

“Nobel” for Entire Life Performance

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ABSTRACT: The linguistic foundation of the term δυναμις (*dinamis*) comes from the Greek language, positively aspected and used in rendering the meaning of *power*, *dynamics*, *potential*, and *ability*. Epistemological progress promotes in the patented formula the notion of dynamite, of the same Hellenistic essence, used for the first time in 1866 and attributed to the explosive that is the subject of this study and which belongs entirely to Alfred Nobel. The interest in this invention was intended to be compatible with scientific evolution and technological progress. Generous in many humanitarian and scientific philanthropic acts, Alfred Nobel was paradoxically pessimistic, bitterly ironic, and convinced that his discoveries, instead of contributing to the annihilation of war, would inevitably make conflicts even bloodier than before. The notoriety of Nobel's will is colossal, exceptional and unmatched in its essence and substance. It stands as a symbol of undisputed epistemological power and a dynamic of the most distinguished praxis.

KEYWORDS: *dinamis*, science, morality, Alfred Nobel, dynamite, Nobel Prize, conscience, will to power, Nietzsche

“I am dynamite!” – Friedrich Nietzsche

1. Introduction

The present study revolves around the concept of δυναμις (*dinamis*) – *power*, from its linguistic foundation to its scientific potential, and, last but not least, deeply ethically imprinted in human consciousness.

Science and morality: in which formulation do these two concepts acquire maximum potential for evolution? Unfortunately, history, in its most vulnerable moments, has often shown us that where scientific progress is relied upon, the morality tangent is questionable. Which is the permissible limit to make possible the existence of this binomial: science and morality? Where does the premise of this supposed inadvertence come from? Educational deficiencies? *The power?* *The Nietzschean Last Man* and his *Will to power?* Ethics (Rotaru, 2005b, 38), integrity, and morality are identified as fundamental concepts inherent in philosophy and human consciousness (Rotaru 2016a, 30-37). Fortunately, philosophy sufficiently problematizes out of necessity, but it does not have the power to sanction the

reprehensible manifestations of fellow human beings, which inevitably leads us to think of Hannah Arendt, of positive law, of human plurality, of the Ancient polis - zoon politikon – in classical Grek world, where the prevailing ideal of existence was the life dedicated responsibly, ethically and practically to the community, and immediately to the revocation of the possibility of ever finding ourselves in the nudity of fundamental rights (Rotaru 2019, 214-215).

The specula, as a tool in the thinking of those concerned with satisfying their own material and social interests, represents the embodiment of the most ferocious opportunism; all in the name of power, this time identified at the lowest level of existence. The consequences of such visions and interests have been shown to be catastrophic to humanity, for so many times.

2. The linguistic foundation of *δυναμις* (*dynamis*)

The linguistic foundation of the term *δυναμις* (*dynamis*) comes from the Greek language, positively aspected and used in rendering the meaning of *power*, *dynamics*, *potential*, and *ability*. The epistemological progress promotes in the patented formula the notion of dynamite, of the same Hellenistic essence, used for the first time in 1866 and attributed to the explosive that is the subject of this study and which belongs entirely to Alfred Nobel. Interest in this invention was intended to be compatible with scientific evolution and technological progress. Generous in many humanitarian and scientific philanthropic acts, Alfred Nobel was paradoxically pessimistic, bitterly ironic, and convinced that his discoveries, instead of contributing to the annihilation of war, would inevitably make the conflict even bloodier than it had been before then. The notoriety of Nobel's will is colossal, exceptional and unmatched in its essence and substance. Symbol of undisputed epistemological power and a dynamic of the most distinguished praxis.

In the same key, contemporary with Alfred Nobel, the eccentric F. Nietzsche will have revolutionized the world with his authentic writing, mirrored in the *philosophy of masks*, in *the last man* and *the will to power*. An innovation unmatched and incomprehensible to most of the sage's guild. "I am dynamite!" ... he exclaimed in a sublime revelation moment, thus becoming the successor of an open universality.

3. Alfred Bernhard Nobel: The Chemist – the Industrialist – the Humanist

3.1. Biographical landmarks embedded in the history and culture of his time

"Alfred Bernhard Nobel was one of the most illustrious personalities of the 19th century. His inventions, vision and generosity would profoundly mark the course and development of human civilization. He was both a visionary and a patron in every sense of the word. It has remained a landmark, a living symbol and a source of inspiration for many. Today his name is attached to the most prestigious award on

the world map, whose awarding continues to be the most important event of its kind in the international political, cultural and scientific circles" (Descopera.ro 2011).

3.2. A family of inventors

Alfred Bernhard Nobel, the third son of Immanuel Nobel and Andrietta Ahlsell, was born in Stockholm, Sweden, on October 21, 1833, into a family where science and knowledge were highly valued. His father, a reputed scientist and inventor of the time, was a descendant of the famous Swedish scientist Olof Rudbeck; Immanuel Nobel, an engineer skilled in the construction of bridges and buildings in Stockholm, experimented with various rock blasting techniques, according to the volume *Personalities of Science - Little Dictionary, Scientific and Encyclopedic Publishing House* (1977). Although his mother came from a wealthy family, 1833 would be a bad year for the Nobel family, caused by his father's bankruptcy. This fact will separate Alfred's parents for a while, the father going, in 1837, to Finland and then to tsarist Russia for a new career. Andriette stayed in Stockholm and, in order to support her family, opened a grocery store, which brought her a modest income (Șîmbeteanu n.d.).

Meanwhile, his father founded a company in St. Petersburg responsible for the distribution of military supplies to the Russian army, convincing its generals of the usefulness of laying water mines to prevent British ships from entering the territory. This belligerent tactic proved to be a real success, with the mines built by Immanuel Nobel keeping the British fleet at bay during the Crimean War (1853-1856). In 1842, Immanuel Nobel brought his family to Saint Petersburg. Here, his son's study natural sciences, languages and literature.

3.3. Science

3.3.1. Nitroglycerin – Ascanio Sobrero

At 17, Alfred, inheriting his family's appetite for science and research, developed into a versatile man, fluent in Swedish, Russian, French, English and German, and equally attracted to English literature and the exact sciences, such as physics and chemistry. After turning 18, Alfred traveled to the United States where, for a period of four years, he furthered his chemistry studies under the guidance of Professor John Ericsson, who, among other things, conceived and designed the armored ship USS Ironclad, made famous in the American Civil War. The instability of the family business prompted Alfred to return to Europe and continue his studies in France, where he had the chance to work in the laboratory of a famous chemist, then, T.J. Lawns. It was also here that he met the young Italian chemist Ascanio Sobrero, who three years earlier, in 1847 to be exact, had invented nitroglycerin, a particularly powerful and unstable explosive liquid. Nitroglycerin was at the time considered too dangerous to be used in practice, due to the fact that it could cause

explosions at small variations in temperature or pressure (Descopera.ro 2011). Alfred Nobel was, however, interested in the possibility of its use in construction and mining, which is why he began to work on developing methods to control the nitroglycerin explosion. He would soon discover that mixing glycerin with quartz formed a paste that could be molded into various shapes and sizes.

3.3.2. *First Patent: Method of obtaining dynamite dust – Alfred Nobel*

In 1863, he was awarded the first Swedish patent for the *Method of Obtaining Dynamite Dust*, a mixture of nitroglycerin and gunpowder, a formula invented in collaboration with family members. A few months after the explosive formula was invented, the family laboratory was destroyed. Experiments with nitroglycerin, resulting numerous times in explosions and loss of human life, led Nobel to deepen research in this field. His research will have tragic consequences, the terrible explosion at his own explosives factory Helensburgh, in Stockholm, leads to the death of several people, including the eldest of the family, his brother, Emil Nobel. The authorities are forced to ban his experiments inside the city.

During this time, his father and brother continue their business in Russia, supplying the Tsarist Empire with explosives for the army and enjoying success in oil exploitation in the North Caucasus. Thus, the contracts with the tsarist army and the oil wells in Azerbaijan and Chechnya transformed the members of the much-tried Nobel family into some of the richest people of those times (Descopera.ro 2011). On the other hand, Alfred did not let himself be defeated by the first failures in his career, which was announced to be an exceptional one. After the authorities forbade him to do any more experiments within the radius of the capital Stockholm, Alfred set up his laboratory near Lake Malaren, an isolated area without human settlements. Deeply affected not only by the death of his brother, but also by the thousands of deaths of miners throughout Europe who used the dangerous nitroglycerin as an explosive, Alfred Nobel devoted all his efforts to the discovery of a safe and effective explosive.

3.3.3. *Dynamite. The Detonator – Alfred Nobel*

The Swedish scientist, who had tried many explosive materials capable of setting off explosions, discovered that a porous silicon ore called kieselguhr absorbed a significant amount of nitroglycerin, resulting in a much safer process to mine than his previous mixture. The formula called for a 75% nitroglycerin and 25% kieselguhr mixture, which he gradually improved because it proved not to be as powerful as he wanted, since the kieselguhr did not contribute anything to the power of the explosive, and actually reduced its effect by absorbing caloric energy which should have intensified the explosion. Nobel replaced it with other active natural ingredients, such as wood pulp as an absorbent, and a salt (sodium nitrate) as an oxidizing agent. These transformations allowed Nobel not only to improve the quality of the explosive, but also to be able to prepare explosives of different grades.

Thus, he called his invention, for the first time, *dynamite*, which he patented in 1867 (Descopera.ro 2011). In order to be able to cause the explosion, the brilliant scientist patented another invention, a detonator that allows the dynamite to be activated by lighting a fuse. Because dynamite reduced the cost of blowing up stone blocks, Nobel made selling it a profitable business.

By the time of his death, Nobel had patented 355 inventions. He discovered the possibility of priming the detonation of nitroglycerine with the help of mercury fulminant. He succeeded in making dynamite powder, dynamite gum, and then the formula for a propellant powder, to which he gave the name of ballistite, a mixture of equal parts of nitroglycerin and nitrocellulose. He took aerial photographs, and developed methods of obtaining synthetic silk, synthetic rubber and synthetic leather. Also fond of literature and poetry, he wrote a tragedy and several novels (Descopera.ro 2011). From 1873, he settled in Paris, and in 1881, he set up a laboratory in Servan, where he continued research in order to improve the dynamite formula, a laboratory he transferred, in 1890, to San Remo, in Italy.

3.4. Industrialist – inventions that innovated mining and construction

"Without dynamite, I think we'd barely be out of the Stone Age. I say that dynamite created our society" ("also the lithium in your phone battery or the silicon in your computer processor, both of which have been mined using dynamite." Lee Fronapfel, Colorado School of Mines: (Tudosie 2020), are the words of the famous mine manager, Lee Fronapfel (Lee Fronapfel, Colorado School of Mines: <https://playtech.ro/2020/cum-dinamita-a-modelat-lumea/>).

Alfred Nobel installed a factory in Viterviken in Sweden, then one in Krummel, near Hamburg, Germany, making an extremely prolific business out of the dynamite trade (*To dissociate its name from previous companies linked to dangerous explosives, Nobel insists that the containers of the new explosive product be initially inscribed with the logo Nobel's Safety Powder, later changed to Dynamite, after the explosive was patented*), exporting the products to countries in continents such as Europe, Australia, North America, thus becoming the first person in the world who creates an international company. In 1868, 11 tons of dynamite were produced, five years later, ten times more, and in 1874 over 3000 tons.

Thus, dynamite acquired the dimension of an indispensable tool in the field of engineering. It was used in the construction of railways; where it was necessary to go through the mountain, specialists used dynamite to create tunnels. Also, in the construction of the Hoover Dam in the United States in the 1930s, it was used to divert water, and in cities, it was used to create sinkholes deep enough to be the infrastructure of skyscrapers. The mining industry also began to see the advantages of using dynamite, most of the elements necessary to build the contemporary world were the result of mining activities; e.g.: ores necessary for the production of concrete, ores of aluminum, titanium, silicon, etc.

In the same historical period, the pneumatic jackhammer was also invented, along with the artificial diamond head drill, which made the mining industry acquire new proportions (Tudosie 2020).

3.5. *The humanist*

"If I have one thousand ideas a year, and only one turns out to be good, I am satisfied" declared the famous Swedish scientist, who always defined himself as "a humanist who loves humanity" (Brainy quote 2023), declaring himself convinced that "prosperity the world could fight all the evils". Alfred Nobel was a follower of pacifism. He was aware of the dangers posed by possible misuses of his inventions, calling war "the horror of horrors and the greatest of all crimes". It is almost impossible to ignore the personality of Henry Dunant and his "*A Memory of Solferino*", another humanist genius of his time, forerunner and founder of the Red Cross. Alfred Nobel never married. Traveling incessantly between Sweden, Germany, France, Russia, USA, Italy, he lived most often alone, without a stable home, without family, devoting all his energy and passion to business trips and intensive work in the laboratory. He had built a real empire of dynamite, being fully convinced in his inner forum that his dynamite would sooner lead to peace than a thousand other international conventions. However, history records him as an idealist, deeply dedicated to work, Victor Hugo calling him "Europe's richest vagabond."

3.6. *The Nobel succession – undeniable heritage of humanity*

Among the world's philanthropic wills, the most famous is that of Alfred Nobel. Reputed chemist, formidable industrialist, illustrious inventor and outstanding humanist, he produced a considerable fortune, establishing in his will as his last wish that his capital be reinvested, and that the interest be distributed annually in the form of prizes to those who, during the previous year, they will have brought the greatest benefits to humanity.

3.6.1. *The Nobel Prizes*

Nobel's will specify only five disciplines that remained unchanged, as did the institutions he chose to award the trophies: The Royal Swedish Academy of Sciences for Physics and Chemistry, The Swedish Academy of Letters for Literature, The Karolinska Institute in Stockholm for Physiology and Medicine, Norwegian Parliament for Peace or brotherhood among the poor. The Peace Prize is the only prize awarded in Oslo, because Nobel wanted to associate Norway, which was linked to Sweden before becoming independent in 1905, to his will (Șimbeteanu n.d.).

In his memory, on the occasion of the centenary of the National Bank of Sweden, it established and subsidized in 1968, a sixth prize offered to notable figures from the world economy.

At the time of his death, the Nobel Empire consisted of a network of nearly 100 factories, the Swedish scientist being one of the richest men in the world. On November 27, 1895, the year before his death, at the Swedish-Norwegian Club in Paris, he made public his will, which consisted in the creation of a prize that would bear his name and stipulated a fundamental aspect regarding the eligibility of the nomination of the candidates, insisting that no considerations based on nationality, sex, religion should influence the choice of laureates: "in awarding the prizes, the nationality of the candidate will not be taken into account in any way". Nobel stipulated in his will that all his factories be sold and the proceeds placed in a bank deposit. The resulting interest was to be awarded each year to those who, in the previous year, had done the best things for humanity. On June 29, 1900, the Nobel Foundation was also established, which controls compliance with the rules bequeathed by Alfred Nobel's will. The Nobel Prizes have been awarded every year since 1901 on December 10, the anniversary of his death (The Swedish Academy, www.nobelprize.org/about/the-swedish-academy/).

3.6.2. Moral philosophy – Friedrich Nietzsche

To continue in the spirit of *δυναμις* (*dinamis*), the so-called dynamite, in the sense of power inherited from the Greek language and resurrected in the modern era with scientific progress, has explosive echoes in the sphere of the humanities as well. Some of Nietzsche's eccentric characteristics are easily found in Nobel. The geniuses of the times they lived in, revolutionary in work and thought, they gave the world masterpieces of unparalleled originality.

Described as one of the most important European men of letters of the 19th century, Friedrich Nietzsche exerted a remarkable, often controversial, influence on the philosophical thought of the generations that followed him. His authentic writing, mirrored in the *philosophy of masks*, in the *Last Man* and the *Will to power*, turned the world upside down, giving it a unique and irreversible meaning.

As the flip side of the coin, through the fraudulent crossing of the border from morality to opportunism, it was usurped and interpreted in bad faith by the Nazi ideology, with fatal repercussions on humanity, and which, surely, the nihilist philosopher would not have desired. Friedrich Nietzsche's moral philosophy is unique and inexhaustible. This work is by no means intended to holistically address even part of his remarkable work. It is just a review of the *δυναμις* (*dinamis*) notion and the fact that the philosopher has aligned himself with those who will have changed the world. Society has always been reluctant to massive change and it has always required extraordinary courage, mixed with a percentage of madness and acceptance of non-acceptance by others.

Nietzsche criticizes the fundamental values of the ultra-rationalized society in which he lived, reaching the denial of encyclopedic principles that exclude the vitalism of existence.

The concept of will to power plays a central role in Nietzsche's thought, insofar as it is for him, in a metaphysical sense, a tool for understanding the world: "*the most intimate essence of existence is the will to power*" (Bondor 2020, 45-47).

His project of re-evaluating the traditional concepts of metaphysics will entail the abolition of idealistic values, especially of Christianity, but also of historians. The *will to power* is analyzed as an internal relation of a conflict, as an intimate structure of becoming, as a fundamental pathos, and not only as a force development. This conception allows the overcoming of man, not his elimination, but the abandonment of the old idols and the hope in a world beyond, the acceptance of life in what it behaves as an aspiration to power.

Thus, contrary to the false interpretations of his philosophy, the Nietzschean Last Man is not an all-powerful physical and intellectual man, but represents an evolving tendency, expected and desired by man: "I have come to announce to you the *Last Man*. Man is something to be overcome" ("*Thus spoke Zarathustra*"). According to Zarathustra's parable of the acrobat, man is therefore a bridge between the anthropoid ape and the *Last Man*, a transitory element in evolution (Llaser 2020, 107). „*I am dynamite!*” cried the philosopher of mankind from the top of his lungs, thus marking his belonging to change and evolution.

A double-edged sword, we would be entitled to say, taking into account the impossibility of many to adhere to modernism eager to free themselves from the corseted entourages and above all, the inability or need of others to conform morally to the wind blowing in the change direction.

4. Conclusion

Depending on the eras that dominated society, *scientia moralitas* underwent influences that led to the expression of power (Rotaru 2023, 62-79). *Power*, in its primordial Hellenistic sense, is viewed positively. Man, by nature, is a complex being (Rotaru 2005a, 295-324), commendable to those spirits who share the membership of freedom, evolution, true followers of eupraxias, and undesirable, incompatible with the reprehensible manifestations of those who guide their existence in opposition to values and aspirations framed in the pattern of good.

Alfred Nobel had a purpose and made constant, considerable efforts, counted with unimaginable and traumatic suffering in improving his work. Despite the general unfavorable opinion regarding his work, he did not lie and created for mankind something as original as dynamite, namely the Nobel Prizes, the most prestigious appreciation of scientific progress, the balance of humanity, the preservation of peace. This is where the essence of true power is to be housed.

In the same key, at the opposite pole of the exact scientific world, the Nietzschean philosophical thought that created the *Last Man* and the *Will to power* for the world, is nothing more than an evolving trend, expected and desired by man (Rotaru 2016b, 29-42).

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