Analyzing Nietzschean Virtue in Business Ethics

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ABSTRACT The origins of virtue ethics can be traced back to the Ancient Greek philosophers, Aristotle, Socrates and Plato.Friedrich Nietzsche, an assiduous student of especially Aristotle, is regarded as one of the notable philosophers of virtue ethics. Since management is philosophy in action and each management theory has a philosophical background, it is pertinent to assess Nietzsche who has greatly influenced the modern era by his assertion that moral codes such as codes of conduct in business for example, are mere interpretations of reality that we now consent to. This does not mean that things will remain constant in the future. Consequently, especially managers when considering business ethics need to ask themselves what kind of leader do they want to be in their organization? What is it that they essentially accept as true about humankind? Why and indeed how ought they to lead through a strong moral compass in a globalized world in which the moral fabric is eroded daily by *inter-alia* corruption? How do they seek get the best out of their employees for the benefit of all stakeholders and consider the people, the planet and the profits with a mindset that enhances the prospects of sustainability? If managers have a better understanding of philosophy it will indeed serves a useful purpose in making them highly effective in what they undertake. This paper in which the approach taken is historical-analytical thus sought to evaluate the potentially huge contribution Nietzsche could make in the field of business ethics and also sought to make his work better known to management scholars so as to empower them to 'do-the-right thing'.

INTRODUCTION

Ethics is a philosophical term derived from the Greek word *ethos* which means character or custom and it involves thinking systematically about morals and conduct and the making of moral choices about what is right and wrong (Lewis and Gilman 2005). There are rules which correspond to the various global cultures so in essence there is cultural as well as moral relativism (Meerhaeghe 2006). Much of the current literature on ethics in general, and business ethics, in particular, is concerned with questions of moral responsibility and the reconciliation of self-actualization and personal freedom with the rights and needs of others. Less obvious, is the assumption of order and control necessary, for implementing moral decision making. Applied ethics, as opposed to speculative ethics, implies the existence and use of power, based on force. Economists, and others, are ill prepared and ill at ease in making normative pronouncements and tend to leave ethical considerations to others. It is important to study the topic of business ethics since it impacts significantly on how a business operates. It thus impacts current business theory and practice and business leaders need to view business activities from an ethical perspective. Nietzsche was a philosopher who supported the notion of ethical egoism and maintained that in order to bring about the most good for everyone; the best possible results could be achieved if every individual centered on their own self-interest first and foremost. By understanding Nietzschean morality as neither rational nor absolute and by grasping the notion that there are many moral systems in the world each of which advances and claims universality, leaders are more able to employ moral systems to serve their specific organisational purposes. Employees of such organisations are thus able to be disciplined in behaviour by having parameters within which to operate.

Business Ethics is a relatively new concept in which the theory of the Categorical Imperative, as postulated by Kant, who said that "to act morally is to perform one's duty, and one's duty is to obey the innate moral laws" (Kant 1993) plays a critical role. Utilitarianism also plays a great role in current business ethics and this view is spearheaded by John Stuart Mill. Utilitarianism may be distinguished as a quantitative and reductionist approach to ethics in which the idea that the moral value of an action is determined purely by its ability to maximize usefulness and minimize negative worth (Rosen 2003). These two views are widely held in the world of business ethics and greatly influence contemporary business conduct.

Friedrich Nietzsche (1844-1900), the 19th Century German philologist who studied theories of culture and language theories, and who is renowned for concepts such as 'the Will to power' and 'the Death of God', is surprisingly omitted from literature dealing with the concept of business ethics. This is uncanny given that he wrote a dozen works dealing with moral philosophy. He was the most celebrated and abused philosopher of his era and numerous apocryphal myths and misconceptions surround Nietzsche's work nonetheless a great deal of 'postmodern' thinking can be attributed to Nietzsche and his attack on 'metaphysics'. Life can be fulfilling when personality, expertise, and purpose converge. Nietzsche goes beyond Sigmund Freud's argument that "love and work" are keys to a satisfying life. For Nietzsche, love and work must be combined with a personal morality that affirms rather than despises life. Everyone must define the mission of his or her work. We must constantly ask ourselves fundamental questions, such as: What are the reasons that led us into our work? Are they the same reasons that motivate us now, or have we changed? And if so, in what direction?

Objectives of the Study

The paper aims at describing Nietzsche's views as they relate to the current world of ethics in business practice. His work is discussed in order both to show just how pervasively his thought influences business today, either positively or negatively, and to help eliminate the clear biases that still mark the world of work.

METHODOLOGY

The historical-analytical approach used thus sought to evaluate the contribution Nietzsche could make in the field of business ethics and also seeks to make his work better known to management scholars so as to empower them. The researcher systematically and objectively located, evaluated and synthesized evidence to establish facts on Nietzsche and draw conclusions. The study involved an examination of primary sources including Nietzsche's works as well as secondary sources such as the work of other researchers as sourced from books and articles.

OBSERVATIONS AND DISCUSSION

Early Ethics - Aristotle and Aquinas

The Greek philosopher Aristotle, in the fourth century B.C. regarded ethics as that which sought to describe "the good for man." His book Nicomachean Ethics, was not merely the exposition of an ethical theory but rather a specific description of a way of life and an ethos that should have existed in Athens. It was incumbent upon man to develop virtues (*aretes*) such as justice, bravery (*andreia*), moderation (*sophrosune*) etc., in order that total happiness (*eudaimonia*) could be arrived at. Aristotle's ethical system was entrenched in his cultural setting and he discussed the conditions under which moral responsibility could lead to the achieving of happiness in human life and the core concept for him is the question of a person's character or personality. What is it that makes a person good? Virtues are, according to Aristotle, acquired human qualities and an immaculate character, which allow a person to achieve 'the good life'. Virtue is determined by the right reason and the right desire to do good (Aristotle 1985). In order to building character and moral leadership in today's business world, many managers believe they would benefit hugely by pursuing Aristotle's aphorism : 'always act towards the right person, at the right time, in the right place, in the right amount, and in the right way' (Aristotle 1985).

In a business ethics context, the virtues would allow employees to cooperate and allow the business community to achieve its collective objectives. In order to cultivate virtue in business students, knowledge about virtue needs to be taught and students need to be trained to be virtuous, especially when society at large is unscrupulous (MacIntyre 1981). Virtues are dispositions to feel and act in a particular manner and according to Aristotle, these needed to be practiced. What the majority of people thought was important, but it was necessary to understand that virtue was a middle ground between two extremes which are vices.

Thomas Aquinas (1225-1274) was born into a very wealthy family near the village of Aquino, between Naples and Rome. In 1244, he was ordained as a Dominican friar. Aquinas's teleological ethics was in a sense similar to Aristotle and concurs with the latter that all events occur to

achieve some or other end. Essentially, Aquinas universalized and made more humane, Aristotle's conception of ethics (Davies 1993). In his view, no human being was excluded from seeking to do universal good. Aquinas presupposed that God created the cosmos, which reveals His purpose in creating it. To arrive at that purpose is to constantly seek the supreme good.' This search for good [Natural law] is the participation of the human person in the divine law of God' (Kenny1984). Elsewhere he states that natural law is "nothing other than the light of understanding infused in us by God whereby we see what is to be done and what is not to be done" (Copleston 1991). Aquinas added faith, hope, and love to the list of virtues espoused by Aristotle. To both Aristotle and Aquinas, virtue was a quality which when exercised, invariably led to 'the good' and a good life for human beings precedes the concept of a virtue. Humans thus have their own natural ends but can select the way in which they will arrive at their given end. It is ethics which determines which ends are worthy of pursuit. When people do evil they become deficient in fulfilling the natural goal which is to do good and God fulfills their natural end. The human will is to seek what is good, but reason must inform the human will as to what is good and how to obtain it. Aristotle's moral theory falls short in that it is naturalistic and humans are regarded by him as simply another species in nature. Humans do not have a special relationship with the God and what is good is not necessarily declared so by God. Aquinas believed that Aristotle's moral vision was good but required what Christianity could provide in terms of understanding. The supreme good could only be found in God and one had to be familiar with such ideas. However, the perfect knowledge of God is possible only in the afterlife (Nietzsche 1966). Fassin et al. (2011) express the idea that there is a great lack in the consistency of definitions and concepts related to business ethics as such and there are various approaches to ethics. A brief explanation of each follows so as to set the scene so to speak. Descriptive ethics describes the values and moral reasoning of people as well as groups and seeks to provide a clear understanding of the ethical decision-making process (Schopenhauer 1979). Certain assumptions are made in that ethical decision-making processes are influenced one way or another by various individual, situation-al, and contextual factors such as personal experiences, opportunity, the organizational environment and the cultural environment (Nill 2003).

Normative ethics proposes answers to general moral questions such as 'what ought one to do what ought to do in a given situation?" (Schlegelmilch 1998). The primary concern is with the justification of moral norms in society and ethical values that are espoused. There are those who question whether or not business organizations bear any moral duty, for example Milton Friedman. Some believe that organizations cannot and should not shoulder moral responsibility. It is only individual employees serving in organizations who should be held accountable for ethical lapses and misdemeanors (Ranken 1987). Nonetheless, organizations are not wholly independent and cannot be held accountable for all actions that surpass that purpose (Wilmot 2001). Morality and ethics are defined descriptively and normatively. From a descriptive perspective it tends to describe codes of conduct or mores that may exist in certain societies or groups therein which governs the behavior of these entities in issues relating to good and bad or even right or wrong, but it does not judge behavior or categorize it as moral or immoral (Bernard 2008). In the normative sense, morality is a set of moral judgments or standards and rules of conduct which when used in certain specific conditions would be proposed by all rational beings (Bernard 2008). There are certain authors who contend that ethics and morality are interchangeable terms and differences are purely semantic (Rossouw 2003).

The normative ethics methodologies can be categorized as either "deontological theories" and/or "teleological theories" which are aimed at providing guidelines to assist organizations to conduct themselves ethically (Hunt and Vitell 1986). The deontological theories emphasize the specific actions or behaviors of individuals, while teleological theories tend to emphasize the consequences of human actions or behaviors. Teleologists are of the opinion that for example, managers should determine the results of various behaviors in any given situation and evaluate the positive or negative aspects of all the consequences that may result. A behavior is considered to be ethical if it produces a greater balance of good over evil than any other existing substitute (Nill 2003). Deontologists on the other hand tend to agree that there are indeed

"certain features of the act itself other than the value it brings into existence" that render an action or rule to be correct (Frankena 1963). The "golden rule" of "doing unto others as you would have them do unto you" (Sidgwick 1907), is what appeals most to deontologists. No doubt, all managers have a specific world view on approaches to ethics, whether this conscious or inadvertent, explicit or emergent, that ultimately follows some philosophy. Managers need to build linkages to the community and to their employees and the environment and this is central to what ethics means (Painter-Morland and Dobie 2009). Considering Nietzsche's views thus makes for useful analysis since he was an ethical egoist and as such tended to define rightness in terms of the consequences for individuals (Mengüç 1998). Self-preservation is the desired outcome of all actions for such egoists (Rosen 1978). This is in stark contrast with utilitarianism which holds that actions is correct only if they create the greatest good for the greatest number of people.

Enter Nietzsche

Friedrich Nietzsche was born close to the city of Leipzig, Germany in 1844. From a very early age, he demonstrated his prowess in both Greek and Latin studies and was subsequently appointed to a chair in classical philology at Basel University in Switzerland. He lectured at the university for about ten years until poor health obliged him to retire in 1879. He lived a solitary, impecunious, and itinerant life as a writer in France, Italy, as well as Switzerland and published numerous literary works before succumbing to nervous breakdown in 1889. He endured both mental and physical paralysis until his death in 1900.

Nietzschean notions have been the subject of interminable debate and no less so in the management sphere. According to Nietzsche, all thoughts have evaluative and interpretative characters this thus implies there is a need for and renewed assessment of all preceding interpretations including a re-evaluation of former values. The business ethics debate is multifarious and somewhat perplexing for many managers and yet it is necessary to consider ethics if we are to try to improve business practice. Business managers cannot afford to be reactive to ethical problems but should rather strive to be pro-active and somewhat entrepreneurial in their approach to ethics in the workplace as well as in dealings with all stakeholders with whom there should be constant communication and towards whom exemplary conduct should be exhibited. The times are changing rapidly: *"...that part of man which feels the need to place value on things— himself in the first instance, but on the people, actions, or things around him as well. It is the part of the personality which is the fundamental source of the emotions of pride, anger, and shame, and is not reducible to desire, on the one hand, or reason on the other. The desire for recognition is the most specifically political part of the human personality because it is what drives men to want to assert themselves over other men..."* (Fukuyama 1992).

Nietzsche suggests that the word "good" was initially connected with only the existence of true warriors and noble aristocrats. These were physically stronger individuals who preserved their status by war and other such jubilant activities. Nietzsche terms this the morality of the masters. Once the *ancient regime* collapsed these values were tested and replaced by their opposite which was a slave morality which supports the notion that the "wretched alone are the good; the poor, impotent, lowly alone are the good; the suffering, deprived, sick, ugly alone are pious, alone are blessed by God" (Nietzsche 2009).

Nietzsche did not believe in the idea that conscience is the voice of God speaking to humanity. He terms it the instinct of cruelty turned the wrong way after it can no longer release itself outwardly. The instinct for freedom has been "pushed back and repressed" and this result in feelings of guilt so the noble people become pessimistic. Nietzsche believed that the world was constantly undergoing organization and reorganization in a very gradual process termed the "will to power". It is this dynamism which constantly produces new relationships.

"The characteristic feature of his sociology was the possibility of development of humans with a special creativity whom he called "higher men," or "supermen." They would be responsible for the enrichment of humanity with cultural life. This attainment of life would be an expression at the highest level permitted by creativity and the transformation of human existence from nihilism to integrating the human condition with the world" (Hillar 2008).

In modern ethics, ethical rationalism is the main concept. It is through reason that people are distinct to the rest of God's creation and it is via logical reason that moral tenets are legitimised. Consequently, all moral truths are anchored in human nature and they are self-determining as regards societal conventions. In this manner, the philosophers of the Enlightenment period instituted absolutist systems of ethics that made relativism unimaginable. Immanuel Kant's categorical imperatives are a principal example in which he emphasized acting in accordance with principles. The utilitarians maintained that the only test of right or wrong actions is their outcomes. In a nutshell, do actions promote the general good and happiness ("the greatest good for the greatest number") or do they serve only a few people? It was Friedrich Nietzsche who developed a totalizing assault on moral values in the 19th century (Christians 2008).

In Nietzsche's writings, particularly *The Birth of Tragedy,* ethics has an "ethological" basis. Only through aesthetic phenomena are life and the world justified. There is a clear demarcation between morality and ethics in what manifests as a fundamental notion of philosophical thought. There is a mode of thought which transcends good and evil and this is beyond any moralistic ontology. Morality is in the world of facades but also exists in deceptions as an error, delusion or veneer. Moral values are in nay event worthless as humanity cannot answer the basic question "why" and this nihilistic idea means the end of the moral interpretation of the world. He embraced of a type of rationalism and an approach he called "the Will to Power" (*Wille zur Macht*). As a man who questioned the very existence of a creator, he embraced aesthetic values that were not dependent on God's moral codes for humanity. Due to his ideas, universal imperatives have been discredited and ethical rationalism has been exposed as the morality of the ruling class and men in particular, as the dominant gender (Outka and Reed 1993). To protect an intangible good is basically a type of psycho-social dominance or imperialism over the moral opinions of miscellaneous communities. Nowadays, morality appears to be coming to a gradual and it is somewhat fashionable for many businesses to disavow any moral obligation to society. In the period of Post-Modernity, ethical living is being eroded by materialism and is being replaced by aesthetics (Bauman 1993). Amongst moral philosophers in history, Nietzsche is unique in scrutinizing the full structure of moral transformation. The contracted heart of traditional ethics makes it virtually unattainable to account for the behaviour of the moral radical as acceptable moral behaviour. Nietzsche detested talk involving the term 'morality', and argued incessantly in contradiction of the notion of a Kantian Categorical Imperative briefly describing the Platonic concept of the Good as the last fumes of an evaporating reality. Nietzsche is concerned that as a result of the 'slave' revolt in moral issues, the 'slaves' are now prisoners in the midst of concepts such as equality and self-sacrifice. Such abstract language of value is in itself a huge obstacle to people realizing certain forms of individual excellence.

Nietzsche's assessment of the distant past and the resultant obstacles presented by the moral and ethical teachings of the world's monotheistic religions, led him to his own interpretation of morality and ethics and resulted in his lengthy work *So Sprach Zarathustra*. If we are to improve the quality of ethical decision making at the micro-level (individual level), meso-level (level of companies) and macro-level (level of a national economy), we are also required to consider personal, communal and universal value systems and how these interact with one another. To assist us in ethics as a study, we should also be considering Nietzsche's views. Why is it, that Nietzsche is neglected in the study of business ethics and what is the problem with current ethics study? What is the Nietzschean perspective of ethics and morality and why is it that business management students should be learning about his ideas on ethics?

Ethics and the 'Hammer Beating Bell' Approach

One of Nietzsche's final works was entitled *How one philosophizes with a hammer*. This emphasizes his rejection of traditional morality and his willingness to seek rigid discipline in promoting moral virtues. The most important question in Nietzsche's diagnosis of the cultural disease he calls "nihilism" is the question about the standing of "morality" in our current time (Schacht 1983). The term 'Post-modernity' seems to people who purport to be fashionable to express precisely the crisis of morality and it is the

crisis of morality which is a direct consequence of the crisis of rationality. The *Ubermensch* (Overman) is a projection of what is best in all humans, and this is what Nietzsche refers to as "nobility".

Nietzsche reflected on human nature and societies in somewhat naturalistic terms which highlight the significance of social structures and the interactions within them. *"The characteristic feature of his sociology was the possibility of development of humans with a special creativity whom he called "higher men," or "supermen." They would be responsible for the enrichment of humanity with cultural life. This attainment of life would be an expression at the highest level permitted by creativity and the transformation of human existence from nihilism to integrating the human condition with*

The "will to power" has far more in common with how one is able to control oneself than with seeking to manipulate and dominate others. In his rejection of morality in a traditional sense, Nietzsche strives for excellence as the driving force in ethics. If we are to begin to understand his philosophy, we need to firstly understand the context in which he writes the *Death of God*. He is not an atheist trying to stir up the wrath of believers. If one understands the statement death of God in a religious context, one is undermining its epistemological and ontological inferences which are that the statement defies the ascendancy of Reason (Nietzsche 1968). In essence what dies is the principle of transcendence that categorically grounds the assertions of traditional epistemology and ontology. The death of God is also a religious proclamation but it is only religious as religion only makes sense by implicitly setting outing the hypotheses of metaphysics and epistemology. What is implied is that all of the presuppositions of religion are defensible only through the approval of Reason, and so it is that, 'God' is simply another expression for Reason which is omnipresent and unconditionally unifying in nature.

We are in an illusion of transcendence and need to be metaphorically awoken with a loud noise such as a bell being struck by a hammer. Nietzsche was opposed to the idea that transcendent categories are binding, and thus the essentialist thought upon which classical moral philosophy was based. He sought to create, enhance and celebrate life and regarded univer-

sal essences as being nihilistic. Therefore, his shift away from essentialism and the creation, enhancement, and celebration of life, presuppose a shift of mindset. Nietzsche's disengagement from essentialism disturbs the tendency of basing morality on universal principles. To still base ethics on ontology and practice becomes a challenge. What then, is "ethics" and how does it relate to, and distinguish itself from, the notion of "morality"?

Why Nietzsche is Neglected?

The majority of ethics related courses begin with in depth surveys of the two leading theories in modern ethics. The first is the "It is one's duty to do what is right" and this theory is based on the writings of the German philosopher Immanuel Kant (1724-1804). It highlights the centrality of general rational principles such as "treat people as ends and never merely as means". The second theory is utilitarian and based on the philosophy of John Stuart Mill (1806-1873). This pays far more disciplined attention to the consequences of decisions that are made in any given business related situation. While business ethics is included in the curricula of many management related courses, there is a feeling amongst lecturers that the topic is too inaccessible. Added to this, many of the students that they teach regard it as irrelevant to contemporary business where the distinction between good and bad or right and wrong is no longer apparent. Apart from his rather aggressive approach towards immorality, Nietzsche was also somewhat opposed to business *per se*. This was because he viewed capitalism as a destructive force which promoted greed and exploitation and which reduced the depth of spirituality in people. However as business is part of life, ethics must be driven by business and this is what Nietzsche proposes. How he proposes this is indeed intriguing and he in a sense does only a little more than play a localized language game as moral philosophers had been doing for years. This is indicative of the fact that language is very liquid as are meanings and this is very dangerous since 'the powerful will convince the majority that language has stable meanings and certainties and they will prescribe what these are' and this 'takes us into the new abyss of postmodernism itself which has increased ethi-

cal skepticism and uncertainty even more' (Robinson and Garratt 2009).

Even though he greatly influenced the later existentialists, his dismissal of the claims of science, religion, rationality and metaphysics as having established absolute truth or values is deemed unacceptable by many. His notion that the world is sans purpose or even a structure should lead one to reject what he considered to be the 'slave morality' of Christianity. He suggested that people should seek new sets of values that go beyond the notion of 'good and evil'. It is only through creativity and innovation that one can as an 'exceptional being' adopt the 'will to power' and greatly improve life. Perhaps many would agree with the latter aspects on creativity.

What Nietzsche Teaches Managers about Ethics in Business

Philosophy enhances the conceptual framework of managers for appreciating the value of ethical conduct for themselves and those they lead. Real leaders need to contemplate the results of their actions on others in society so as to benefit themselves. Business ethics is increasingly viewed as an imperative for managing organizational success and sustainability. However, there is a need to equip mangers and those whom they lead to develop the ethical aptitudes that will enable them to cope with the many and varied ethical challenges faced on a day-to-day basis. By encouraging more direct engagement with Nietzsche's work, this paper strives to examine Nietzsche's ideas and questions if these would be more suitable as a means of explaining the business world.

Nietzsche would undoubtedly have viewed at the democratic and almost unrestricted spirit of modern business distrustfully. Nietzsche does not concern himself with seeking out and applying rational principles and processes in daily conduct. In fact he is bent on the inculcation of values that cultivate, nurture and develop the human character so as to make it more beautiful, so to speak. Nietzsche's philosophical thinking thus unfolds a huge distinction between morality and ethics, a basic notion of thinking which is transcends "good" and "evil", and which in essence goes way beyond any moralistic ontology (Yovel 1986) and stresses "good" and "bad". Nietzsche (1967) stated that "Knowledge

functions as an instrument of power". His "Will to Power" was a magnum opus which takes our minds away from material objects and transfers us to the realm of power which is used as a relation of forces of attraction and repulsion. Attraction of the 'noble' person and repulsion of the person who is simply one of the 'herd'. Nietzsche essentially speaks of domination by one person or group of people over another person or groups. Nietzsche does ironically post the question: "*Where has the last feeling of decency and self-respect gone when even our statesmen, an otherwise quite unembarrassed type of man, anti-Christians through and through in their deeds, still call themselves Christians today and attend communion?*" (Nietzsche 1966). He is thus cognizant of the fact that many public actors such as managers do not operate morally. Nietzsche maintains: "*Every practice of every moment, every instinct, every valuation that is translated into action is today anti-Christian: what a miscarriage of falseness must modern man be, that he is not ashamed to be called a Christian in spite of all this!*" He thus sees the hypocrisy in humanity as a problem. To Nietzsche's way of thinking, managers do not need to use ethics to figure out what is right; or what is wrong in a given situation, instead, each and every situation demonstrates what moral rules really are, essentially they are basically a set of judgments that a group of people share and nothing more. He was thus a cultural relativist and viewed morality and values as culture specific and they do not demonstrate any sort of universal reason. Nietzsche would ask why anyone would wish to be morally responsible. If one thinks they will be rewarded for being morally responsible, they are deceived since in the eternal return, later does not exist and the same thing will occur again.

However, virtue ethics which stresses the idea of forming good character and then trusting people to do the right thing, provides flexibility in that those who are virtuous by nature should be able to manage any situation which they face well. In day to day business ethics, the moral action of managers emanates from intentional efforts to realize idealistic conceptions. To Nietzsche, all moral action and ethical behaviour is implicit and the direct result of human character. Consequently, to consider ethics was to Nietzsche nothing more than recalling a nobler more aesthetic past (Rampley 2007) as was

evident in Classical Greece. Nietzsche strives to point out that a good individual is one who complies with authority and upholds the social order as a basic concern but life is somewhat centered around glory and power and right and wrong in various business issues are founded on the assertions of those with legitimate hierarchical power. The primary aim of life is to act with integrity and to be service oriented, committed, loyal, responsible and sensitive the needs of others. Where Kant would say that managers and employees must act in a way that they believe is right and just for any other manager or employee in a similar situation, Nietzsche would say that managers and employees should seize what benefit they are strong enough to exercise without reverence to ordinary social norms and legal requirements but contrary to this notion, organizations do have certain duties in society, including moral obligations that include supporting the duties of loyalty, appreciation, justice, magnanimity, self-improvement and non-injury to all stakeholders. Nietzsche proposed that human existence is an endless circle. We should thus always behave as though the eternal return is a real possibility. Consequently we should act in such a way so that we do, we do in the knowledge that we have to live with our choice over and over for eternity. The eternal return is what will then provide us with a reason to do one thing as opposed to another. So this is what guides us in an immoral worldly existence.

Nietzschean Ethics / 'Un-ethics'

Nietzsche was essentially a moral relativist and in his *Genealogy of Morals'* and *The Will to Power,* he argues that man has two main drives, namely, a drive for total power and fear. He stresses that people unconsciously do whatever they believe they need to do in order to become more potent human beings (Nietzsche 1967). Morality is when people become powerful, and do not want others to become more powerful than them (Leiter and Sinhababu 2009). Consequently they impose rules on others and seek to limit their drive for power. Nietzsche rejected the notion of obedience-oriented philosophies in which individuals either obey or fail to obey God's moral codes. He was in favour of a more utilitarian approach in which individuals independently evaluate the ethical implications of their actions towards other human beings. He wrote: *"Most*

of the conscious thinking of a philosopher is secretly guided and forced into certain channels by instincts" (Nietzsche 1968). What they conclude from their reasoning and purport to be truth is based on assumptions and hunches. It is this 'gut-feeling' on issues that makes individuals do the right or wrong thing at any given time. Nietzsche believed that all philosophers wished to provide a rational foundation for the existence of morals and they all believed they had achieved this objective. Morality was viewed as a 'given' notion. For many people, ethics talk is no more than an emotional outburst and it is based on fiction. There is no such thing as transcendent 'reason' as a source of moral wisdom consequently efficient evil exists (Robertson and Garratt 2009).

Once the world is rid of the notion of God, it will be able to revert to nature, which is a level surface of immanence within there are many and diverse forces but no beyond. Nietzsche also asserted that if all morality is a nothing more than a lie, it remains a needed one for the advancement of civilization. Consequently, even if moral systems are relative and random, compliance to such imperatives is the foundation of civilization itself and it is this which makes one's existence meaningful and life worth living. He warns: *'He who fights with monsters should look to it that he himself does not become a monster. And when you gaze long into an abyss the abyss also gazes into you'* (Nietzsche 1966).

Nietzsche also insisted on the necessity of conflict in any society and the prohibition of anything remotely resembling compassion, *"he who climbs upon the highest mountain laughs at all tragedies, real or imaginary"* (Nietzsche 1968). He also stated that the more passionate one is about their cause the stronger they become, and the more powerful they are, the wiser they become. Power is a matter of how much of it one has and it emanates from nature and is a "primitive form of affect, that all other affects are only developments of it" (*Will to Power*: 688). He placed great value on the conception of the will to empower itself and stated *"But what is life? Here we need a new, more definite formulation of the concept 'life.' My formula for it is: Life is will to power"* (*Will to Power*: 254). Nietzsche's criticized both Aristotle and Aquinas and opposed the notion that the word 'good' was initially applied to altruistic action as a socially useful idea. According to Nietzsche who

was an altruist who was concerned with others, everything that is done by people has an egoistic basis as the self is nothing more than a system of urges. All ethical and moral actions and beliefs are relative. When an action is un-egoistic it is described as moral, and therefore no such act has existed. Morality exists only in a fictitious world. Altruistic in nature, Nietzsche wanted to see that moral authority and motivation would produce the greatest good for the largest number of human beings (Parsons 1973) and thus uphold the integrity of the community at large.

Nietzsche's views demonstrate that he perceives issues on ethics from the standpoint of human life which exists beyond what is considered good or evil. He confronts the basic moral view that when some people dominate and exploit others who are less powerful than they are, that they are acting in an unacceptable way. All people have a "will to power" which is based on their relentless energy and this is not based on them being deficient in any way but rather on a natural striving for authority and control. To Nietzsche there is no single moral code which applies to all people equally. There are numerous moralities-some for the 'overman' of 'noble' rank and some for the plebeians in society. As such, certain moralities are appropriate for the upper echelon or the leaders in society. Managers for example, would be subjected to different types of morality and ethical conduct on their part and this could be considerably different to the expected moral and ethical conduct of the employees they manage. The important consideration in determining morality and individuals is what kind of person any individual is and whether or not that person is strong or weak.

Nicomachean Ethics and those of Nietzsche differ in that virtue and vice have similarities in that irrespective of which we opt for, the choice is based on personal desires and it is not dependent on the merits or otherwise of our selection. Nietzsche elucidates that our concept of what is deemed right or wrong is crafted by society and the cultural grouping within which we reside (Nietzsche 1968). Beyond our culture and the society in which we live, both morality and ethics may have different interpretations. Nietzsche thus distinguishes between two types of morality namely the "master morality" and the "slave morality". The first is applies to leaders in society, who generate their own values in a self-preservation mindset. The "slave morality" is applies to the rest of the 'herd' which according their standards the behaviour of masters is viewed as being evil. Nietzsche states that "masters beyond good and evil" and are subject to their own values which are by nature very distinct to the norms that are sanctioned for the herd which in any event are mediocre and stifle the growth of the *Ubermensch* (Overman) who are the real leaders. So, in Nietzschean thinking, there are two unsurpassed ideals of life and two distinct moralities. The first ideal is the morality of the ancients, whose utmost values are vigour, bravery, boldness, fortitude in adversity, self-discipline, and strength of character. Opposed to this is the second ideal which is the contemporary or slave morality, which is related with a contempt for the world. (Glover 1999).

Nietzsche's provides evidence of his approach in the following lines:

"For believe me! - the secret of realizing the greatest fruitfulness and the greatest enjoyment of existence is to live dangerously! Build your cities on the slopes of the Vesuvius! Send your ships out into uncharted seas! Live in conflict with your equals and with yourselves! Be robbers and ravagers as long as you cannot be rulers or owners, you men of knowledge! The time will soon be past when you could be content to live concealed in the woods like timid deer!" (Nietzsche 1999).

Nietzsche demonstrates according to his perceptions, how western views of morality are defective. Essentially, Nicomachean Ethics is a means by which individuals or even the collective society generates an effective system of ethical beliefs that currently influences Western culture. However, Nietzsche demonstrates that preconceived notions and biases in the Western systems of morality taint ethics as such, so that all actions and beliefs could be wide of the mark in other ethical systems. So Nietzsche does not seek to propose or begin to suggest an explicit positive moral code but strives to confront post-Enlightenment moral beliefs upon which present-day business ethics bases itself. Using Socrates as sort of role model, Nietzsche wanted to expose *"how much hypocrisy, comfortableness,"* and lack of self-discipline is in fact concealed beneath contemporary morality. On the surface morality appears to be good, but in essence it is a festering wound in need of healing. What is required are new aims and objectives that gives reason to life. Every age requires

a thinker to dissect the virtues of the society in which he/she lives (Schacht 1983). Individual virtue and the character of a person are the primary concern of Nietzsche: *"The greatest perhaps also possess great virtues, but in that case also their opposites.....I believe that it is precisely through the presence of opposites and the feelings they occasion that the great person, the bow with the great tension, develops."*

In this context, all universal moral codes that hinder character and suppress the notion of equality between humans must be discarded as each individual should be able to achieve wholeness and live a holistic life. Our impulses and urges must be managed without impeding the development of others but must rather be integrated with them (Acampora 2006). Those who are stronger and more spiritually inclined owe it to themselves to have compassion for the weak and this is nothing less than a demonstration of a higher level of attainment on the evolutionary ladder (Kaufmann 1968). The level of tolerance and compassion one has also demonstrates their real power. However, selflessness does not necessarily benefit society, and can actually harm it if not correctly handled and egoism *per se* does not need to debase society but can and should aid it.

The body is inferior and should be submissive to the dictates of the mind.

In Nietzsche's *Nachlaß* we read:

"The human body, in which the most distant and most recent past of all organic development again becomes living and corporeal, through which and over and beyond which a tremendous inaudible stream seems to flow: the body is a more astonishing idea than the old "soul".

In his *Beyond Good and Evil,* Nietzsche states that: *"The world viewed from inside, the world defined and determined according to its 'intelligible character' – it would be 'will to power' and nothing else" (Beyond Good and Evil*: 36). Consequently, the importance of the will to supremacy is itself the very significance of human life and this is an unquestionable ontological reality. Nietzsche attempts to destroy the old way of thinking and acting so as to commence a new phase in the dialectical progression of human values. He differentiates between *healthy* and *sick* ways of evaluating life and thus between healthy and unhealthy lifestyles. To Nietzsche, the soul, which is equal to the body,

is then where time is experienced and where we can gain authority over it (Loeb 2005). Nietzsche expresses the idea that it is only creativity that can allow people to generate new possibilities beyond what is already provided by the past and this can assist us to face the ambivalent paradoxes of the present predicaments that are faced (Guttierez 2013). People should become who they are rather than who they want to be.

In order to begin to comprehend Nietzsche's view of selfishness, we need to come to grips with two terms, namely, self-development and self-expression. The egoism of the strong in society, whose contentment exists because of their philanthropy, is distinct to that of the weak: *"Insatiably your soul strives for treasures and gems, because your virtue is insatiable in wanting to give. You force all things to and into yourself that they may flow back out of your well as the gifts of your love. Verily, such a gift-giving love must approach all values as a robber; but whole and holy I call this selfishness. There is also another selfishness, an all-too-poor and hungry one that always wants to steal—the selfishness of the sick: sick selfishness. With the eyes of a thief it looks at everything splendid...and always it sneaks around the table of those who give....What do we consider bad and worst of all? Is it not degeneration? And it is degeneration that we always infer where the gift-giving soul is lacking. Upward goes our way, from genus to overgenus. But we shudder at the degenerate sense which says, "Everything for me."* (Nietzsche: Thus Spoke Zarathustra).

Thinking Ethically in Business

An excerpt from Nietzsche has obvious links with management literature on contemporary business leadership of the 1980s and early 1990s: *"To give style to one's character- a great and rare art! He practises it who surveys all that his nature presents in strength and weakness and then moulds it to an artistic plan until everything appears as art and reason, and even the weakness delight the eye...It will be the strong, imperious natures which experience their subtlest joy in exercising such a control, in such a constraint and perfecting under their own law"* (Nietzsche 1999). When a business manager contemplates the question "why do I need to act ethically", and reflects on Nietzsche, he could probably conclude that Nietzsche would in all

probability respond by saying that there are no moral occurrences but rather only moral explanations of occurrences. Consequently, if no moral occurrences exist, nothing whatsoever could be considered to be good or evil. In *The Will to Power* we read: *"to demonstrate the absolute homogeneity of all events and the application of moral distinctions as conditioned by perspective; to demonstrate how everything praised as moral is identical in essence with everything immoral"* (Nietzsche 1967). Conversely, in *Beyond Good and Evil,* he states that despite his assessment that all moral systems are relative and subjective, life is only worthwhile when rules are obeyed to. Obeying is what makes life significant. In questioning what is right and what is wrong Nietzsche refers to the heroic nobleman in the theory of perfectionism and he maintains that there are simply no objective values. What does exist in abundance are a random set of values that do not objectively exist. Ethically speaking, Nietzsche certainly makes us more aware of the significance of perspective. This is basically the necessity to see all values and concepts in the right moral and ethical perspective. This view has very important connotations for the principles of corporate social responsibility and corporate social investment which suggest that businesses should modify their aims and actions and move away from the limiting focal point of increasing their bottom-lines and returns to shareholders, and shift towards serving the more philanthropic interests of the much broader community and in so doing, serve the interests of all stakeholders. Businesses should thus be engaged in what is advantageous for the majority, while still making profit. Nietzsche also states: *"My idea is that every specific body strives to become master over all space and to extend its force (its will to power: and to thrust back all that resists its extension. But it continually encounters similar efforts on the part of other bodies and ends by coming to an arrangement ("union") with those of them that are sufficiently related to it: thus they then conspire together for power. And the process goes on…"* (Nietzsche 1967).

Human artistic creativity, innovation and power, are paramount. It is this creativity which creates ethical values (Yovel 1986), but very few individuals have the capacity to create while others must follow the lead of the creative few and afford them space to be creative and innovative. After all, things exist primarily for them. Clearly, for Nietzsche, 'might is right' but to have ethics in place is an aesthetic option rather than an objective truth. Not all people can be managers and so most people who are not in managerial roles lack real value. Those who are ordinary and do not rise above the others merely exist (Allison 2000). Do ethics really have anything to do with what we think as individuals or is right simply right and wrong always wrong? Nietzsche's analysis is highly naturalistic and he does seem to adopt his ideas from nature and his view on the cosmos and knowledge to an extent echo this adoption.

Interestingly, in especially Existentialism, Nietzsche's ideas are gradually been taken more seriously and business leaders must act with a greater sense of morality and respect towards all stakeholders and not exploit especially their employees if they wish to be truly effective. It would be highly irresponsible for managers for example, to try to do the work of their employees as this would ultimately lead to inefficiency and promote corruption and unethical conduct. Business managers as the elite group must be innovative and inventive and not seek to diminish their value by unethical conduct. Comprehension and knowledge are conditioned in an intricate manner by the circumstances in which what we refer to as facts are faced up to, and also by the cerebral processes that are referred to as interpretations. In any case, 'facts' and moral actions are not always what they seem to be and are in any event interpreted differently by different people in diverse contexts and situations. Some interpretations offered by people are better than those offered by others. What makes some interpretations superior is less distortion. One should evaluate an interpretation and further develop it so as to improve it. To simply accept an interpretation is not acceptable and to *"blindly indulgence of an affect, totally regardless of whether it be a generous and compassionate or a hostile affect, is the cause of the greatest evils"* (Nietzsche 1966).

Nietzsche asserted that feeling and intuition are in point of fact forms of reason and he perceived the world to be a sphere of colliding motivations and brutal conflict. His super beings were past "beyond good and evil" and thus had the right to rule the 'herd' of masses for their own loftier intentions. In the apartheid South

Africa in which there was psycho-social dominance by one group over another and where people were adopting preconceived notions and biases with ease, the super beings, akin to managers, supposedly had the greatest levels of development and intellectual growth and should have been courageous enough and able to reconsider the values pervading their organizations and operate with lack of restrictions to their inner Will to Power. They did not do so and consequently the lower level of society, akin to employees, would consider themselves to be exploited and browbeaten and would experience an innate antipathy towards their managers, with of course the hugely negative racial undertones. The consequence of such perceptions were undoubtedly a pessimistic outlook by the 'lesser' beings, and possibly retribution in the form of converting the supposed virtues of their managers into vices.

The multiculturalism in South Africa suggests that issues such as race, ethnicity, and gender have an inexorable consequence on the way people reflect and the values they embrace. Cogent discourse amongst individuals from diverse groups is prohibited because each group possesses its own version of what is considered to be 'truth' as well as often different values for the realization of the 'truth'. The message is clear for managers. They must be able to rationally discuss and significantly appraise and evaluate ideas with employees emanating from other cultural groupings (Deigh 2010). For managers, egoism is highly creative and implies prioritizing the self-interest but this is altruistic and diverts one's thinking if not carefully controlled. In *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, he says that one should love oneself *"so that one can bear to be with oneself and need not roam. Such roaming baptizes itself 'love of the neighbor': with this phrase the best lies and hypocrisies have been perpetrated so far"* (Nietzsche 1968). Once managers are unhappy with themselves, they take their ill feeling out on their employees. However those who are content with themselves, and somewhat egotistical, will ultimately benefit others. Essentially then, in a business context, Nietzsche calls on people to better themselves so that they can also serve the interests of others who are weaker. It is also true to an extent that not all creative people act ethically all the time but nonetheless, says Nietzsche, they do have

a great role to play in making the world a better place. It is essential that managers contemplating business ethics issues recognize that every individual is indeed an independent being with the power of self-regulating judgment and preferences that emanate from their cultural backgrounds.

CONCLUSION

Nietzsche's great value to managers and business ethics issues is his ability to alarm them into re-examining and re-evaluating their beliefs based on social customs and definitions of what is considered to be appropriate. Many managers 'glorify' themselves and strive for the ethic of self-preservation at all costs, almost always to the detriment of society and all the stakeholders of the organization they lead. Friedrich Nietzsche believed that the source of all 'human potential' is in the atheistic glorification of the self and he encouraged this belief. Nietzsche calls managers to continually question their most entrenched beliefs and habits. He considers that when people are deprived of questioning, there cannot be any resultant progress. The "Will to Power," suggests the superior people in the world have both the power and the obligation to make rules for the rest who are the "herd," who follow blindly what they are told by those they identify to be superior beings. Nietzsche states, "I live in my own house, have never copied anyone else and at any master (*Meister*: 'manager') who cannot laugh at himself - I laugh!" This, he concludes, is in print "over the door to my house". Nietzsche is important in management since many managers have a tendency to believe they are superior beings and have a right to authority and can issue orders to their lower level employees who are to their minds, a mindless 'herd'. It appears, sadly, that capitalism and Nietzschean ethics are not mutually exclusive since many managers see themselves as superior entities.

As stated Nietzsche differentiates between two types of morality: first the "master morality" and second the "slave morality". The initial type applies to the leaders of a society, who tend to formulate personal values. On the other hand, "slave morality" is applies to the herd according to whose values the behaviour of leaders is considered to be devoid of any good and borders on evil. However it is the masters, upholds Ni-

etzsche, who are located beyond good and evil. They are bound to their own values and these differ to those endorsed for the herd that support mediocrity in all actions and thus contribute to the hindering of the development of the 'overman'. Nietzsche was probably the last defender of the ancients and their idea of virtue. Nietzsche sees that master and slave moralities being at constant loggerheads with each other and they may never be prepared to accept ever uniting. According to Nietzscean ethics, neither God, nor society or our parents or even our earliest ancestors can pass down to us values that are applicable to our lives. We have no choice but to think things over and over when it comes to for example, ethical conduct and issues of justice and fairness.

It is very un-Nietzschean for ethical and moral managers to focus on each employee's independent and autonomous growth. However good self-development may be to ethical conduct, this should not be in isolation, but rather in concert with others. The correct way to approach the arena of business ethics is that managers must radically shift their emphasis from only profit-making and envisage the conduct of work as a vital and necessary part of what leads to a good life. Happiness in the workplace and indeed in life is based on the manner in which one works and lives their life. Managers without a moral guidance, who are in power and the higher the level of power and authority they possess the greater the possibility that it can be used for evil as well as good. Clearly then, all leadership which seeks to be ethical in nature requires a moral compass. Nietzsche assists in providing a moral compass for managers and employees as he presents us with his views of personal characteristics in ethical action and the element of managerial and employee decision-making which is perhaps what management students and managers are seeking to address in their work. It is very clear that postmodernism cannot disregard the fact that people are indeed unique individuals who are obliged to live and work in groups and if there is to be harmony and growth in a business and ultimately in a society, codes of conduct or moral regulations are a necessity even if they are assumed to have no true underpinning.

To Nietzsche, people who think in terms of "good" as opposed to "bad" epitomize a superior mentality which is suitable for a leadership role, while those who think in terms of "good" as opposed to "evil," epitomize an acquiescent mentality and are suitable only to be led by others.

Critically, Nietzsche's views support the notion that ethics is for all business leaders. The day-to-day virtues define the atmosphere of day-to-day business activities.

RECOMMENDATIONS

There is need to renovate some archetypes of business leaders especially at a time of global economic crisis in which employees are disrespected and all that matters is the bottom-line. Managers should thus seek to act ethically and this implies that they use their creativity to improve themselves and the whole of society. Nietzsche suggested that we concentrate on what is important in our lives with all the courage and strength of character we can gather because there essentially there is not enough love and goodness in the world for us to be allowed to give away to imaginary things according to some wise saying. For Nietzsche, a manager will lose his/her power when the organization does not control for example, a market. However once the organization makes profits and controls the market in sustainable way which incorporates the triple-bottom line and considers corporate social responsibility to be a critical element of operation, then the manager becomes a truly useful entity. A true manager is very effective when he/she considers all employees in even the most basic of decisions. Managers are respected when they take their employees seriously and include them in the formulation of policies and they should thus do so as a matter of course. This truly empowers employees who are not viewed as a 'herd'. Managers must be empathetic and supportive towards all employees and their cultural backgrounds must be considered. Managers must also realize that without the support of employees and other stakeholders, no organization can grow and be sustainable. All employees are equal human beings and must be treated as such because this is the right thing to do. Profits are important, yes, but not at the expense of any the stakeholders.

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