

Major Influences on Friedrich Nietzsche's Philosophy

ThankGod Bekweri Amadi

Department of Philosophy, Faculty of Humanities
University of Port Harcourt, Port Harcourt, Rivers State, Nigeria
thankgod.amadi@uniport.edu.ng

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Peter Zabbeh Alawa, Ph.D.

Department of Philosophy, Faculty of Humanities
University of Port Harcourt, Port Harcourt, Rivers State, Nigeria
peteralawa@yahoo.com

ABSTRACT

Every philosophy, irrespective its originality, is a product of the historical, cultural, religious, political and philosophical background and heritage of its proponent(s). Hence, this paper explores some key philosophical influences on Friedrich Nietzsche such as those of Arthur Schopenhauer, Charles Darwin, and Richard Wagner. Others are Friedrich Ritschl, Otto Jahn, Fyodor Dostoevsky and Julius Bahnsen. It is our considered view that the philosophies of the above philosophers formed the building block for Nietzsche's philosophy. This paper demonstrates that Nietzsche's doctrine or metaphysics of the will was conceived from the Schopenhauerian philosophy of The World as Will and Representation. Julius Bahnsen's analysis served as the gateway to Nietzsche's appreciation and calibration of Schopenhauer's dual aspect theory of the will. On Wagner's footprint, it strongly argues that Nietzsche's artistic call was informed by his friendship with Wagner. His 'death of God' owes partly to his Darwinian evolutionary consciousness and partly to his Wagnerian art-creationist inclination, not forgetting his Dionysian religio-cultural background and his reading and appreciation of Dostoevsky's works. Ritschl and Jahn were teachers of Nietzsche who participated in his formative years. We found in Ritschl the hen that incubated Nietzsche's style of writing and in Jahn the cock that developed Nietzsche's critical attitude. However, Nietzsche's originality is not in doubt, as he transformed all his experiences and existential engagements into an existential philosophy now christened in his name. We adopt the content-cum-textual analytic method.

Keywords: Nietzsche, Influence, Will, God, Dionysian, and Originality.

Introduction

Scholarship, to a very large degree, is the ability to influence society or individuals towards a particular direction. It is a show of mental leadership, that is, an attempt to lead the rest of society to accept one's thought pattern or one's position on a

particular subject matter. It can also be a form of mental inculturation or, arguably, religious indoctrination. Most times, it is a conscious activity, at other times, it is subconscious. That is to say that most times the scholar has the intentionality (motive) to influence or indoctrinate, while at other times, he or she does not have such intention to enchant but many naturally fall under the spell of his or her logic, faith or instrumentality of presentation. There is mentorship in scholarship. By mentorship is implied the philosophic-scientific process of nurturing and growing a mind. This process involves making such mind sip from the mentor's mind in order to enrich itself. In other words, it is a conscious attempt at teaching pupils to mind the mentor's mind. However, the mentee also has a responsibility to resist some of the mentor's as well as other's input in the minding process. That is, the mentee should attempt to resist or refuse to be influenced by some others. The foregoing notwithstanding, it is difficult to exist without being influenced by co-existing or pre-existent entities. The history of philosophy is a history of mentors and mentees as Socrates mentored Plato in the art of philosophizing and Plato in turn mentored Aristotle. In effect, it is now claimed that all philosophies are footnotes to Plato and Aristotle. Jacques Derrida, for instance, reminds us to read them again, again and again (Gaston, p vii). Although there were moments of mentorship which were moments of transition from one philosophical period to another, the previous ideas still found their way into the new epochs. It follows that although new people and ideas are born into the world, old people and ideas do not die, but transit into the new epoch.

This work aims at tracing the philosophical steps and ideas of Friedrich Nietzsche in some of his friends (his mentors). We shall focus more on the birthing of the idea of the death of God and some closely related themes, such as the will, superman and overman, nihilism, etc. We shall spotlight and attempt to create some nexus between the thoughts of Nietzsche and those of scholars like Arthur Schopenhauer, Richard Wagner, Charles Darwin, Friedrich Ritschl, Otto Jahn, Fyodor Dostoevsky, and Julius Bahnsen.

Major Influences on Nietzsche

Arthur Schopenhauer

It is important that we begin this note of historical mind-binding remembrance between Arthur Schopenhauer and Friedrich Nietzsche by stating a peripheral preface of note that both scholars are German by origin. This is much less imperative than the truism that Nietzsche drank the full liters of wisdom which he milked from his reading of Schopenhauer's *The World as Will and Representation* (*Die Welt als Wille und Vorstellung*). As Grace Neal Dolson has noted in her article entitled "The Influence of Schopenhauer Upon Friedrich Nietzsche," Nietzsche started to proselytize with the full ardour and candour of a newly made convert after reading the book (p. 241). She adds that Nietzsche succeeded in winning over his friends to believe in the Schopenhauerian school. Thus, if any was in trouble, they suggested appropriate passages from Schopenhauer's work from where the solution came. In content, how does Schopenhauer implant in Nietzsche? Recall that Schopenhauer had argued "But he is still in his childhood

who can think that superhuman beings have ever given our race information about the aim of its existence or that of the world. There are no other revelations than the thoughts of the wise..." (Schopenhauer, *Essays*, 180-181).

It is clear enough to us that Nietzsche's conceptualization of the superman and overman has its root, or at least its trunk, in Schopenhauer's idealization of the superhuman being, even though Schopenhauer was referring to a deified being. Nietzsche, rather, eliminated the religious elements in Schopenhauer's conceptualization and projected the human being beyond the ephemeral realm into the realm of the supersensible. Of note also, is the fact that Schopenhauer had less or no regard for a supernatural deity; especially such as deified by the Christian, Muslim and Buddhist, except for his admiration of the pessimistic spirits of Buddhist doctrines which formed the basis of the writings of Nietzsche. Benjamin A. Elman in his article "Nietzsche and Buddhism" claims that Schopenhauer's consciousness and admiration of the Buddhist Vedantic and pessimistic philosophies predate his acquaintance with Buddhism (p. 676). However, Nietzsche, writing as a mature philosopher, admitted the pessimism of Schopenhauer and yet, rejected Buddhism claiming that Schopenhauer and Buddha were under the "spell and delusion of morality" (Elman, p.678). Elman denies that Nietzsche consciously borrowed any Buddhist principle (p. 685). Schopenhauer shows so much disdain for priests the same way Nietzsche later did in his work *The Will to Power*. In the words of Schopenhauer:

The fundamental, secret and primal piece of astuteness of all priests, everywhere and at all times, whether Brahmin or Mohammedan or Buddhist or Christian, is as follows. They have recognized and grasped the enormous strength and the ineradicability of the metaphysical need of man: they then pretend to possess the means of satisfying it, in that the solution to the great enigma has, by extraordinary channels, been directly communicated to them. Once they have persuaded men of the truth of this, they can lead and dominate them to their heart's content (Schopenhauer, *Essay*, p. 181).

Steven Michels, writing on Schopenhauer's will, puts it thus: "the world as will and idea is a mirror which reflects the will. In this mirror the will recognizes itself in ascending grades of distinctness and completeness" (p. 35). Nietzsche, under the overdose of Schopenhauer's opium, writes "...And just as the priesthood had falsified the entire history of Israel, so again the attempt was here made to forge the history of mankind in general, so that Christianity might appear to be its most cardinal event" (*Will*, p.110). However, in his mature state, he repudiates Schopenhauer for attempting to accord pity (which in his thinking is a vice) a noble place in his ethical system. "That virtue of which Schopenhauer still taught that it is the supreme, the only virtue, and the basis of all virtues – precisely pity I cognized as more dangerous than any vice" (Nietzsche, *Will*, p. 24). Again, in our thinking, Nietzsche developed his idea of the will to power from Schopenhauer's idea of the will to live. Recall that Schopenhauer had argued against Kantian thing-in-itself as having degenerated in Kant's own hand. For him, the will, akin to Spinoza's "sufficient reason" is that from which we abstract. "This

will alone constitute the other aspect of the world, for this world is, on the one side, entirely representation, just as, on the other, it is entirely will” (Schopenhauer, Vol.1, p. 4). Kant was, therefore, wrong in talking of the thing-in-itself outside the world as representation and the world as will. He went further to talk about the objectification of the will which literally translates to the will as representation or the will as an object (Schopenhauer, Vol.1, p. 30). But his discussions on the will-to-live were, again, in strict connection to the Christian teachings on suffering, sin and eternal death. As he puts it:

Considering not the individuals according to the principle of sufficient reason, but the idea of man in its unity, the Christian teaching symbolizes nature, the affirmation of the will-to-live in Adam. His sin bequeathed to us, in other words, our unity with him in the idea, which manifests itself in time through the bond of generation, causes us all to partake of suffering and eternal death (Schopenhauer, Vol. 1, p. 405).

According to Schopenhauer, in the Christian pedagogical canons of truth and virtue, the doctrine of original sin affirms the will-to-live while salvation negates the will-to-live. This, according to him, is why we participate in the misery of Adam. In modern-day Christianity, “we should interpret Jesus Christ always in the universal scale, as the symbol or personification of the denial of the will-to-live” (Schopenhauer, Vol. 1, p. 405). Schopenhauer was a traditional philosopher, a transcendental idealist of the Kantian sort. But Nietzsche adopted his concept of the will and transposed it into a more radical concept as the affirmation of life rather than the Schopenhauerian negation of life. Accordingly, he maintains that “it is worth noting that this affirmation does not contain the meaning of value judgement, nor are they proposed based on the starting point of a binary opposition” (Xie, p. 56). Nietzsche, unlike Schopenhauer, “professes that the will is not known absolutely nor can it be. The act of willing is not even a single entity; it is a unity only as a word” (Michels, p. 36). For Nietzsche, therefore, life as will to power necessarily presents itself in the struggle for existence often based on violence. Hence, it manifests its individualism often as egoism of the highest order (Cunningham, p. 482). Nietzsche himself tells us in his *Untimely Meditation*, particularly in Chapter Three which he subtitled “Schopenhauer as Educator,” of his unfruitful search for a true philosopher except for his discovery of Schopenhauer:

It was thus truly roving through wishes to imagine I might discover a true philosopher as an educator who could raise me above my insufficiencies insofar as these originated in the age and teach me again to be simple and honest in thought and life, that is to say to be untimely, that word understood in the profoundest sense; for men have now become so complex and many-sided they are bound to become dishonest whenever they speak at all, make assertions and try to act in accordance with them. It was in this condition of need, distress and desire that I came to know Schopenhauer (Nietzsche, *Untimely*, p.133).

Nietzsche goes on to say:

I am one of those readers of Schopenhauer who when they have read one page of him know for certain they will go on to read all the pages and will pay heed to every word he ever said. I trusted him at once and my trust is the same now as it was nine years ago. Though this is a foolish and immodest way of putting it, I understand him as though it were for me, he had written (*Untimely*, p. 133).

The forgoing citation lends credence to an unfathomable level of influence by Schopenhauer on Nietzsche. Little wonder Nietzsche domesticated the word will-to-live in Schopenhauer's philosophy as the will to power in his own philosophy. Jiajia Xie was right in his interpretation of the Schopenhauerian and Nietzschean concepts of will thus: "we refer to Schopenhauer's life will as "the will to live". While Nietzsche's theory is "the will to power", and we can see the difference between them only in matter of words" (p. 55). We said he is right but not very correct because as we have shown above the concept of will in Schopenhauer has a negative application, while in Nietzsche it is an affirmation of the will to live. What we mean by this is that in Schopenhauer's philosophy, the will expresses a deeper pain and suffering of existence, it is the will to commit suicide. He believes that man is essentially a being born to suffer – existentialism. On the other hand, in Nietzsche's philosophy, the will becomes the natural impulse for survival, the impulse to become the superman.

Nietzsche believes that Schopenhauer bequeathed to him three basic tenets and three dangers of existence. Honesty, cheerfulness and steadfastness are critical values derivable from Schopenhauer's philosophy, even though he (Nietzsche) does not believe in fixed values. For Nietzsche, Schopenhauer "is honest because he speaks and writes to himself and for himself, cheerful because he has conquered the hardest task by thinking, and steadfast because he has to be" (Nietzsche, *Untimely* p. 136). These, according to Nietzsche, are qualities Schopenhauer holds in common with Montaigne. Nietzsche then must build on the strengths and ignore the dangers which are isolation, melancholy (despair of truth) and agony. Nietzsche, therefore, breaks away from Schopenhauer first in rejecting his transcendental idealism. That is, he rejected traditional philosophy in its holistic form. However, he borrowed the idea of pessimism from Schopenhauer – a pessimism that led him to declare the death of God and focus on the human all too human. Hence, Nietzsche suggests to us that Schopenhauer laid the foundation for his philosophy of human, all too human. According to Nietzsche:

That Schopenhauer can offer us a model is certain, all these scars and blemishes notwithstanding. One might say, indeed, that that in his nature which was imperfect and all too human brings us closer to him in a human sense, for it lets us see him as a fellow sufferer and not only in the remote heights of a genius (*Untimely*, p. 143, emphasis mine).

In almost every paragraph of his "Schopenhauer as Educator," Nietzsche reminds us of the Schopenhauerian foundation of his philosophy. He tells us that he was able to educate himself against his age simply because of his leaning on the Schopenhauerian pessimistic principle of knowing (p.146). What is this pessimism of knowing, other than

the freedom and independence to assess issues with the objectivity of a superman? Dolson argues that what appears to have attracted Nietzsche to Schopenhauer was a radical independence of tradition and social views, hence he glorified Schopenhauer's philosophical works for being free from external influences (p. 249) – the objectivity of a Zarathustra that has isolated himself from the appearances of Kantian philosophy. It is the quest for this philosophy of freedom that we pursue here that led Nietzsche to inaugurate a philosophy of the death, obituary and burial of God. Evidently, the chief bond between Schopenhauer and Nietzsche was the full intellectual carriage and surge towards individualism. Eike Brock quotes Nietzsche as saying in his *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* that “one repays a teacher badly if one remains a pupil forever” (p.190). According to Brock, this literarily explains Nietzsche's departure from continuous Schopenhauerian tutelage and attainment of dependence. This notwithstanding, Nietzsche's philosophy is patterned after and tailored towards the Schopenhauerian tragic or suffering philosophy of the world. Brock also cites a passage from Nietzsche which proves the Schopenhauerian foundation of the death of God in Nietzsche. According to Brock, “Nietzsche describes becoming with dramatic words, which could also have come from the pen of Schopenhauer: every moment devours the preceding, every birth is the death of countless beings, procreation life and murder are one” (p. 198). Drawing from this, we can say that the birth of tragedy was the death of God, the birth of existentialism was the death of traditional philosophy which also denotes the death of God.

Charles Darwin

Nietzsche's philosophy also could be said to have been formed, delivered and nurtured under the Darwinian evolutionary soil. Nietzsche wrote at a time when Darwinian evolution theory was gathering momentum among the intelligentsia. Charles Darwin and Alfred Russell Wallace, in their work *On the Origin of Species*, had argued for an evolutionary account of the origin of species or entities, even though Wallace had refused to own it after he received some attacks from the Christian community. This account negated the Judeo-Christian creationist account of the origin of species according to which God is the creator of every entity and in him we live and have our being. Darwin rather believes in evolution by natural selection. He maintains that mental attributes of our home-grown animals vary, and that these variations are matters of inheritance. He also shows that instincts differ in a state of nature (Darwin, p.220). According to him, the fact that instincts are of the apex importance to each animal explains the slight modifications in natural selection (Darwin, p.220). Darwin believes that natural selection or the evolution theory in general has to do with the natural state of the struggles for existence. He uses the phrase “struggle for existence” “in a large and metaphorical sense, including dependence of one being on another, and including (which is more important) not only the life of the individual, but success in leaving progeny” (Darwin, p. 64). Nietzsche shows forth his Darwinian intellectual lineage and Affinity in his book, *The Will To Power* when he wrote:

“Useful” in the sense of Darwinist biology means: proved advantageous in the struggle with others. But it seems to me that the feeling of increase, the feeling of becoming stronger, is itself, quite apart from any usefulness in the struggle, the real progress: only from this feeling does there arise the will to struggle (p.344).

In his main work on human evolution, *The Descent of Man* (1871, he argued that religion (like language and morality) probably first arose as a by-product of the development of human mind” (Dalston, p. 475). Lucky O. Akaruese, in his inaugural lecture *But for Philosophy, What is Man?*, alarms us with the implication of this Darwinian descent of man when he argues that “No doubt, Darwinian evolutionism brings to focus (among others) the fact that human of today is inevitable product of evolutionary histories and occurrences that span over 5 million years ago” (p. 15). Nietzsche particularly borrows this idea when he argues that God is a psychological product of man. A product of man’s fear and trembling who projected himself as God unto man his maker. However, some scholars agree with Darwin on this subject, even though with slight modifications of his view. Franz M. Wuketits in an article titled “Charles Darwin and Modern Moral Philosophy” admits that the origin of man is brilliantly adumbrated by Darwin, but goes further to detail the epistemological and ethical principles for any evolutionary account of speciesism (p. 396). Michael Behe and his group attempted to interpret Darwin’s natural selection or black box as the human cell. According to them, this black box means an irreducible mystery. “Behe argues that the data of biochemistry within the cell leads to a belief in molecular machinery which is irreducibly complex” (Wilkinson and Campbell, p. 211). This irreducible complex is the human cell. Indeed, they were reacting to Darwin and Wallace’s claim thus: “if it could be demonstrated that any complex organ existed, which could not possibly have been formed by numerous, successive, slight modifications, my theory would absolutely break down. But I can find no such case” (Wilkinson and Campbell, p. 211). This black box of Behe is, therefore, not in the strictest sense, a defence of Darwin’s natural selection but somewhat an attempt at falsifying Darwin’s theory even within the logic of natural selection.

However, some others have serious reservations about admitting the evolution theory in its original state because of its historical circle juxtaposed with the life circle of individual human beings who study it, as Lawrence M. Krauss of the Arizona State University hinted in a dialogue with Richard Dawkins of the University of Oxford. The point remains, however, that despite these reservations, Darwinian evolution has provided a fertile ground for the germination of atheistic philosophies such as the death of God in Nietzsche. Social and creative evolutionists have interpreted Darwin’s biological evolution theory as the “general doctrine of the gradual appearance of new forms through variation; the struggle of super-abundant forms; the elimination of those poorly suited; and the survival of those better fitted to a given environment; the maintenance of racial efficiency only by incessant struggles and ruthless elimination” (Ryan, ed. p. 111). According to Denis O. Lamoureux who stretched the debate between the evolutionist and the creationist beyond the established bounds:

The qualifying word in this category is the adjective evolutionary, indicating simply the method through which the lord made the cosmos and living organisms. This view of origins is often referred to as theistic evolution. However, such a word arrangement places the process of evolution as the primary term, and makes the creator secondary as merely a qualifying adjective (p.29).

Henri Bergson, in particular, thinks that Darwin had a lacuna by admitting finality in his evolution theory. He rather talks of creative evolution by which he denies the notion of a beginning and an end to evolution. “The dual refusal of Spencer’s Darwinism and of traditional conception of will nevertheless lead Nietzsche and Bergson to quite different conclusions...Nevertheless, Nietzsche’s refusal is not a refusal of becoming. Rather, it is more a challenge to the notion of finality” (Francois and Lapidus, p. 102). It is deducible from the foregoing citations that the contention and incessant struggles between Judeo-Christian creationism and idea of evolutionism – their variations, and struggles for survival – saw the elimination of the idea of the death of God as we see it in Nietzsche’s philosophy. Hence, it was a natural struggle between the idea of the divine God, here representing the whole cluster class of divine or theological determinism, and human beings (supermen) representing the other cluster class of freewill. Essentially, we are convinced that Charles Darwin’s evolutionary philosophy created an elbow room for the idea of the death of God in Nietzsche to thrive. Hence, Nietzsche simply cashed in on this Darwinian struggle for existence through natural selection to demonstrate the death of God. No wonder he talks of the superman, as that being that survived this struggle. The idea of God (existence of God) died in Nietzsche’s philosophy because ab initio, it was not naturally suited and rationally grounded to survive the onslaughts and gravitational forces that confronted it. How can we sustain the idea of God that is not grounded in logic or nature?

Richard Wagner

Another very close ally and unwavering influence on Friedrich Nietzsche was Richard Wagner. His footprints on Nietzsche are so obvious to the extent that Nietzsche devoted some sections of his work, as we find in *The Birth of Tragedy*, *Untimely Meditations* and *The Case of Wagner*, to discuss his affinity with Wagner. Writing his editorial note to the English translation of the single-volume publication of *The Birth of Tragedy* and *The Case of Wagner*, Walter Kaufmann tells us that *The Birth of Tragedy* which apparently is Nietzsche’s first book, ends with a long panegyric on the rebirth of tragedy in Wagner’s Operas (Nietzsche, *Birth* and *Case* p. vii). Seriously too, Nietzsche eulogized Wagner’s music in the same fashion that he praised Dionysian music and arts. He was full of praise for Wagner’s Operas to the point that he loved the city of Bayreuth that hosted Wagner’s Museum. Nietzsche tells us that, for Wagner, the word ‘Bayreuth’ signifies one of the most shattering defeats. But for him, it signifies “the morning consecration on the day of battle” (Nietzsche, *Untimely*, p. 212). However, this praise singing could not last for life as Nietzsche later strongly criticized Wager, particularly for his exaltation of nihilistic tendencies such as pity and fleshless love. In the words of Will

Durant, referring to Nietzsche's reaction to one of Wagner's operas, "It was to be an exaltation of Christianity, pity, and fleshless love, and a world redeemed by a fool, the fool in Christ. Nietzsche turned away without a word, and never spoke to Wagner thereafter" (p. 309). Indeed, if age difference is considered a barrier in friendship, then, Nietzsche and Wagner cannot claim to be friends since Wagner is older than Nietzsche by about thirty-one (31) years. Available records show that Wagner was the friend of Nietzsche's father. Elizabeth Foerster-Nietzsche (Nietzsche's sister) posits that Nietzsche's admiration of Wagner began earlier than some other reports claim. According to her, Nietzsche's statement in *Ecce Homo* that "from the moment a piano edition of *Tristan and Isolde* appeared (my compliments, Herr von Bulow), I became a Wagnerite" deserves a modification. In her view, it began as early as 1860 when Nietzsche together with Wilhelm Pinder and Gustav Krug started a society they called "Germania" the elementary goal of which was to acquire true knowledge of the arts and sciences. Hence, they fell in love with Wagner's artistic works (Foerster-Nietzsche, p. 467). Eventually, Nietzsche met Wagner for the first time in Leipzig. This, according to Elizabeth, he describes in a letter written to Rohde, in November 9, 1868 (p. 469).

However, some other accounts have it that Nietzsche and Wagner met for the first time when Wagner was fifty-five years and Nietzsche was twenty-four. They met at Switzerland when Nietzsche was appointed to the chair of classical philology at Basel. Then Wagner was living in Switzerland. For Wagner, it was nice to have a brilliant professor such as Nietzsche as an ally, hence after reading *The Birth of Tragedy*, he complimented Nietzsche thus: "I have never yet read anything more beautiful than your book". According to Walter Kaufmann, who translated the book, what Wagner "liked best was the lengthy last part with its effusive appreciation" and praises poured on him. Wagner was also thrilled by the artistic mannerism with which Nietzsche stylistically presented his arguments (Nietzsche, *Birth and Case* p.146). Drawing from this point, we can argue sustainably here as our first point on Wagner's influence on Nietzsche that Nietzsche's disjointed stylistic mannerism owes more to his Wagnerian inclination and discipleship. This does not mean that Nietzsche never possessed the Cartesian innatism and Aristotelian potency for this Feyerabendian anarchism. But there are writeups that prove a Wagnerian footprint in this direction. But we must hold our peace on this point for now since it is not proper to make trouble in the morning. We think it may not be proper to start with the negative points.

Certainly, one thing that is obvious is the fact that Nietzsche's natural inclination and attraction to art and tragedy owe partly to his relationship with Wagner and partly to the German cultural, artistic, and Dionysian-cum-Apollonian religious milieu. He tells us that Under the charm of the Dionysian gods the union between man and man is re-enacted and nature which hitherto is hostile to man and subjugated celebrates this reunion (Nietzsche, *Birth*, p. 37). Nietzsche could not veil his takeaways from German Dionysian artistic-cum-religious culture and his own Wagnerite disposition, when he penned down the following lines:

In song and in dance man expresses himself as a member of a higher community; he has gotten how to walk and speak and is on the way toward flying into the air, dancing. His very gestures express enchantment. Just as animals now talk, and the earth yields milk and honey, supernatural sounds emanate from him, too: he feels himself a god, he himself now walks about enchanted, in ecstasy, like the gods he saw walking in his dreams. He is no longer an artist, he has become a work of art... (Nietzsche, *Birth and Case*, p. 37).

We also find in Nietzsche's *Untimely Meditations* some passages which suggest to us that Nietzsche's disbelief in theistic entities owes partly to his association with Wagner. For instance, Nietzsche writes: "he seems to have abandoned any general hopes and to have lived from day to day; and thus, he eluded despair, but at the price of abandoning belief" (Nietzsche, *Untimely*, p.204). What emerges, when the two preceding citations are taken together, is the fact that Nietzsche's negation of the God-thesis owes more to his association with Richard Wagner. God became an artistic creation of man as we find in the penultimate citation as replicated in the major works of Nietzsche. Again, Nietzsche's individualism and conception of the superman is submerged in Wagner's artistic conception of the individual as a creative spirit. The individual must be consecrated to something higher than himself – that is the meaning of tragedy; he must be free of the terrible anxiety which death and time evoke in the individual:" (Nietzsche, *Untimely*, p.213). In fact, Wagner, whom Nietzsche seriously followed, later became a victim of his own creation, as Nietzsche was and is still considered the most hostile of the critics of *Parsifal*. Nietzsche excoriated Wagner's *Parsifal* for its exaltation of nihilistic tendencies such as pity and fleshless love. He considers Wagner as a decadent writer to the extent that he was compassionate and pitiful. In essence, he accuses Wagner of promoting the mentor – Schopenhauer's and his Buddhists religion (Nelson, p. 29).

Back to the point on methodology or style of presentation. We had earlier used the phrase "disjointed style" of presentation to describe Nietzsche's method, but our reading of Mark Berry's paper "The Positive Influence of Wagner upon Nietzsche" has slightly altered our perspective. This is to the extent that we no longer see Nietzsche's style of presentation as negative, hence, the withdrawal of the word "disjointed". According to Berry,

It would be an understatement to say that Nietzsche is not a systematic thinker in the conventional sense. It is something of a rarity amongst philosophers to find such a mélange of philology, poetry, invective, aphorisms, excursions into the history of ideas and so on. This we can be sure is intentionally so; Nietzsche is not trying to be a latter-day Kant. Wagner represents a more difficult case. His method is not Socratic... (p.12 emphasis mine).

We draw from the emphasized portion of the foregoing citation to corroborate our point that Nietzsche's method of writing was modelled after that of Richard Wagner, even though Berry laboured, and successfully too, to convince us to see the positives of this method. "Wagner, however, is not really a systematic thinker; his method is far more

agglomerative than this. Ideas and influences come to overlap each other in a considerably less sophisticated fashion, somewhat akin to a rudimentary geological overlay” (Berry, p. 12). It is important to note also that Nietzsche himself is aware of the difficulties associated with apprehending his aphoristic style, so much so that he wrote in *The Genealogy of Morals* “the aphoristic form may present a stumbling block...” (p.157).

Other Influences: Friedrich Ritschl, Otto Jahn, Fyodor Dostoevsky and Julius Bahnsen

Apart from those discussed above, there are quite some other significant influences on Friedrich Nietzsche. Indeed, as Anthony Jensen has observed in his paper “Friedrich Ritschl, Otto Jahn, Friedrich Nietzsche,” Friedrich Ritschl and Otto Jahn have often received notes of mention whenever a biographical sketch on Nietzsche is being considered. However, the actual contents of their contributions towards the embryonic formative years of Nietzsche’s philosophy have not been given due attention. Jensen, therefore, laboured to demonstrate their individual and collective influences on Nietzsche as his teachers. According to Jensen, that Nietzsche chose to join Ritschl at the University of Leipzig rather than stay with Jahn in the University of Bonn harbours great biological significance (Jensen, p. 529). Jensen further demonstrates a methodological similitude between Nietzsche and his teachers Ritschl and Jahn. In his words, “Nietzsche would have been made familiar with both Jahn and Ritschl and their methodological tendencies during his preparatory schooling at the famous Schulpforta... Schulpforta inculcated both a love of classical antiquity and a rigorous training in critical philology that would have been consistent with the pedagogical aims at both Bonn and Leipzig” (p.530).

Our deduction from this is that Nietzsche’s dry methodological tendency not only owes to his Wagnerite disposition, as earlier enunciated in this paper, but also to his Ritschl-Jahn dry methodological incubation. “While Ritschl’s philological practices were indeed dry critical analysis, they must be considered in the context of these cultural ideals. Ritschl aimed at complete human education, something to which Nietzsche would have been very attracted” (p. 535). Recall that we have shown that Nietzsche’s philosophy develops from the German cultural and religious ideals of Dionysius and Apollo. So, it is obvious that Nietzsche’s fondness for a philosophy of culture was not a mere coincidence but a seed planted in him by his teacher Ritschl. Through Jensen, we find the nexus between Wagner and Nietzsche. “Through Ritschl Nietzsche was invited to play Wagner’s *Meisterlied* for his wife” (Jensen, p 540). In essence, it was in the area of music that Ritschl had his second impact on Nietzsche. He also contributed, in some measure, to the love that Nietzsche had for Wagner’s music. Nietzsche himself was so aware of the impact of Ritschl on him that he had to write a letter of gratitude to him in January of 1876. “I stand to you and your most honorable wife as always, in the same love and thankfulness even when I remain silent” (Jensen, p.544).

Unlike Ritschl who almost imbibed the full dramatic contents of Wagner’s music and artistic culture, Jahn was more of a critic of Wagner. As a result, he developed in Nietzsche a critical consciousness towards arts in particular and, by extension, life in

general. It is this philosophical attitude that Nietzsche returned to Jahn in a form of *argumentum ad hominem ad tuquoque* when he wrote his 1871 *Einleitung in da Studium der klassischen* (Jensen, p. 542). Nietzsche even after his onslaught on Jahn's philology admired and adopted an aspect which helped him to develop his existential philosophy. In sum, it is commonsensical to think a link between teacher and pupil as in the case of Ritschl, Jahn, and Nietzsche. But beyond the idea of this natural nexus between teacher and pupil are the traces of the closed philological methodology of Ritschl and Jahn in Nietzsche's philosophy.

The influence of Dostoevsky on Nietzsche is indeed, another remarkable feature that defines Nietzsche's philosophy. Dostoevsky, first, is a literary icon and prose writer. His influence on Nietzsche could be seen in some critical philosophical works of Nietzsche such as *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* and *Daybreak*. For Dostoevsky, like in the case of many philosophers of religion, the fundamental problem with the Christian theistic conception of God is the internal contradictions inherent and manifest in a God who loves mankind and yet permits or allows suffering (evil). His sceptical disposition towards the Christian conception of God was expressed in *Ivan Karamazov* and *The Brothers Karamazov* where he argues "it's not God I don't accept, understand this, I do not accept the world that he created, this world of God and cannot agree with it" (Kiskaddon, p.4). In 1878, Dostoevsky wrote to N. L. Ozmidov asking him to assume that God does not exist and that the soul is not immortal and then ask the question "why should I live righteously and do good deeds if I am to die entirely on earth?" Dostoevsky, as Kiskaddon Elissa captures, developed a superman theory which was initially established in Raskolnikov from *Crime and Punishment*. This theory of superman develops from denial of the existence of God. From the foregoing, we can see that Nietzsche's concept of the superman predates Nietzsche's philosophy and is rooted in Dostoevsky's philosophy. It means that in trying to doubt the existence of God, human beings assert their own existence, not just as beings but as Gods unto themselves. Just as Rene Descartes doubted the existence of entities and through it realized the existence of the Cogito, so, also Dostoevsky's doubts helped to establish the strong man who became God unto himself. Again, "Nietzsche's late 1886 preface to the second edition of *Daybreak* can be stipulated as the demarcation for Nietzsche's pre-Dostoevskian and Dostoevskian period" (Luft and Stenberg, p. 442).

Eric V. D. Luft, and Douglas G. Stenberg further argue that even though Nietzsche encountered Fyodor Dostoevsky for only about two years, his marks of influence are way too much for Nietzsche himself to recognize. Even though they cautioned us to be careful in attributing his contributions to derivations from other scholars, they equally argue that Nietzsche borrowed a few psychological concepts and a few literary images from Dostoevsky. One of these concepts is the idea of god related and juxtaposed with Trophonios which represents the underground man. According to Luft and Stenberg, the underground man in Dostoevsky equates to the Trophonios in Nietzsche's *Daybreak*. This underground man speaks from the inside hole not in the fashion that the Voice speaks in Gabriel Okara's *The Voice*, but in a manner that

Zarathustra speaks Nietzsche's bible *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*. Trophonios in the Greek mythological lexicon translates to a criminal who is swallowed up by earth at Lebadeia. He later became a god and the voice of the Lebadeian oracle after his death. In likening it to the underground man in Dostoevsky, Luft and Stenberg tell us that the "underground is associated with death, and thus is a metaphor of his own negation over and against the age in which he lives" (p. 451). The point we must not lose sight of here is the fact that, in a sense, Nietzsche's concept of God or at least death of God could be traced to Dostoevsky's concept of underground man. In Nietzsche's Zarathustra, we see an individual whose individualism translates to a human form of God. An individualism that eliminated the external God-figures and superimposed itself on himself as God unto his own ends. Similarly, in Dostoevsky we find an individualism of an underground man that becomes the voice of the oracles.

In this paper, it has been argued that Schopenhauer influenced Nietzsche to a discussion on the concept of will. The work *The World as Will and Representation* after Nietzsche's digestion and reformulation became *The Will to Power* or, in another context, *The Gay Science*. What remains to be demonstrated is the fact that Julius Bahnsen provided the gateway for Nietzsche's understanding and appreciation of Schopenhauer's concept of will and his calibration or redefinition of this concept. This was indeed the preoccupation of Anthony K. Jensen in a paper he titles "Julius Bahnsen's Influence on Nietzsche's Wills-Theory". Bahnsen had personal encounter with Schopenhauer, Wagner and Nietzsche. In fact, he visited Schopenhauer twice during the 1850s and wrote an autobiography whose hyperbolic self-loathing stand is akin to Nietzsche's self-praise in *Ecce Homo*. Bahnsen sought to calibrate Schopenhauer's Will into a naturalized will that accounts for the creation of human norms and behaviour. In carrying out this task, he presented a quadruplet of argument that sought to "naturalize Schopenhauer's dual-aspect theory of explanation" (Jensen, p. 103). "(1) there is no evidence of a transcendent will; (2) explanations of behaviour do not require a transcendent will; (3) that what explains behaviour is not a thing at all, but a fluid dynamic of strivings; and (4) that these strivings are guided even absent a distinct guiding principle" (Jensen, p. 101). Jensen argues that not only did Nietzsche know Bahnsen's four arguments, he also incorporated them into his own effort to naturalize Schopenhauer for the sake of explaining agency (Jensen, p. 103). Yes, we agree with Jensen but may not bother to rearticulate all the points he raised in support of his conclusion. Suffice it to rely on Jensen's second argument in support of his claim. "Nietzsche agrees with Bahnsen that there is no such necessity" (will). Nietzsche adopted not only the general position, but also Bahnsen's three supporting arguments. He objects to the Schopenhauerian position that the will is a transcendental entity and that it is required to explain the grounds of necessity or expediency.

Conclusion

The originality of every philosophical work does not translate into novelty devoid of influence(s) or a self-isolating encounter in the forest, like that of Zarathustra, but the ability and lucidity of an individual to be able to translate the part or totality of his or her

experiences as embodied in his language, culture, religion politics, etc. into a philosophical tool of problem-solving. This philosophical tool becomes the individual's solution to part or totality of the problems and challenges he/she encountered or others may encounter in the course of their existential journeys. Every scholar or philosopher bequeaths some ideas and ideals to society and by extension individual members of society. Through these ideas and ideals coated in philosophical lexicons, they win followers and disciples who turn into high-spirited exponents that disseminate such philosophies and, as a result, influence society towards the direction that the proponent intends them to follow. In this short paper, we have carefully argued that irrespective of the air of creativity, novelty and ingenuity accorded Nietzsche, his philosophy, like every other philosophy, is not devoid of influence. Schopenhauer bequeathed to Nietzsche the reality of will as espoused in *The World as Will and Representation* which became the philosophical framework that Nietzsche studied and calibrated into his concept of will to power as embodied in his work *The Will To Power*. Nietzsche's appreciation, cogitation and calibration of this Schopenhauerian will was made easier from the philosophical lens of Bahnsen.

Darwin and Wallace's, *The Origin of Species* served as the atheistic foundation for Nietzsche's philosophy of the death of God. Their natural selection became human selection in Nietzsche. In another sense Dostoevsky's concept of underground man aided Nietzsche to kill God and conceive the superman. Wagner, another Schopenhauerian scholar, schooled Nietzsche to fall in love with the German tragic Dionysian culture and religion. But for Wagner's influence, we doubt that Nietzsche would have *The Birth of Tragedy*. Ritschl and Jahn taught Nietzsche, hence, they are part of his breeding process. We found in Ritschl the hen that incubated Nietzsche's style of writing and in Jahn the cock that developed Nietzsche's critical attitude. However, Nietzsche's originality is not in doubt, as he transformed all his experiences and existential engagements into an existential philosophy now christened in his name. In sum, using the philosophy of Nietzsche as well as his influences, we have successfully demonstrated that no philosophy or philosopher drops from the sky, nor is an island unto itself or himself.

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