

Radical Perspectivism in Friedrich Nietzsche's Existentialist Philosophy and The Imperatives for Social Development

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Abstract

This paper makes three pungent points. Firstly, is a contention that Friedrich Nietzsche's notion of perspectivism is, contrary to the popular interpretation of being nihilistic, rather inter-subjectivist in theory and praxis. Second is that the inter-subjectivist undertones in Nietzsche's philosophy allows for dialectic interplays and reasoned interlocution amongst diverse perspectives and, in the process, integrates their respective normative frameworks towards an intricate and coherent value system. And thirdly projection of an inclusivist social developmental trajectory embedded by the unified and integrated normative value system resulting ultimately from radical yet inter-subjectivist notion of perspectivism upon which Nietzsche's meta-ethical and existentialist theorizations were structured. Such an expository analysis on the notion of perspectivism in Nietzsche's philosophy becomes imperative in understanding the transition from systematic and schematic philosophical systems with abstract, rationalist, universalist, objectivist and absolutist undercurrents which consign the human person to mere symbolic roles to a philosophical system which interprets the human experiences in the world in such a manner that affirms his concrete beingness, individuality and problematic existence. Nietzsche's aphoristic philosophy becomes apt here due to its inherent anti-systematism, as it projects spontaneity in the human's attempt to capture the authentic concerns of his concrete beingness and problematic existence. How then did Nietzsche traverse the problematics of solipsism likely to emerge from the embedded relativism, subjectivism and individualism in his perspectivism? This essay gives a succinct analysis of this.

Keywords: Development, Existentialism, Intersubjectivism, Nihilism, Perspectivism

Introduction

Conceptualising Nietzsche's Radical Perspectivism

Perspectivism as a philosophical outlook amplifies and underscores the relativist cum subjectivist notion that meaningful epistemic constructs such as reason, perception, experience, knowledge and even the ascription of meaning is un-objective and non-absolute but dependent upon various individual viewpoints, interpretations and understandings.¹ In other words, it posits that rationality as a concept encapsulating that which is considered sensible, appropriate, required and/or representative of an accepted or an established mainstream normative framework or explanatory paradigm² implies different things to different people, in accordance with the peoples' personal outlooks and objectives with regards to believing and accepting truths and avoiding falsehoods³. This presupposes the explanation and understanding of the notion of a perspective in terms of reflection, with the indication that one has a valid reason to hold any position or adopt any particular normative paradigm towards attaining one's objective after sufficient careful reflection⁴. Invariably, truth or falsehood underlying or embedded within any evaluation of reality is thus reflective of or dependent upon the evaluator's ideological standpoint.

Nietzsche's philosophy, being a reactionary philosophy to Hegel's abstract rationalism, universal objectivism and absolutism which detaches from any sort of relativism, subjectivism or individualism, reflects a perspectivist trajectory that can be described as radical. This radicalism stems from the fact that Nietzsche, in his reaction to Hegel,

^{1.} Anselm K. Jimoh, *Certitude and doubt: a study guide in epistemology*. (Ibadan: Ebony Books, 2013). p. 51.

^{2.} Simon Blackburn, *The oxford dictionary of philosophy*. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008). p. 307.

^{3.} Sven Bernecker, *Reading Epistemology: selected texts with interactive commentary*. (Malden: Blackwell Publishing, 2006). p. 53.

^{4.} *ibid.*

argued pungently that reality or the constituents of truth in the world are subjective to individual interpretations and perspectives, and as such he construed any form of objectivism as tyrannical. Due to its relativist and subjectivist undertone, many critics have misconstrued Nietzsche's perspectivism as nihilistic.

Against this nihilistic misconception and misinterpretation of Nietzsche's radical perspectivism, this essay avers the inter-subjectivist undercurrents of Nietzsche's philosophy and the implications for social development. It has three segments. The first bothers on the historical analysis to Nietzsche's radical perspectivism, explaining the determinant factors and intents behind Nietzsche's radical perspectivism. The second attempts a theoretical, expository, critical and hermeneutical analysis of Nietzsche's radical perspectivism. Subsequently, the third explicates the imperatives of such a philosophical orientation for human personal and collective existential betterment.

A Historical Rendition to Nietzsche's Existentialist Philosophy.

The modern period of philosophy, ushered in by the renaissance and the reformation, and still haunted with the skeptical challenge, represented an obsessive search for the perfect method that guarantees certainty of knowledge. Epistemological philosophy at this time required a mind that is free from passions, prejudices, presuppositions, traditions and dogmas, and rejected all conclusions that were not based on justificatory reasons. Also, the dawn of experimental science was attended by a wave of enthusiasm and interest that cut across Europe, especially in Britain where empiricism reflected the triumph of the experimental method in modern science. Empiricism thus began to take on the form of a positive and well-founded philosophical theory which could compete on an equal intellectual pedestal with rationalism. This was reflected in the inductivist philosophy of Francis Bacon who attempted a total reconstruction of knowledge by simplifying cognitive phenomena in order to aid our natural cognitive abilities. According to him, knowledge depends for its supporting grounds on some experiential contents and

contexts.⁵ Thomas Hobbes attempted to reduce the multiplicity of phenomena to the simplest possible laws and basic elements alongside Galileo's explanation of nature on a mechanistic psychology by assuming that all that happen within the universe represent nature.⁶ John Locke, following the footpaths of the great scientists of his time, postulated the notion of blankness of the mind (*tabula rasa*) like Aquinas and posited that the fundamental elements of knowledge of the external world consist only in the minute data of sensation, and these impress on the mind leaving it with images.⁷

Yet, there emerged the resurgence of rationalist philosophy in continental Europe during the very period in which British philosophers were devising the new doctrines of empiricism. It was about this time that Descartes, among others like Leibniz and Baruch Spinoza, though knowledgeable in science and as such contributed to the emerging scientific fields, developed novel (epistemological) rationalistic structures which were more superior in method and cogency to those of the ancient Greeks.⁸

Among the many influences of Descartes were the eclectic approaches of Voltaire, Diderot, Helvetius, Holbach and arguably, Immanuel Kant who, as against debating the differences between rationalism and empiricism, capitalized on the advantages of each side to establish the Enlightenment philosophy of the truths of science and the

⁵. See James Collins, *Crossroads in Philosophy: Existentialism, Naturalism and Theistic Realism*. (Chicago: Henry Regnery Company, 1969).

⁶. See William F. Lawhead, *The Voyage of Discovery: A Historical Introduction to Philosophy*. (Belmont: Wadsworth/Thomson Learning, 2002). p. 218.

⁷. Locke distinguished between two kinds of sense perception – perception of external and of internal objects. The former has to do with direct experiential contact with objects from which we derive simple ideas such as coldness, softness, hardness, bitterness, sweetness and so on, while the latter kind of perception is given by psychological occurrences and internalization (that is, when the mind has processed the data of sensation) of external objects from which we derive complex ideas like thinking, believing, sentiency, or the sensation of colour which we observe through an internal sense. See Hans Reichenbach, *The Rise of Scientific Philosophy*. (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1973). p. 78.

⁸. Reichenbach, *The Rise of Scientific Philosophy*. pp. 88-100.

natural rights of mankind.⁹ Among the post-Kantian nineteenth-century movements is German idealism – a philosophical system which started as an attempt to extend Kant's revolutionary project to a far-reaching, logical conclusion that coincides with a cultural phenomenon which advocates the derivation of epistemic and ethical principles from the spontaneity and autonomy of mind and spirit,¹⁰ and emphasizes the restoration of the harmony embedded in personal experience and the recreation of a closely-knit community which contrasts the fragmentation of the person and the growing social divisions¹¹ – exemplified by Hegel. Hegel's systematic philosophy, incorporating a phenomenological dialectical methodology with both ontological and epistemological connotations, purports to “comprehend reality in all its manifestations as a self-representation of reason.”¹² In addition to these is the objectivist notion of morality resultant upon humans' interrelationship within an overwhelming social arrangement which was prudentially entered into in order to, according to Omotade Adegbindin, avert “the fabled Hobbesian state of anarchy, where lives were 'nasty, brutish and short.’”¹³

All these rationalist cum idealist philosophies project reality and/or the universe from, basically, a mental or spiritual paradigm, as dependent upon and directed by ideas, minds, or spirits, with an infinitesimal cognizance or virtually none at all of the individual's existentiality. Particularly, idealism, especially the Kantian transcendental and the Hegelian absolute variants, construe reality or the world from a purely conceptual viewpoint such that both natural and human historical processes, including existing individual persons, find themselves within

⁹. T. Z. Lavine, *From Socrates to Sartre: the philosophic quest*. (London: Bantam Books, 1989). p. 187.

¹⁰. Paul Franks, “German Idealism,” in *The Shorter Routledge Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, ed. Edward Craig (New York: Routledge, 2005). p. 316.

¹¹. Raymond Plant, *Hegel*. London: George Allen and Unwin Ltd, 1973.). pp. 16-17.

¹². Reason, for Hegel, designates that which is “ultimately and eminently real.” For him, “reason is reality, and that alone is truly real which is reasonable.” See Robert Stern and Nicholas Walker, “Hegel, Georg Wilhelm Friedrich (1770-1813)” in *The Shorter Routledge Encyclopedia* ed. Edward Craig...p. 339.

¹³. Omotade Adegbindin, *Ifa in Yoruba Thought System*. (Durham: Carolina Academic Press, 2014). p. 142.

an overwhelming spiritual and ontological mechanism and communality, and exist merely as a component within, or object for or of universal consciousness or spirit. This objectification of the individual human person, and the absorption of his existence within an infallibly infinite force propelled towards an ineluctable teleological progress with little or no input of the individual self, becomes untenable to latter philosophers of phenomenological and existentialist orientations such as Edmund Husserl, Martin Heidegger, Soren Kierkegaard, Jean-Paul Sartre, Friedrich Nietzsche and others. Husserl, in his intuitive phenomenology, adopted the apodictic and absolute foundation of mathematics as Descartes did and postulated a detachment from and suspension of earlier held assumptions, sentiments and prejudices, a disengagement of the mind from the contingently circumscribed natural things. This is with the intent to allow for the individual's conscious engagement and self-transmutation into the perception and discovery of immediate evidence and as such the attainment of pure consciousness of the essences of phenomena as against their mere appearances, with an insistence that all sorts of essences lie within the simple data or phenomena.¹⁴ Post-Husserl existentialist philosophers became dissatisfied with Husserlian phenomenology, as they construed its subtle subject and object polarity and inherent transcendentalism - suspension of the natural standpoint and transition of the ego to phenomenological standpoint¹⁵ - as still neglecting the natural, human existential standpoint, and as effecting the submergence of the individual person within a grand narrative of the universe.

The emerging existentialists commonly rejected such “systematic and schematic thoughts in favour of a more spontaneous mode of expression in order to capture the authentic concerns of concrete existing individuals.”¹⁶ In spite of the fact that existentialism was a reactionary

^{14.} Jitendranath N. Mohanty, “Husserl's Theory of Meaning” in Husserl: Expositions and Appraisals. eds. Frederick A. Elliston and Peter McCormick. (Indiana: University of Notre Dame Press, 1970). p. 29.

^{15.} Kolawole Owolabi, “The Natural Attitude and the Phenomenological Attitude in the Philosophy of Edmund Husserl,” in *Metaphysics, Phenomenology and African Philosophy*. Ed Jim I. Unah. (Lagos: Fadec Publishers, 2004). pp. 286-304.

^{16.} Samuel E. Stumph, *History of Philosophy*. (New York: McGraw Hill Books Co, 1975). p. 32.

philosophy which emphasizes a subjective reaction against the systematic thinking of previous philosophies, it emerged with its own problems and methods as a philosophical movement. With a sense of historical background in Protagoras’¹⁷ *homo mensura* dictum that “man is the measure of all things,”¹⁸ the Socratic imperative of “Man Know thyself,”¹⁹ Pascal's aphoristic questioning of the power of rationalist thoughts and St. Augustine's exhortation to man to self-introspect in his quest for truth,²⁰ the existentialists insist that the specific contents on human reality or values underlying human existence cannot be predetermined or deduced from abstract and general principles apart from the peculiarities of concrete contexts of human actions within the finitude of human existence; that is, on the limits inherent in the possibilities of human choice and human projection into the future. The basic features of the existentialist philosophies consists of the primacy of beingness and the absurdity or meaninglessness of human existence,²¹ facticity and the significance of freedom and the attendance choice²² which implies futuristic projections and risks,²³ fallenness, originality, autonomy/independence, self-consciousness, inter-subjectivity, human pro-activeness within his concrete historical and socio-cultural situations and inter-personal relationships,²⁴ and an inescapable sense of

^{17.} Ibid.

^{18.} William Barrett, *Irrational Man: A Study in Existential Philosophy*. (New York: Double Day Anchor Books Inc, 1962). p. 4.

^{19.} Robert Audi, ed. *The Cambridge Dictionary of Philosophy*. (United Kingdom: Cambridge University Press, 1995). p. 255.

^{20.} Ibid

^{21.} Olatunji A. Oyeshile, *Reconciling the Self with the Other: An Existentialist Perspective*. (Ibadan: Hope Publications, 2006). p. 27.

^{22.} Jean-Paul Sartre aptly captures when he asserts that “Man is nothing else but that which he makes of himself.” See Abraham Kaplan, “Existentialism,” in *The New World of Philosophy*. (London: Collins Clear-Type Press, 1962). p. 120.

^{23.} Among these risks, the most serious is the possibility of “man's descent into inauthenticity or into alienation, his degradation from being a person into becoming a thing.” See N. Abbagnanno, “Existentialism,” in *The New Encyclopedia Britannica*. Vol. 25. ed. K. J. Adler. (U.S.A Encyclopedia Britannica Inc, 1998). p. 611.

^{24.} See David Steward and Algis Mickunas, *Exploring Phenomenology: A Guide to the field and its Literature*. (Chicago: American Library Association, 1974). p. 63.

responsibility in the bid to attain existential meaningfulness and authenticity as against bad faith.²⁵

Conceptually, trajectories of thoughts make up the twentieth-century existentialist philosophy include the notion of the *Lebenswelt* (lived-world) as emphasized in Husserl's later works centering on the common assumptions of human daily experience and the non-systematicities embedded in especially Kierkegaard and Nietzsche's works.²⁶ As such, Nietzsche's existentialist philosophy has a historical foundation.

A Theoretical Analysis of Nietzsche's Radical Perspectivism

The anti-systematicity and optimism of the nineteenth century exposed the formalisms and objectivities of the previous era, especially in the notions of "God, truth, reality, values and human progress."²⁷ Like Kierkegaard, Nietzsche adopted as his task a critique of an era he was dissatisfied with and felt had attained an unprecedented low point. He posited that any impersonal and non-perspectival search for truth is an attempt at metaphysical comfort, the sort of comfort which was once provided by religion. Richard Rorty explains this Nietzschean dissatisfaction as having to do with the notion that "the philosophical tradition that stems from Plato is an attempt to avoid facing up to (existential) contingencies."²⁸ He informs further that "the ability to live with the thought that there was no convergence," for Nietzsche, was "the test of human character."²⁹ This is buttressed by Nietzsche's own statement that "The concept of substance is a consequent of the concept of the subject; not the reverse."³⁰

^{25.} Bad faith, according to Mary Warnock, consists in "pretending to oneself that one is bound by necessity, and has no choices open to one." See Mary Warnock, *Existentialism*. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1970). p. 29.

^{26.} Paul Ricoeur, "Phenomenologie existentielle." *Encyclopedie Francaise*. (Vol.19, No. 10. 1957). pp. 8-10.

^{27.} Stumph, *History of Philosophy*. p. 417.

^{28.} Richard Rorty, *Objectivism, Relativism and Truth*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. 1991). p. 32

^{29.} *ibid*.

^{30.} Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Will to Power*. tr. Walter Kaufmann. (New York, 1967). Par.485

Consequently, especially in the light of the re-emphasis on the centrality of man and the individuality of his existence, Nietzsche construed the universe in terms of man's needs, projections, evaluations and so forth, and not as having a specific, determined position within the order of the totality of things. This shift from the objective to the subjective, from the abstract to the concrete, existing individual was prominent in Nietzsche's philosophy, which was characterized by his attempts to undermine the absolutist/positivist scientism in favour of a discursive/evocative approach, indicating that there are no epistemological or ethical absolutes.

Nietzsche approached the discourse on truth from a position that disregards the notion of a certain, independent, objective and empirically verifiable content of reality as implied in the correspondence theory of truth.³¹ For Nietzsche, since the kind of relationship presupposed between humans and reality by the facts assumed in the correspondence theory of truth does not exist, no evaluation of objectivity can go beyond cultural formations or subjective designations. Since there are no objective facts and *noumena*, everything we encounter is a private, internal experience which gives rise to a personal perspective. Even the sciences only make available to us reality as mediated through a particular perspective, thus functioning merely as a means of an "interpretation and exegesis of the world."³² As such, facts are nothing but mere interpretations. Truth therefore simply refers to the mental operations going on in the psychic processes of each individual. The suggestion here is that it is only by the product of an individual's experience that truth can be understood. Therefore truth is construed respectively by and for individuals. Herein is the exemplification of Nietzsche's radical perspectivism theory.

Nietzsche's anti-positivist standpoint involves a rejection of another presupposition of traditional epistemology about truth - foundationalism. Nietzsche rejects foundationalism on the argument that

^{31.} Jonathan Dancy, *Introduction to Contemporary Epistemology*. (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers Ltd. 2000), 115-116.

^{32.} Maudemarie Clark, 2005. "NIETZSCHE, FRIEDRICH (1844-1900)" in E. Craig ed.opcit. p. 731.

all knowledge and whatever evidence of truth we have are mediated by “concepts, interpretation and theory”³³ such that there is nothing like an apprehension of unmediated facts or superiorization of one belief as a sustainable template for other beliefs. In the same manner, Nietzsche argued that there are no absolute or eternal values, especially those construed in non-natural terms such as assume that anything truly valuable must have a source outside the accessible, empirically verifiable world of nature. He denounces, most especially, the ascetic value ideals which defines and construes the “highest human to be one of self-denial, denial of the natural self, thereby treating natural or earthly existence as devoid of intrinsic value.”³⁴ On the contrary, he posits that each individual must create his own values in relation to his self-conceived and given tasks.³⁵ The values of goodness and/or badness are not to be found in the Kantian categorical imperative nor in the universality of the utilitarians, or any objectivist, formalistic ethic. It is to be found, rather, in the dispositions of the particular character which permits the exercise of the will – such dispositions such as courage, pride, and firmness which, like the Aristotelian virtues, presuppose self-mastery as in the right ordering of the passions.³⁶

Nietzsche posits that moral development, like cognitive activities, requires the ideal of human excellence. This ideal of human excellence manifests a drive to achieve mastery and exert personal power which runs contrary to the common, herd-like mode of doing things. This will to power is exhibited through self-confidence, contempt for trivialities and the ineffectual, a lofty cheerfulness of outlook and a desire always to dominate and never to be bound or obligated.

Pungently, the notion that there are no un-interpreted facts or truths and that the exemplary human being is he who crafts his own identity through self-realization and does so without alluding to anything outside

³³. William Lawhead, *Voyage of Discovery: A Historical Introduction to Philosophy*. (Belmont: Wadsworth Publishers, 2002), 418.

³⁴. Ibid p. 727.

³⁵. Steward and Mickunas, *Exploring Phenomenology*... 68.

³⁶. J. A. K. Thomson, trans. *The Ethics of Aristotle: The Nicomachean Ethics*. (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books Ltd, 1981) and L. J. Munoz, *Virtues: An Inquiry into Moral Values for Our Times*. (Ibadan: Sefer Books Ltd, 1996).

himself underscores Nietzsche's theory of perspectivism. This informs his master/slave dichotomy in moral orientations.³⁷ Beyond this master/slave dichotomy, Nietzsche places great emphasis on the dynamics of revaluation and transcending human facticities and existential predicaments in the sense of exceeding the constrictions and boundaries of our ideological patterns of living, perceiving and especially valuing. This Nietzschean standpoint is informed by the fact that people always adopt perspectives by default (whether consciously or unconsciously) and the perspectives an individual adopts are informed by the circumstances surrounding that individual and the entrenched, underlying values. An interpretation depicts an understanding of reality from a particular perspective and as such, usual of perspectives, relates back to values.

Underscoring the heuristic import of the above is the extrinsic nature of value in Nietzsche's philosophy. The implication of this is that nothing is valuable in itself. Things are valuable in virtue of something else, namely, in virtue of the will to power.³⁸ What has value in the negative sense is that which contradicts our will to power and is thus self-undermining. That which allows us to escape self-contradicting lifestyles and actively fulfill our will to power contains value in the positive sense. Having a sound notion of extrinsic values is thus embedded in Nietzsche's notion of values.

It is instructive to note that in spite of the importance Nietzsche alludes to values, he did not proffer any succinct definition of value. On the contrary, he employed it descriptively, indicating the value something has as against what value is in itself. Nietzsche commonly associates values with the needs of an individual as propelled by physiological components such as drives and desires, which explains how humans get committed to courses of actions which implies a particular lifestyle.³⁹ Value in Nietzsche's conceptualization, however, differs from needs or physiological components as it entails something

^{37.} Lawhead, *Voyage of Discovery*:

^{38.} Frederich Nietzsche, 1968. *The Will to Power*: Trans. Walter Kaufmann and R. J. Hollingdale, ed. Walter Kaufmann. New York: Vintage Books.

^{39.} Ibid.

that matters to the individual or has significance in that individual's evaluative framework – that is, a kind of self-consciousness and forms of concern that transcends physiology. Thus, for Nietzsche, “the standpoint of 'value' is the standpoint of conditions of preservation and enhancement for complex forms of relative life-duration within the flux of becoming.”⁴⁰ What is most expressive here is that a value is a standpoint and, by standpoint, Nietzsche purports the manner by which values structure an individual's interpretation of the world which, in Nietzsche's parlance, constitutes a perspective.

Given that no absolute value exists, in Nietzsche's idiom, the evolution of values traces to humans and must be measured by value-positing perspectives which serves as aids for survival and growth. However, due to the importance of values for human well-being, beliefs in them have overtime become essential so much such that they are misconstrued as being absolute. As such, social institutions enforcing adherence to entrenched and usually inherited values do so basically for self-perpetuation and economies of power, especially as individuals under their influence are purportedly made secure and their life-possibilities are enhanced. Nevertheless, as times unfold, the entrenched and inherited values are deemed as being no longer suitable and their continued enforcement unviable. To insist on continuous allegiance to such values, in spite of the apparent impracticability, would turn what once served advantageous to being disadvantageous. When it gets to this stage, the human person must transcend the valuing perspective, reactivate his creative, value-positing capacities or perspectives and construct new values. This underscores the notion of trans-valuation of values in Nietzsche's theorizing.

Although the psychologism embedded in Nietzsche's theory has subjectivist (the view that known or knowable norms and values are such only to the extent of the prisms or lenses through which they are observed), relativist (the view that all norms and values are of equal validity) and nihilist (the view that there are ultimately no norms or values) undertones, it differs conceptually from them in the sense that

⁴⁰ May Simon, 1999. *Nietzsche's Ethics and his War on 'Morality.'* Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Nietzsche's radical perspectivism transcends differences in beliefs. For instance, it holds that two individuals from different socio-cultural or religious backgrounds may have the same perspectives if they both have shared values. It projects the possibilities of shared perspectives constructed by people in their interactions with one another, and as such evolves fundamental changes and viable alternative beliefs or perspectives to interpret the meaningful elements of their existential, social, moral, religious and cultural lives.

The Imperatives of Nietzsche's Radical Perspectivism for Social Development

The pluralist complexities of contemporary societies presuppose a wide range of normativities with their respective and distinctive existentialities,⁴¹ subjectivisms and historical sensitivities. The choice of a collectively adopted operational normativity is usually problematic in plural societies. This problematic has as its cause perspectival differences among different groups in the society with respect to differing and sometimes parallel conceptualizations of reality and its attendant problems of truth and value.

Nietzsche's theory of radical perspectivism addresses such problematic because of its insistence that truth and value are not absolute, thus allowing for the aggregation of singular, different and possibly parallel viewpoints, thereby negating the possibility of the tyranny of a singular normativity in any contemporary pluralist society. These singular viewpoints illuminate, for example, an idea in seemingly self-contradictory ways. Although perspectivism does not imply any method of inquiry or structural analysis, it can be argued in the aggregation of perspectives, each perspective is subsumable into other perspectives, and adds to the general objective assessment of a proposition under review. However, upon a more critical examination, and with emphasis on the notion of inter-subjectivity inhered in Nietzsche's radical perspectivist theory, these singular viewpoints or perspectives have the capacities to

⁴¹. By existentialities we mean the attendant specific facticities, culturalities, individualities, identities and particularities which underlie the existence and survival of the various peoples who subscribe to different normativities.

reveal different contextualities by which such an idea can be comprehensively evaluated, and truth possibly attained and validated. Hence his notion of truth as:

a mobile army of metaphors, metonyms, and anthromorphisms – in short a sum of human relations, which have been enhanced, transposed, and embellished poetically and rhetorically and which long after use seem firm, canonical and obligatory to a people.⁴²

Against the risk of absolutism or totalitarianism of any sort, Nietzsche's radical perspectivism theory allows for reasoned interlocation (including the possibility of self-criticism) around different normativities and a critical analysis of these normativities towards the conscious engagement and application of reason and tolerance of others' belief systems – a primary condition for the attainment of social development. Social development is here construed as a general improvement or remarkable progress in the nature, quality and quantity of a shared existential standard of people co-habiting in a society engendered by positive mutualisms. It purports that the polycentrism of normativities in pluralist societies and the attendant need to understand their underlying values must engender interaction, mutual critique,⁴³ cooperation, and reciprocal influence among the different normativities in order to allow for conflict resolution and social inclusiveness which are essential for a comprehensive development. Underlying this notion of social development are positive, effective and sustainable existential values which accrue to the society as a whole.⁴⁴ Radical perspectivism therefore behooves on the human person as a conscious and free being to engage other human persons in the society towards arriving at a consensus on norms of action based on a satisfactory mutual

⁴² Friedrich Nietzsche, "On Truth and Lie in an Extra-Moral Sense," in *The Viking Portable Nietzsche*. ed. And trans. Walter Kaufman. 46-47.

⁴³ What Nietzsche called "revaluation of values." See Stumph, *Voyage of Discovery*: 426.

⁴⁴ T. E. Weisskopf, "Toward a Socialism for the Future, in the Wake of the Demise of the Socialism of the Past." *Review of Radical Political Economics*. (Vol. 24, Nos 3&4. 2012), 1-28.

understanding of the meaning and purpose underlying different normativities. It thus evokes a cultural pluralism where we have a mosaic of normativities with some shared meanings and equal validation, including social control and decision-making powers especially with respect to linguistic, ethnic, racial, religious or political affiliations, without any particular group alluding to any sort of absolutism or totalitarianism. This would affirm the worth and dignity of each perspective, the authenticity of the individual postulating the ideas underlying the perspective, and the aggregation of shared values and norms suitable for social development.

The above underscores the imperativeness of human peculiarities and perspectives in the attainment of inter-subjective agreement, solidarity, democratic ethos and politics, socio-cultural and political progress in contemporary pluralist societies. It enshrines freedom and openness, and the elasticity of listening to outsiders or others whose existential conditions, ideological perspectives, and moral, religious, cultural and political orientations differs from ours. It instills a sense of membership of the human community in everyone and one's obligations to other humans as well as to oneself with regards to becoming who one wants to become.

Conclusion

Our thematic concern in this essay has largely been devoted to Friedrich Nietzsche's theory of radical perspectivism as it pertains to the meaning of values and their significance to human existence, and as a conceptual and theoretical template for a comprehensive development in the contemporary plural society. This work does not rule out the risks or gainsay the subjectivist or relativist cum nihilistic inclinations of Nietzsche's radical perspectivism, nor even the Cartesian solipsism problematic. Our emphasis has rather and indeed been on how Nietzsche's radical perspectivism can be used to ameliorate opposing existential paradigms and developmental trajectories in a plural society.

Nietzsche's theory of radical perspectivism, as engaging and discursive as it may be, warrants a predication upon critical analysis and interpretation through the prism of the existentialists' notion of inter-

subjectivity as embedded therein. Remarkably, also, the notion of inter-subjectivity becomes meaningful only within a context of the inter-human where there is mutual relationship engendered by the necessity of considering the other (whether an individual or a group) as a member in a supposedly organized and structured social relationship which is continuously in the quest for a comprehensive development. However, values, intrinsically designed to play significant roles in human's goal of individual and collective survival, and presupposing and forming human characters, modes of conduct and as determinants of sense of judgment in relation to the idea of the good and the bad, the right and the wrong, the desirable and the undesirable, vary according to perspectival differences.

Thus, Nietzsche's theory of radical perspectivism, employing the inherent notion of inter-subjectivity as a discursive framework, focuses on human values as constructs of truth and other existential normativities. It enshrines, beyond the notion of human beings as centrifugalized networks of beliefs and perspectives determined by historical and existential circumstances and ideological constructs, the possibility of frames of references and conceptual overlaps⁴⁵ in such a manner that allows for the possibility of profitable deliberations and mutual agreements, thus making universal participation in the social constructs and direction essential and obligatory. Its arguments that the appreciation of values on the basis of acquired experience and viewpoints or perspectives, a critical and inter-perspectival evaluation and judgment of phenomena, and the attendant re-valuation or transvaluation of values into aggregate values and normativities both on the individual and the collective within the society, is germane for the much-needed and much-sought social, comprehensive development in contemporary plural societies.

⁴⁵ It is instructive we do not stretch this possibility beyond the specter of "untranslatable languages;" as, according to Donald Davidson, we would not recognize other organisms as actual or potential language users – or, therefore, as persons – unless there were enough overlap in belief and desire to make translation possible. The point is merely that efficient and frequent communication is only a necessary, not a sufficient, condition of agreement. See Donald Davidson, "On the Very Idea of Conceptual Scheme," *Proceedings of American Philosophical Association*. (Vol.17, No.11. 1974), 231.

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