. Also the manifestation of being a master doesn't entail only in a physical level but it encompasses in intellectual and in their creativity to will for power. Aside from a drive to dominate and expand their power, there lies also to drive to protect and preserve their present power in any possible and creative way[20].

Then slave morality is girding also towards the will to power. It differs only from master morality from the fact that its drive is hidden or its agents deny it, but within them "is" always the will to dominate. Its main patrons are those who are primarily weak, downtrodden, uncertain, and weak willed. They rely on their virtues, which are patience, humility, pity charity, abstinence, modesty, compassion, resignation, and submissiveness[21].

They, the weak or the slaves, are always on the will to overcome the strong or the master. It is done by elevating qualities that are by nature inferior to the category of the "good" of the master and leveling "evil" those virtues, which are superior in masters' category. The success of this act lies mainly on the fact that the members of the weak or slaves are many in terms of number compared to the number of the masters[22].

These given characteristics of these two moralities support the claim that the "good" in contrast with "evil" in morality is not a stable entity or a universal concept, which does not vary to any person at any given space. The bad or the slave can be good in the valuation of the master. It only fosters the idea that the valuation of good and evil is relative on whoever is using or judging. Nietzsche writes it as:

"It was the "good", that is to say the noble, mighty, highly placed and high minded who saw and judge themselves and their actions to be good" [23].

From this virtue turns as just something made to dominate and to attain power with respect to its maker

and user. It is not intended to serve the whole goodness of being but mainly; to serve its creator and patron, which is either the master or slave in their quest for power.

II. Nietzsche's Notion and the Mindorenos Situation In The Presence Of Mining

"Starting from where you are" is the forefront of Nietzsche's philosophy. Thus, looking to the common experience of every being is the foundation of his intellectual journey. It follows that the ordinary and what is within, is the subject of his study. From this, it is appropriate to apply this in the situation of man. Mindorenos' situation as they struggle for the emancipation of mining is one of the current issues, which is appropriate to be seen in the light of this notion. In facing such problem in the political or social arena, one should not doubt to use Nietzsche because the "struggles over property shaped his later belief in the ubiquity of the will to power"[24].

To clarify the situation, Mindorenos are on their way to intercept the entrance of mining companies, which are trying to mine the 9, 720 hectares of land between Oriental Mindoro and Occidental Mindoro. These companies are trying to get minerals such as cobalt, nickel and bronze. But due to the dangers of this mining into the health, social, economic lives of the Mindorenos this was strongly opposed. Especially because of the example happen in the nearby province-Marinduque.

For almost a decade it has been an issue, different mining companies come and go. But this latest aspirant, which is the "Crew Development Corporation", seems to give the most burdens to them. Its attempt to really pursue the mine is always in the active mood. Series of rallies and conventions were held which are conducted mainly by the NGO's. On the other hand the provincial government formed a resolution, which aimed to have 25 years of keeping this issue in silence, which is the Provincial Ordinance No. 001-2002 saying that:

"It shall be unlawful for any person or business entity to engage in land clearing, prospering, exploration, drilling, excavation, mining transport of mineral ores and such other activities in furtherance of and/or preparatory to all forms of mining operations for a period of twenty (25) five years"[25].

But this was junked by the National Government and according to the report of the Manila Times, the President signed an Executive Order 270-A which

views the environment as “ the paramount consideration in every stage of mining operation” and urges to mining companies to put in place “progressive rehabilitation measures”[26]. This simply say that the mining companies are allowed in the country with the condition of using necessary and safety equipment and technologies in mining which will not damage the location. So even the people strongly opposed, still this company got the possibility to operate and there the problem lies.

Where is the notion of Nietzsche in this situation?

From the very point that will to power is present to every man as Nietzsche said, “where ever I found life there I found will to power” [27] follows the deduction that Mindorenos are also bound in this same passion. Still from their identity as peace loving people hides their motivation for power since this “will” is present either explicitly or implicitly in an individual or group of individuals. So, to know how they manifest the power is to know how they act in relation to Nietzsche’s concept of master and slave morality as the manifestation of will to power.

Mining company can be viewed in the mask of the master or those who are in power, the noble and aristocrats. Since the master is the one whose will to power is revealed, it fits the company owners because their drive to power can be easily seen in the way they pursue mining and their creativity in facing their opposition. Standing from the banner “progress is attained through change” is a manifestation of domination in a way that they impose a new type of valuation, which is, really favorable to them. It can be seen as Nietzsche discussed the creativity of the strong willed persons as they used to say “as there is ‘progress’ there is transvaluation of the strengthen factors into good”. So this claim is on the way of fostering “progress” really necessitate change and through the help of time that will turn into “good”[28]. But it should be explained that the “good” here is just nothing but the handmaid of the strong willed people-the master.

Other creative way that they are using which is a sign of being a master is in their way of presenting studies about the project and promises. First of these is the promise of electricity for the residents and other nearby barangay. Second is the hospital or clinic, which will take charge of the health and sanitation of the said barangays. This company also promised to rehabilitate their road and make it more accessible to the town so

that people can easily transfer their products to the market. But one should be informed that this is not really intended for the people because under these projects is their will to power. They will really make that project possible because they need electricity for their plants to operate. Also, it is written in the Mining Act that every mining activity must have clinic for their workers. In the other side, the road must also be good enough so that they can transport their waste, products and other things in a more comfortable manner.

The justification of the safeness of how the waste is to be disposed and also the harmlessness of their waste to the marine systems through the use of scientific studies are also used in this masterful stand. They really hit the mark of what Nietzsche is trying to say of how creative is a powerful man in a way that he is “making” truth, as a means for his will to power. Truth here is nothing but:

A sum of human relations, which have been enhanced, transposed, and embellished poetically and rhetorically, and which after long use seems firm, canonically and obligatory to people”[29].

They are just like the priests in the time of Nietzsche in which the priests dictate what the truth is. The time validates truth. Time became the condition of the possibility of truth. That is why Nietzsche concluded that there is only one way of attaining truth and that is to become priests. Priest represents the powerful, the strong willed people. It follows that the powerful dictates what truth is and was validated through time just like what these corporation are doing.

The national government in dismissing the effectiveness of the 25 years moratorium of the provincial level holds also the stand of the master. Why? The tax that is the main concern of the transaction is basically for the stability of the government. Like a master she should be creative in maintaining her power in any way, which can guarantee to her will and dismissing the moratorium is one of her ways. In this way she is rightly entitled to be in lined in the band wagon of the masters and all those persons which are related and in some way or another to make this dismissal possible, with the purpose of acquiring or maintaining something from it.

Like the company and the National Government, Mindorenos are still striving for their will to power- to dominate and overpower the other. They are on their way not only to preserve their place but hidden is their goal to dominate and to control. What makes them

differ is that they are embracing the will of the slave. They are resisting but in a peaceful way. Several rallies are made. They really conform to what Nietzsche said about the patrons of slave morality for most of them are weak or those who belong to the lower strata of the society who has no other capable thing to do but to shout in the streets. They are those who have no power in the society to turn things in their hands with the use of visible movement of power.

The strength of the slave morality is also with them. They have the greater number in relation to those who are pushing mining into action. Then this strength gave them their chance to counter their opponents. They have the control over the majority of the people over Mindoro but not over the powerful. This made them possible to put into action the natural tendency of the weak which is “to reduce their opponents into a caricature”[30]. This can be observed in their rallies and conventions where they labeled people who are related, favor and or pursuing mining as “evil or bad””. They made the figure of “devil” related to these powerful persons. It can also be concluded that they are branding them as criminal.

In contrast to the values-the mining corporation is promoting which is “progress through change”, Mindorenos counter this by saying that those who favor on this project are “MukhangPera” or only do such things for money. They are branding the values or virtues, which are promoted by their opponents as “evil or bad”. These characteristics basically rooted on the routine of the slaves- putting the superior value of the powerful into an inferior category.

How about those Mindorenos who have no concern on the situation? Where are they belong?

In the presence of many undiscovered and beautiful things on earth, which need to be dominated and conquer, if a man remains static and doing nothing, it is just like killing his will to power within. It defies the very essence of man. That is why Nietzsche said “even to perish is better that to be a half man or poisonous man”[31]. Those people must die for they may affect the attitude of the other. The act of not moving is a direct assault to the constitution of will to power and a kind of unbecoming. But looking to the situation of the Mindorenos who show no concern entails different thing. Showing no concern to a particular situation doesn’t mean that it ends one’s will to power. It might happen that some perceived that the issue has nothing to do in his own quest for power, but in his world or

private life there lies his endeavor for power. So let them in their own way. There is no problem in the context of will to power if they are not moved by a particular situation. The problem may come if they ceased to strive and just let time come with our anything can be contributed in the nave of “growth” in his will to power.

Then who is good or evil/bad among them?

Nietzsche defined “good” as everything that heightens the feeling of power in man, the will to power, power itself. This means that the goodness of something depends on its relation to the quest of someone to power. The act of man is relative to its consequence to power as it s goal or end. Then “bad” is defined as everything that is born weakness”. Again the act of man in relation to power is the undercurrent. If man’s act is not in accordance to his will to power therefore that is a sign of weakness. In relation to man, man is bad or evil if he can’t pursue his drive for power[32].

From this, it is not right to ask that question “who is right or wrong or god or evil”? -For that defends of the way they exercise their will to power. The right question needs to be answered now is “What someone should do in order to attain happiness

III. What Idea Nietzsche is Trying to Convey to the Mindorenos?

Since from the above evaluation no one was trapped from the notion of “bad”, in the light of the will to power, the researcher decided to choose one of the agents to be evaluated about ways of obtaining happiness. In which Nietzsche defined happiness as “the feeling that power is growing, that resistance is overcome”[33].

Within the realm of possibilities only two ways or choices to do are presence in the face of the Mindorenos to be powerful enough and overcome those who resist to their aim. First is to treasure the wisdom of slave morality and let the corporation and the National Government realized that they are wrong. But this choice seems not workable as the situation goes; it seems that the company is really determined to operate. The last one is to undergo to some changes and that is what the researcher chose to explore.

The love of being here is always in Nietzsche’s philosophy, instead of thinking a life there where the angels and saints are singing; he is advocating everyone to live where the problem lies. And basically, that

would be the first thing Nietzsche wants to say to the Mindorenos “I beseech you my brothers remain faithful the earth, do not believe to those who speak of other worldly hopes” [34]. The first claim is basically a call to wake up and re-evaluate the part of religion in Mindorenos lives.

It is undeniably true that majority of the Mindorenos are Christian and this religion is what Nietzsche considered as the holy lie. So the first move is to go out to the wings of religion for its values are disabling the Mindorenos in their way to dominate and control their situation, to overcome the resistance and attain happiness.

Since there is a need for the suspension of religion in the life of the Mindorenos, it follows that there should be a change in the Mindorenos’ virtue. It is important that their moral valuation should be change in a way, which will justify or will favor whatever act they are planning to do. Nietzsche said “let your spirit and your virtue serve the sense of the earth, my brothers, and let the value of all things to be posited newly by you. For that you be fighters! For that you shall be creators”[35].

The claim is radical but if they really desired to attain happiness or overcome the resistance and feel power. Then, let them call this act as “necessity”[36]. The power is theirs to use and do. It is part of their will to power. And if the Mindorenos are really convince to their goal Nietzsche would say “I have not yet seen any reasons to fell discourage, he who acquires and preserves a strong will, together with a broad mind, has a more favorable chance now than ever he had” [37].

From these assumptions it should be clear that more than the change of what the agent should do, the change of the agent himself is needed because for Nietzsche “the change of values-that is a change of creatorSs”[38]. Therefore it is really change of all and everything. Mindorenos should change himself, for being a Mindoreno now is something to be overcome like the overman, which Nietzsche is trying to teach to everyone. In this temperament the voice of encouragement in Nietzsche is echoing saying, “the time has come for man to set himself a goal, and the time has come for man to plant the seed of his highest hope”[39].

But the question now is “What are these acts which the virtue should justify?”

Nietzsche said “we do not believe in a right that does not proceed from a power which is able to uphold it, we regard all rights a conquest” [40] it is simply

saying to the Mindorenos to bless their claim in the name of conquest. Overpowering others in any means, which is if not equal to the opponents, it must be greater to what the opponents have. “Force” if necessary. Therefore, aside from marching and shouting in the street or using the peaceful way or means which their religion are imposing they should find other means even which are radical nature.

Radical means are only indispensable for those who are weak, for those their virtues control them not to do. And that is the soul of the re-evaluation of their values or virtues. They have to make their values justified their acts. Nietzsche said “morality is necessary in order to make man triumph in his struggle with nature and wild animals”[41].

The next question maybe “How about if they [Mindorenos] use these new virtues in justifying their acts against each other?”

This problem now lies in the levels of individuals between two Mindorenos and not between the Mindorenos and the company. In this situation Nietzsche would say “man out of boredom, wants to exists socially, herd-fashion, he requires a pact and he endeavors to vanish at least the very crudest bellum *omnium contra omnes*(war of all against all) from his world”[42]. It means men will not fight against each other because they all want to exist and they need each other in order to exist. It followed that, that assumption will never happen.

At the end, this point of argument regarding the change of virtue into a radical one is viewed as a strong fortress of the Mindorenos in the future. Accepting the fact that leaders in the National Government will change, for years they will come and go. Maybe the next will favor to the Mindorenos, which is better but if not? In some remote possibility this present company maybe can be overcome still using the will of the slaves but how about the next to come? Surely the next will be powerful than those who aspired before. National leaders and companies will continue to attract investors. If Mindorenos have Virtues to support their stand in a manner, which will not allow the others to overcome them, their property will be preserved. The point here lies not only blocking the present company but also how to build a force, which will lead to overcome the resistance consistently and feel the power in their hands as a condition for happiness.

SUMMARY

Virtue for Nietzsche is made for the service of the will to power. It is something, which is molded to dominate, but its originator or those who are powerful. Any virtue is not rooted in an unchanging foundation and is not really for the good of “all” in anywhere and anyplace but only for the good of its patrons.

Nietzsche’s notion is really visible in the Mindorenos situation over mining but the discussion and evaluation ended up not in the question “Who is right or wrong?” but “What would be the act to be made to attain their happiness?” At the end by reflecting to Nietzsche’s idea and assuming that he is alive at this present situation the researcher concluded that Nietzsche would ask the Mindorenos for a chance in themselves and their virtues.

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