
UNIT 3 NIETZSCHE

Contents

- 3.0 Objectives
- 3.1 Introduction
- 3.2 Life
- 3.3 Main Works
- 3.4 Nietzsche's Philosophy
- 3.5 Nihilism
- 3.6 Will to Power
- 3.7 The Death of God
- 3.8 The Overman or Superman
- 3.9 Let Us Sum Up
- 3.10 Key Words
- 3.11 Further Readings and References
- 3.12 Answers to Check Your Progress

3.0 OBJECTIVES

The main objective of this Unit is to understand the philosophy of Nietzsche. Though we will not be doing a detailed study of the philosophy of Nietzsche, we will be getting familiar with the salient features of his philosophy. We begin with his life and works and proceed directly to his philosophy. The first section explains his notion of Nihilism, wherein we will explain the general understanding of active nihilism and passive nihilism. The second section elucidates the 'will to power.' We shall analyze how it is understood as 'life' itself and how it is the essence of every willing being. The third section delineates the 'death of God.' We shall see how the announcement of 'death of God' was used against Christianity and against the traditional morality. The fourth section enumerates characteristics of the Overman and explains about the concept of Eternal Recurrence. Thus by the end of this Unit you should be able to:

- Have a basic understanding about the life, works and the personality of Nietzsche
- Figure out the notion of nihilism (active and passive)
- Know what is 'will to power'
- Comprehend the announcement of 'death of God'
- Specify the characteristics of Overman or Superman and the necessary points regarding Eternal Recurrence.

3.1 INTRODUCTION

Nietzsche became a legend even before he died in 1900. He was an extremely complex personality; he possessed great artistic talent and was one of the best of the modern German writers. His style, in prose as well as in verse, is passionate, inspiring and of great literary beauty. His knowledge and interest in Greek culture played an eminent role in his philosophy. However, the central theme of his thought was man, human life, and therefore, he was completely preoccupied with history and ethics. Undoubtedly, there is in Nietzsche much more than what the *dilettantism* which took possession of his work and personality at the end of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th century.

3.2 LIFE

Nietzsche was born on October 15, 1844, at Röcken, Prussian Saxony. His father, Ludwig Nietzsche, a Lutheran minister christened him Friedrich Wilhelm after King Friedrich Wilhelm IV of Prussia, on whose birthday he was born. Ludwig died in 1849 and the boy was brought up at Naumburg by his mother, sister, a grandmother and two aunts. In 1858, he entered Pforta, a famous boarding school near Naumburg. He was often at the head of the class and acquired an excellent education. His admiration for the Greek philosophy was awakened during his school days. He studied theology and classical philology at the University of Bonn and he graduated in 1864. But in 1865 he gave up theology and went to Leipzig. As a student at Leipzig, Nietzsche discovered Arthur Schopenhauer (known for his pessimism) and Richard Wagner (a great musician of that time), the two greatest influences on his early thought. After reviewing his papers which were published in *Rheinisches Museum*, in 1869, the University of Basel appointed him as the chair of philosophy even before he had even taken the doctorate.

He never married though he proposed to two women, one Dutch and the other Russian. Both refused to marry him. He was for a period of time in conflict with his sister Elizabeth because she married a fascist and went to live with him in Argentina. But she returned later after the death of their mother and looked after Nietzsche. She was very possessive of her brother, built a myth around him and it is understood that she falsified many of his manuscripts to suit her own fascist ideology. Throughout his life Nietzsche's health was poor. His doctors kept warning him to preserve his very bad eyesight by reading and writing less. He disregarded this advice, fought severe migraine and gastric pains with long walks and much writing and took pills and potions to purchase a little sleep. In 1889, the mental tension became too much for Nietzsche. However, he carried on writing and publishing many books. His books became his life. In January 1889, Nietzsche collapsed in a street in Turin while embracing a horse that had been flogged by its coachman. He never recovered and he vegetated until his death. On August 25, 1900, Nietzsche died as he approached his 56th year, apparently of pneumonia in combination with a stroke. His body was then transported to the family graveyard directly beside the church in Röcken, where his mother and sister also rest.

3.3 MAIN WORKS

The principal works of Nietzsche are named here. *The Birth of Tragedy* / *from the Spirit of Tragedy* was written in 1872. In the period 1873-76 he published

4 essays with the common title *Untimely Meditations* or *Considerations* which is rendered as *Thoughts out of Season*. They are: i) *David Strauss, the Confessor and Writer* ii) *The Use and Abuse of History* iii) *Schopenhauer as Educator* and iv) *Richard Wagner in Bayreuth*. In 1878-79 he wrote *Human, All Too Human* which was published originally in three parts. In 1881 Nietzsche published *The Dawn of Day* and this was followed in 1882 by *Joyful Wisdom*. In 1883-85 Nietzsche came out with his famous work, *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*. *Beyond Good and Evil* in 1886 and *A Genealogy of Morals*, one of the exceptional works on morality, in 1887, which together with *Zarathustra*, are probably Nietzsche's most important writings. In 1888 along with *The Will to Power* he had written *The Twilight of the Idols*, *The Anti-Christ* and *Ecce Homo*, a kind of autobiography (these works have been published after the death of Nietzsche). These latest works show signs of his extreme tension and mental instability.

3.4 NIETZSCHE'S PHILOSOPHY

Nietzsche was not content with the traditional mode of philosophizing and conceptualizing. Nietzsche argued and presented his views quite differently from the traditional way. First of all, his writings do not present a systematic account of his philosophical endeavor. His dislike for a systematic presentation is symbolized in his writings. He had not written his ideas in a systematic way so as to establish a system of his own. Nietzsche himself makes this clear by saying that, "I mistrust all systems and avoid them. The will to system is a lack of integrity." So, it is not easy to present his philosophy systematically; his philosophy cannot be readily segregated into metaphysics, epistemology, ethics, aesthetics and the like. In any case, we make an attempt, for our practical purpose, to categorize his philosophy under the following titles.

3.5 NIHILISM

Nietzsche sees reality, the cosmos as valueless. Everything organic and inorganic is reduced to be merely the product of matter, which has deterministic laws. The advancement of science and technology, the renaissance thinkers, revolution against Christianity, Darwinian Theory of evolution and many other reasons could be pointed out why the world was looked at as valueless. A view that the world is nothing but a big machine was dominant and, Nietzsche thinks that people do not realize the catastrophe. Nietzsche identifies this catastrophe with nihilism. Western society was seen by him to have been captured by this horror.

Nietzsche describes nihilism as 'ambiguous' in that it can be symptomatic of either strength or weakness. Nietzsche claims that nihilism is a necessary step in the transition to a revaluation of all values. It is the most extreme form of pessimism. In simple terms, it is the belief that everything is meaningless. It arises from weariness. Nihilism is a transitional stage that accompanies human development, cleaning and clearing away outdated value systems so that something new can arise in their place. Nietzsche speaks of two kinds of nihilism: passive nihilism or incomplete nihilism and active nihilism or perfect nihilism. Passive nihilism is characterized by a weak will and active nihilism by a strong will.

Passive Nihilism

Passive nihilism is more the traditional belief that 'all is meaningless.' It is the result

of what happened in our thinking. According to Nietzsche, “the highest values devalue themselves.” The aim is lacking; ‘the why’ finds no answer. The highest values so far had been God and other metaphysical or otherworldly realities. The other world was considered the real world while this world was considered only an apparent one. The role of God is now put in question and ‘experience’ turns out to be the sole basis of acquiring knowledge. Hence, what happens is the fact that anything, which is considered holy and unquestionable, is under skepticism. The result is nihilism. We are confronted with the naked reality as something aimless and valueless. The world looks valueless because those things that oriented in giving meanings are taken off. One of the main reasons could be the end of Christian thinking, we mean from the point of view of keeping God as the lawgiver, as the source of life, as the source of value and as the source of meaning of our existence. Now everything is related to positivistic or scientific approach, which is devoid of any value attached to the world and thus we are confronted with nihilism. This kind of nihilism is said to be incomplete or the passive.

It is incomplete or passive because even after denouncing the existence of other worldly virtues, the human being still finds meaning in something else. This something is viewed as giving value and purpose to our existence even in the midst of valuelessness. That is nothing but morality. The denial of God does not necessarily lead to the denial of morality, which played a dominant role in the justification of the world. The human being posits the meaning of existence in the acceptance of the existing moral system. Therefore, what we need to do is even to go beyond this status of justifying our existence with the existing moral system.

Active Nihilism

Nietzsche tries to be a perfect or active nihilist. He understands very well that morality serves as the great ‘antidote’ for the nihilism that one is faced with. Nietzsche argues that “every purely moral value system ends in nihilism. One still hopes to get along with a moralism without religious background but that necessarily leads to nihilism.” Hence, it is not enough that we try to be non-metaphysicians but it is necessary to be also active nihilists. If we are confronted with nihilism, we should face it actively and affirmatively. One should not try to value something that is not there as passive nihilists do. Rather we need to face actively the baseless, valueless world. This would indicate active or perfect nihilism.

To sum up, while most of his contemporaries looked on the late nineteenth century with unbridled optimism, confident in the progress of science and the rise of the German state, Nietzsche saw his age facing a fundamental crisis in values. He ends up with identifying nihilism which others have failed to realize and respond to it actively. “Nihilism literally has only one truth to declare, namely, that ultimately nothingness prevails and the world is meaningless.”

Check Your Progress I

Note: a) Use the space provided for your answer.

b) Check your answers with those provided at the end of the unit.

1) How does Nietzsche view nihilism?

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2) What are the two kinds of nihilism? Enumerate their features.

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3.6 WILL TO POWER

To understand the will to power, one must first of all take into account Nietzsche's background and criticism of Arthur Schopenhauer. Schopenhauer posited a 'will to live,' in which living things were motivated by sustaining and developing their own lives. Nietzsche instead posited a 'will to power,' a significant point of contrast to Schopenhauer's idea, in which living things are not just driven by the mere need to stay alive, but in fact by a greater need to use power, to grow, to expand their strength, and, possibly, to subsume other 'wills' in the process. Thus, Nietzsche regarded such a 'will to live' as meaningless while 'will to power' alone as primary.

Will To Power as Drive

Nietzsche claims that "A living being seeks above all to discharge its strength – life is *will to power*." In Nietzsche's writings, the 'will to power' is consistently associated with being the essence of a willing being's nature. In his writings, he makes the 'will to power' as the fundamental drive to explain life's activities. The 'will to power' is treated as the drive of a being to 'overcome' itself, or in simple terms, to better oneself or to become more than what it is at present. To better oneself, one must be able to overcome both the limitations of oneself and external things; "That it must be a struggle and a becoming." In overcoming these, one can guess what a being feels: satisfaction and pleasure. In striving to better oneself, one certainly has a will that causes them to face the limitations. In facing and triumphing over those things one gains pleasure. But of course, if one does not succeed, then they certainly will feel dissatisfied, but does not one also notice the strengthening of a will thereafter, perhaps to even say a will becoming more 'determined' and the cycle continues.

Obedying the Will to Power

As said above, the 'will to power' is closely associated with the fundamental drive of willing beings, we shall look at how Nietzsche characterizes several aspects of human doings as actions that can be viewed as obeying the 'will to power' as characterized above. First, there is the pursuit of knowledge or the "will to truth" as Nietzsche calls it. In *Human, All Too Human*, he gives three effects of seeking knowledge that are tied to a gain in the sense of power. One effect is that by gaining knowledge, one gains an awareness of one's power, analogous to "gymnastic exercises are pleasurable even without spectators." The second effect is that by bettering our knowledge, we also gain the ability to 'defeat' and become 'victors' over older ideas (or at least we believe so), thus a sense of power over

other's ideas. Lastly, in finding new 'truths' one can become affected with a sense of superiority and uniqueness since one feels they understand something better than others which can feed a sense of power over others. Nietzsche claims "Their 'knowing' is *creating*, their creating is a legislation, their will to truth is – *will to power*."

Will to Power Between Nobles and Slaves

Nietzsche saw the 'will to power' as that which drove the priests to moralize upon the world and recreate the concepts of 'good' and 'evil.' This is seen best in the work *The Genealogy of Morals* in which Nietzsche discusses his idea of an interplay based on the philological analysis of words between the 'noble' class Romans and the 'slave' class Jews. While the Romans were painted as strong, rich, and powerful, the Jews were weak, poor, and lacking in power. However, this dichotomy of power caused deep seated hatred to brew within the Jewish class, led by the priests; "It is their impotence which makes their hate so violent and sinister, so cerebral and poisonous."

The Romans were powerful in a superficial manner relying on money and weapons. The priests were the "most intelligent haters." Driven by hatred and keen intellects, the Jews came to overpower the Romans not with weapons and money, but with morality. Whatever the Romans were, termed 'evil' or sinful and anything that was Jewish was made 'good.' The masses, or the "herd" as Nietzsche refers to them, fell in sway with this morality and thus the Jews came to dominate the Romans. For, to be Jewish was to be good, and to be otherwise made one into "the 'evil enemy,' the Evil One." This will to dominate, spurred by hatred, and led by priests, strong with a 'will to power,' allowed the Jews to triumph over Rome. We should not be misled by this conclusion because this (of the Jews, of the slaves) is not the will to power that Nietzsche aims at. The example is to show the force or the power of the will to power. He stands with the will to power of the masters.

To sum up, let us attempt to congeal the above to state what 'will to power' is according to Nietzsche. 'Will to power' is that which explains the fundamental will of living beings which makes beings strive for growth, overcoming subjective and objective obstacles, and the satisfaction of gaining a sense of volition. It is important to note that in Nietzsche's writings, there is no other will besides the 'will to power.' The 'will to power' empowers one and makes the weak stronger than ever. Though, there is always a discussion whether there are 'wills to power' (several wills that empower) or just 'will to power,' we are content with 'will to power.'

Check Your Progress II

Note: a) Use the space provided for your answer.

b) Check your answers with those provided at the end of the unit.

1) What is 'will to power' according to Nietzsche?

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2) How does the 'will to power' play a role between Nobles and Slaves?

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3.7 THE 'DEATH OF GOD'

The announcement of the 'death of God' by the madman occurs in *The Gay Science*. Let us have an extract from the passage that we might be able to draw some important conclusions to show how this announcement serves as the devaluation of all morality, including Christian, Kantian and utilitarian.

The madman jumped into their midst and pierced them with his eyes. "Whither is God?" he cried; "I will tell you. We have killed him – you and I. all of us are his murderers... Are we not straying as through an infinite nothing? Do we not feel the breath of empty space...? God is dead. God remains dead. And we have killed him. (*The Gay Science*, 125)

The message of the 'death of God' is not merely an announcement for the extinction of religion. It includes the non-believers too to have a broader understanding going beyond mere announcement of the decline of religion which bases itself on God. Let us analyze.

Death of God and Nihilism

As we have seen earlier, the first moment of evaluation of the 19th century Europe shows us to be confronted with nihilism. The announcement of 'death of God' shows us the emptiness and the nihilistic elements of the society. Walter Kaufmann says that Nietzsche represents himself to be the madman in the text. He says, 'to have lost God means madness; and when mankind will discover that it has lost God, universal madness will break out.' The madman accuses the audience saying, "We have killed him". That means now the whole world looks baseless again. There is nothing beyond to ensure us comfort. Through this announcement Nietzsche confronts us with the naked reality again trying to show how we feel now without God. Kaufmann says, "That is an attempt at a diagnosis of contemporary civilization, not a metaphysical speculation about the ultimate reality." Martin Heidegger explains that "The statement 'God is dead' contains the realization that nothing is spreading. Nothing means here: absence of Supersensory, binding world."

Death of God and Morality

The announcement of the 'death of God' devalues religion and everything connected with religion. It is here we situate Nietzsche's critique of religion as essentially linked to morality. As 'death of God' contains three structural moments: an arrow shot to devalue the Christian, Kantian and other foundations of morality. Christian morality has its foundation in God. The Kantian foundation of morality is different at the start but at the end with the postulation of God it becomes essentially related to Christianity. The utilitarian principles keeping the morality of the community have a direct link with the herd (Christian morality): the norm of altruism is nothing

but the 'love of neighbor' – the central theme of Christianity. Hence Nietzsche sees all morality to be related to Christian morality. Now the proclamation of 'death of God' shakes the foundation of morality itself.

From 1880, Nietzsche begins his vehement attack on Christianity. The announcement of the 'death of God' is to insist that the morality of Christianity can no more base itself on God. In the text where the announcement is made, the madman says, "What after all are these churches now if they are not the tombs and sepulchers of God?" This reference is related to the death of a Christian God. And thus the foundation of morality is shaken. R.J. Hollingdale's explanation is the following: the 'death of God' is intended to imply all that ever has been or ever could be subsumed on the name of 'God' including all the substitutes of God, other worlds, ultimate realities, things-in-themselves, nominal planes and the wills to live – the entire 'metaphysical need.'" That leads then to a world purposeless and hence morality has nothing to offer – a future happiness or redemption or salvation. Hence Kantian morality too is doomed to be valueless.

We shall move to the utilitarianism. The same attitude of Christianity is seen to be present outside of religion too. Nietzsche says, "Utilitarianism (socialism and democracy) criticizes the origin of moral evaluations, but it believes them just as the Christian does." The utilitarian principle is nihilistic, because it has the conception of 'good and evil' of the priestly class, of Christianity. By destroying the Christian values Nietzsche destroys that of the utilitarian too. Hence the 'death of God' is not mere evaluation but it is the announcement of the denial of God. For Nietzsche regards God "not as a mere error, but a 'crime' against life. We deny that God is God. By denying God Nietzsche wants to 'unearth' the theological instincts wherever they are present. So we conclude, by destroying the basis of the herd morality he destroys that of the other foundations too. The 'death of God,' according to Nietzsche, urges us to be 'true to earth' and reevaluate the whole of values. The 'death of God' breaks off with all that are illusory and other worldly. It brings an end to the dualities.

Check Your Progress III

Note: a) Use the space provided for your answer.

b) Check your answers with those provided at the end of the unit.

1) Describe the announcement of 'death of God'.

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2) How does the 'death of God' devalue religion and morality?

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3.8 THE OVERMAN OR SUPERMAN

The term 'Overman' (Übermensch) carries two meanings crucial to Nietzsche's revaluation of values. 'Über' signifies 'over' in the sense of height and self-transformation. It suggests the elevation of mankind's highest self into an experience of being that has no trace of moralism or the fiction of free will. It can also suggest 'across' or 'beyond' and Nietzsche employs this second resonance to characterize 'man' as a bridge we must pass across toward a life free of resentment and negativity. The term is never applied to an individual, and Nietzsche plainly considered neither himself nor Zarathustra, whom he often ridiculed, an Overman. The transformation of man into Overman cannot take place without a 'going-down' or the destruction of man's reactive beliefs. The Overman is not the 'end' of mankind but a process that transforms reactive values into the active affirmation of power.

MAN AND OVERMAN

Nietzsche's Zarathustra preaches the advent of the Overman. Nietzsche proposes this word "As the designation of a type of supreme achievement, as opposed to 'modern' man, to 'good' man, to Christians and other nihilists." This means that the Overman is the possibility of a powerful human being of the future. In fact he is the goal of man. The present man of decadence needs to be overcome. Nietzsche explains: "What is the ape to man? A laughing stock or a painful embarrassment." And just so shall man be to the superman: a laughing stock or painful embarrassment. It means that the man is an animal to be overcome by the Overman as man has overcome the ape. The present man is expected to pave way for the Overman, be like a bridge between animal and Superman.

CHARACTERISTICS OF OVERMAN

If the Overman is the goal what are his characteristics? How does he differ from present man? To answer these questions we shall use an image that Nietzsche describes. One of the images that he uses to explain about the Overman is the image of the sea. The present man is like a river that is contaminated. He is corrupt to the core. The Overman is like a 'sea' to receive polluted water and not be defiled. The image shows that man is nothing compared to the Overman and explains that any happenings or occurrences of life do not defile the Overman. Whatever comes on his way, be it suffering, or pleasant occurrences, he is not affected by the situation rather he affirms himself and establishes himself. He will be beyond 'good and evil.' Overman is not only the embodiment of all the ardent affirmations of life, but the fusion of all that is macho and beautiful. He will cast aside all aspirations towards otherworldliness and immerse himself joyfully in the creative task of here and now. Society will and must produce superman, and production of genius is the aim of culture to which, all races will contribute their blood and the body.

Nietzsche concludes that there is no meaning in life except that which a man gives and the aims of most men have no surpassing dignity. To raise ourselves above the senseless flux, we must cease being merely human, all-too human. We must be hard against ourselves and overcome ourselves; we must become creators instead of remaining mere creatures. This dimension of Overman takes us to the next concept, namely, 'Eternal Recurrence.' Though we do not discuss it in a detailed manner, it has its own importance to be explained briefly.

ETERNAL RECURRENCE

The notion of eternal recurrence can be viewed in two ways: cosmological or non-cosmological, but both the ways involve a supreme affirmation of life. On one level, it expresses the view that time is cyclical and that we will live every moment of our lives over and over, infinite times, each time exactly the same. It simply means that each passing moment is not fleeting but rather echoes for all eternity. Nietzsche's ideal is to be able to embrace the eternal recurrence and live in affirmation of this idea. In other words, we should aim to live conscious of the fact that each moment will be repeated infinitely, and we should feel only supreme joy at the prospect.

On another level, the doctrine of the eternal recurrence involves Nietzsche's distinctive metaphysical notions. Nietzsche contends that there is no such thing as being; everything is always changing, always in a state of becoming. Because nothing is fixed, there are no 'things' that we can distinguish and set apart from other 'things.' All of reality is intertwined, such that we cannot pass judgment on one aspect of reality without passing judgment on all of reality. To put it differently, we cannot feel regret for one aspect of our lives and joy for another because these two aspects of our lives cannot properly be distinguished from one another. In recognizing that all of life is one indistinguishable swirl of becoming, we are faced with the simple choice of saying *yes* to all life or *no* to all life. Naturally, Nietzsche argues that the *yes*-saying attitude is preferable.

Check Your Progress IV

- Note: a) Use the space provided for your answer.
b) Check your answers with those provided at the end of the unit.

1) Explain the term 'Overman.'

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2) Pen down how the image of sea is compared to that of the Overman.

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3.9 LET US SUM UP

One who knows only the suffering life of Nietzsche will tend to think that he is a sickly being and his philosophy is too sickly and pessimistic. But he learnt from his sickness. He learnt to affirm life in spite of his sickness. He saw the religions, especially Christianity and the traditional morality to be hostile to the dignity and development of human beings. Thus, he started as a nihilist, but confronted the

nihilism actively by affirming the self. He came out with the notion called 'will to power,' which is understood as the drive, a drive which makes the human beings strive for growth, overcoming all the obstacles. 'Will to power' is nothing but life itself. Against the morality, Nietzsche becomes prophetic in demanding to devalue the existing morality (Christian, Kantian and Utilitarian), which is nihilistic so that he can present a renewed moral ground or to be specific, a renewed amoral ground. On his way he proclaimed the 'death of God.' Then, follows his Superman or Overman, who overcomes every single difficulty and who is beyond 'good and evil.' He is far superior to man who is merely a human, all-too human. The notions 'will to power' and the Eternal Recurrence paves the platform for the Overman.

Though we would be able to criticize every notion of Nietzsche, we just ask a few questions, was he right? Would we be able to reevaluate morality completely? No God, no morality, no religion. Then, what will be the standard to base ourselves on? The 'death of God' would become a slogan when it does not serve the purpose! Who creates Overman? When? Overman or Overmen? What about the rest? Should they be considered as not worthy to live? Does the 'will to power' consider the life as just physiological? Is the will just a drive? If the world is valueless and nihilistic, are the above said notions necessary at all, because the ideal he has shown seems to lead us to perfect nihilism? Are his revalued notions meaningful, because the affirmation of power, however sublimated, seems to lead to subjugation?

3.10 KEY WORDS

Nihilism	: 'Nihil' signifies 'primarily a value of nil.' It means nothingness.
Will to Power	: The fundamental drive to explain life's doings. The life, the world is nothing but the 'will to power.'
Death of God	: It is an attempt at a diagnosis of contemporary civilization, not a metaphysical speculation about the ultimate reality.
Overman (Übermensch)	: 'Über' signifies over, across or beyond. Superman is over the man who is too human.
Eternal Recurrence	: It is the view that time is cyclical and that we will live every moment of our lives over and over an infinite number of times.

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3.12 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Check Your Progress I

- 1) Nietzsche describes nihilism as 'ambiguous' in that it can be symptomatic of either strength or weakness. Nietzsche claims that nihilism is a necessary step in the transition to a revaluation of all values. It is the most extreme form of pessimism. In simple terms, it is the belief that everything is meaningless. It arises from weariness. Nihilism is a transitional stage that accompanies human development, cleaning and clearing away outdated value systems so that something new can arise in their place. Nietzsche speaks of two kinds of nihilism: passive nihilism or incomplete nihilism and active nihilism or perfect nihilism. Passive nihilism is characterized by a weak will and active nihilism by a strong will.
- 2) Nietzsche speaks of two kinds of nihilism: passive nihilism or incomplete nihilism and active nihilism or perfect nihilism. Passive nihilism is characterized by a weak will and active nihilism by a strong will. Passive nihilism is more the traditional belief that 'all is meaningless.' God and the morality were the highest values but they do not have any meaning or value anymore. At the same time it is not enough that we try to be non-metaphysicians but it is necessary to be also active nihilists. If we are confronted with nihilism, we should face it actively and affirmatively. One should not try to value something that is not there as passive nihilists do. Rather we need to face actively of the baseless, valueless world. This would indicate active or perfect nihilism.

Check Your Progress II

- 1) The 'will to power' is considered as being the essence of a willing being's nature. Nietzsche makes the 'will to power' as the fundamental drive to explain life's doings. The 'will to power' is treated as the drive of a being to 'overcome' itself or in simple terms, to make better or to become more than what it is at present.
- 2) Nietzsche's famous work, *The Genealogy of Morals* discusses his idea of interplay between the 'noble' class, Romans and the 'slave' class, Jews.

While the Romans were painted as strong, rich, and powerful, the Jews were weak, poor, and lacking in power. However, this dichotomy of power caused deep seated hatred to brew within the Jewish class. Driven by hatred and keen intellects, the Jews came to overpower the Romans not with weapons and money, but with morality. Whatever the Romans were deemed 'evil' or sinful, thus anything that was Jewish was made 'good.'

Check Your Progress III

- 1) The announcement of the 'death of God' by the madman occurs in *The Gay Science*. The madman shouts, "Where is God?" and he continues, "We have killed him, thus we are murderers." The whole world now looks again baseless. There is nothing beyond to ensure us comfort. And, the message of the 'death of God' is not merely an announcement for the extinction of religion. It includes the non-believers too to have a broader understanding going beyond mere announcement of the decline of religion which bases itself on God.
- 2) The announcement of the 'death of God' is an arrow shot to devalue the Christian, Kantian and other foundations of morality. Christian morality has its foundation in God. The Kantian foundation of morality is different at the start; but at the end with the postulation of God it becomes essentially related to Christianity. The utilitarian principles keeping the morality of the community have a direct link with the herd (Christian morality): the norm of altruism is nothing but the 'love of neighbor' – the central theme of Christianity. Hence Nietzsche sees all morality to be related to Christian morality. Now the proclamation of 'death of God' shakes the foundation of morality itself.

Check your Answers IV

- 1) The term 'Overman' (Übermensch) carries two meanings. 'Über' signifies 'over' in the sense of height and self-transformation: it suggests the elevation of mankind's highest self into an experience of being that has no trace of moralism or the fiction of free will. It can also suggest 'across' or 'beyond' and Nietzsche employs this second resonance to characterize 'man' as a bridge we must pass across toward a life free of resentment and negativity. The term is never applied to an individual, and Nietzsche plainly considered neither himself nor Zarathustra, whom he often ridiculed, an Overman.
- 2) One of the images that Nietzsche uses to explain about the Overman is the image of the sea. The present man is like a river that is contaminated. He is corrupt to the core. The Overman is like a 'sea' to receive polluted water and not be defiled. The image shows that man is nothing compared to the Overman and explains that any happenings or occurrences of life do not defile the Overman. Whatever comes on his way, be it suffering, or pleasant occurrences, he is not affected by the situation, rather he affirms himself and establishes himself.