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Contents

Universality and Relativism on Tolerance in Religions A Philosophical Reflection
Professor Raghwendra Pratap Singh

Developing the Art of Pedagogy in Educator Teaching
Jayantkumar K. Vadhachya

Barriers to Effective Communication Skills
Dr. M.G. Venugopalan and Dr. I. Suhenya

Nietzsche's Concept of Power – Will to Power in Place of Will to Life
Mayuri Barman

Ahimsa in Indian Philosophy A Phenomenological Perspective
Rekhamoni Devi

Right to Equality and Equality in Rights
Harshit Chitlangia and Sonal Sodhani

Symbolism and its Implications in the Novels of R.K. Narayan
Shakeba Jabeen Siddiqui

Authenticity and the Social Space
Solomon Zingkhai

Spatio-temporal Labeling and Segmentation: Application of GeM (Genre and Multimodality) Framework on Mira Nair's Film Monsoon Wedding
Dolly Seehra¹ and Geetha Bakilapadavi²

Towards a Gender Free Society: A Study of Mahesh Dattani
Balaka Halder

Powerful Women Characters in the *Harry Potter* Series (with special reference to *Hermione Granger*)
Bhawana Bajpa

Nietzsche's Concept of Power – Will to Power in Place of Will to Life

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Abstract—Towards the close of the nineteenth century a voice of an iconoclast, Friedrich Nietzsche (1844-1900) was heard. He was a philosopher as well as psychologist who represents a major historical event. His ideas have had repercussions in recent history and literature as well as in psychology and religious thought. He has been assigned a great place in the grand tradition of western thought and his fame has spread like wild fire. He sought to counter the positivistic challenges from across the channel by developing a new picture of human dignity. His mission is to sweep away the shackles behind which western man had been sheltering. Therefore, the total independence and isolation of free man is found for the first time in Nietzsche.

"Philosophy is the tyrannical drive itself the most spiritual will to power, to creation of the world, to cause prima. That the central idea in Nietzsche's philosophy is expressed by his phrase: The will to Power. According to Nietzsche, the basic drive that pervaded the development of Greek culture might well have been the will to power. It is the motive force behind all life. Only where there is life is there will, not will to life but will to power."

Key words: Iconoclast, will to power, Greek culture, will to life

1. INTRODUCTION

"Philosophy is the tyrannical drive itself the most spiritual will to power, to creation of the world, to cause prima."
(Nietzsche, 1989)

Friedrich Nietzsche (1844-1900) the distinguished German thinker was a Philosopher as well as Psychologist, declared himself the destroyer of old values to clear the way for the virtues of strength against weakness. His ideas are of concern not only to the members of one nation or community, nor alone to philosopher, but to men everywhere. Nietzsche's ideas have had repercussions in recent history and literature as well as in psychology and religious thought. He has been assigned a great place in the grand tradition of Western thought and his fame has spread like wildfire. He sought to counter the positivistic challenge from across the channel by developing a new picture of human dignity. According to Nietzsche, one must consider many perspectives and a philosopher should not imprison his thought in one system. Systems says Nietzsche, are good in so far as they reveal the character of a great thinker but this goodness must be

independent of the truth of the system. These basic assumptions gave expression to the mental make-up of the philosopher. Many philosopher were impressed by Nietzsche's ideas that instead of deducing a system from accepted premises one must engage in the pursuit of independent problems and showing them to their astonishment what they had presumed in formulating their problems.

The will to power is the fundamental principle of human nature. This principle is capable of justifying existence in general and life in particular. It is the reality behind all things. The desire to become powerful is extremely natural everywhere in nature and society. It is the sole duty of mankind. Power can extend from the minimum to the maximum. The different powers are at different levels. Animals are more powerful than material or lifeless things but intellectual power is superior to animal power due to which man is more powerful than animal. Nietzsche's conception of power is inextricably linked to the tradition of Plato.

Plato—Eros:

Plato called this creative energy - Eros - which manifests itself from its lowest form of biological satisfaction to spiritual creation. Platonic eros is, therefore, "wholly teleic, goal directed, and moves towards the more than nature" (Morgan, 1964). According to Plato, there are different levels of the self, when they reach the divine level are knit together by a conative urge and is merge into one which is called reason. This urge is called by Plato 'Eros'. According to Plato, eros is one creative energy which manifests itself from its lowest form of biological satisfaction to spiritual creation. Thus in Plato's conception of eros the biological is not denied but incorporated and transcended. The sensual love and the yearning for beautiful and good derive from one and the same basic impulse which is called by Plato eros. Thus, the essential mark and internal motive force of soul according to Plato, is eros.

2. WILL TO POWER

As the nineteenth century drawing to its close, a voice of an iconoclast was heard. Friedrich Nietzsche (1844-1900)

declared himself the destroyer of old values to clear the way for the virtues of strength against weakness, health against decadence and freedom of spirit against slave morality. Nietzsche confronts the basic problems about happiness and enquires whether a new goal can be found that will give an aim to human life. These difficulties are removed in his early works where no will to power stamps the understanding. Still Nietzsche encounters similar problems and was able to solve them by temporarily abandoning his ambitious project and turned to psychological enquiries where he discovered the will to power by bold induction. Thus the central idea in Nietzsche's philosophy is expressed by his phrase "The will to power" which is the innermost essence of all beings. Nietzsche's will to power is the gateway to Nietzsche's thought. Nietzsche approached the conception of a will to power from two distinct points of view. First, he thought of it as a craving for worldly success, which he repudiated as harmful to man's interest in perfecting himself. Secondly, he thought of the will to power as a psychological drive in terms of which many diverse phenomena could be explained as gratitude, pity and self-abasement.

Apollo and Dionysus:

According to Nietzsche, the basic drive that prompted the development of Greek culture might well have been the will to power. He notes that the Greeks preferred power to anything "useful" and even to a good reputation. This sudden association of the will to power with the Greeks was one of the most decisive steps in the development of this conception into an all-embracing monism. In Zarathustra's initial proclamation the culture of Greece is explicitly referred to and explained in terms of the will to power. Power in Greek thought is described by Nietzsche in terms of Apollo and Dionysus. The key conceptions of the Birth of Tragedy are the Apollonian and the Dionysian. Nietzsche at first favours Apollo, the God of beauty which was able to control the destructive disease, to harness the Dionysian flood and to use it creatively. But in his later writings he celebrated Dionysus who is no longer the deity of formless frenzy which is found at first. Only the name remains, but later the Dionysian represents passion controlled.

Thus, Apolline and Dionysiac powers are considered as "artistic powers which spring from nature itself, without the meditation of human artist" (Nietzsche, 1993). Their artistic power of the whole of nature reveals itself to the supreme gratification. The will to power is not only the devil who diverts man from achieving culture but it is envisaged as the basis of Greek culture, which Nietzsche then considered the acme of humanity. Instead of being associated primarily with neurotics who crave pity, with modern man's lust for money, the will to power is now envisaged as the basic drive of all human efforts. In Zarathustra Nietzsche explains that will to power is proclaimed as the basic force underlying all human activities.

In Nietzsche's interpretation of human nature the will to power is the chief factor in man's evolutionary struggle. The motive force behind all life, from the animal kingdom to every instinct is the expression of it, disguised or otherwise. "wherever I found a living creature, there found I the will to power" (Nietzsche, 1997). As the lesser surrender himself to the greater, similarly the greatest surrender himself to the lesser for the sake of power. It is the surrender of the greater to risk and danger. And where there is sacrifice and service, there also is the will to be master. "Even in the will of the slave, I found I the will to be master" (Nietzsche, 1997). Moreover, the will to power which enforces obedience, is also the will to power which enforces obedience. "Wherever I found living things, there found I the language of obedience. All living things are thus things" (Nietzsche, 1997).

Nietzsche's philosophy of power entails the repudiation of the pleasure principle as a moral standard. There is a sense in which it is found that all men desire pleasure or happiness. According to Nietzsche, "men feel a life devoted to the pursuit of power to be more satisfactory human life than a life devoted to the pursuit of happiness" (Kaufmann 1974). "Happiness" in other words "elastic" and man can enjoy this feeling in a great number of different ways which is also conceivably power gives them the greatest possible degree of "Happiness" has at least two different meanings: first, a happiness consists in the state he desires and secondly, a happiness may be something more specific that possible to be desired by all men. Thus, according to Nietzsche, all men not seek pleasure and as a matter of fact their happiness consists in the possession of power.

Will to power not will to life:

Nietzsche opposes Darwin's conception of "struggle for existence". Darwin's, struggle for existence' gives way to struggle for power. According to Nietzsche, the struggle for existence would be meaningless, unless there is a desire for existence, an active will to exist. This will to exist is not a will to dominate. The power does not mean domination over others, but can be achieved in creative activity. According to Nietzsche in order to exist has to become a will to live. Thus, man's will to live, becomes the will to power which is identical to the will to live. According to Nietzsche, "where there is life is there will; not will to life but will to power" (Nietzsche, 1997). Man even the mediocre species is in a sense more powerful than other species. Nietzsche's "will to power" mind—Socrates or Caesar, who represent the "will to power" as Darwin said but for which beings strive for the basic drive which is not the will to preserve life but the will to power.

3. CONCLUSION

For an adequate understanding of Nietzsche's philosophy it is necessary to ascertain the role that the will to power plays as an explanatory principle. This will to power is the will to power.