NIETZSCHE OR SCHOPENHAUER
Can One Construct an Alternative Mentality?

In the *Genealogie der Sitten: Ein Angriff* (1887), Nietzsche attacks what he perceives to be the fatal flaw of the modern Western mentality: its ethics of "guilt" and "pity." He carries out this attack from the standpoint of the ethics of the overman, which he proposes in *Thus Spake Zarathustra* (1884) and which, as I have argued elsewhere, can be seen as a return to the archaic or heroic mentality present, for example, in Hellenic and medieval epic.[1] In the *Genealogy of Morals*, however, Nietzsche changes his rhetorical strategy and largely employs the language of the historian and the psychologist rather than that of the prophet. I shall review Nietzsche's principal arguments in the three essays comprising the book and shall assess the relevance of these arguments to contemporary cultural history. I shall finally reassess them in terms of an alternative mode of thought, behavior, and pathos, to which Schopenhauer also refers at the end of his monumental work, *Die Welt als Wille und Vorstellung*, and which is based on neither an archaic nor a modern mentality of power. Indeed, Western philosophy could have taken a completely different turn in the twentieth century if it had chosen to develop Schopenhauer's imaginative insights as thoroughly as Nietzsche's.

The basic questions that Nietzsche wishes to address in the *Genealogy* are: "Under what conditions did man construct the value judgments good and evil?" "Have [these value judgments] thus far benefited or retarded mankind?" "Do they betoken misery, curtailment, degeneracy, or, on the contrary, power, fullness of being, energy, courage in the face of life, and confidence in the future?"[2] In order to answer these questions in a satisfactory manner, he proposes in the first essay, entitled "'Good and Evil,' 'Good and Bad,'" to bring the method of historical hermeneutics into traditional metaphysics, elaborating an *Entwicklungsgeschichte der Begriffe*. He directs this historical method primarily against nineteenth-century German idealist philosophy that claims universal validity for its abstract metaphysical and ethical concepts. For Nietzsche, philology in general and etymology in particular are important instruments of historical interpretation (and here he shows his classical training): they can

3

point to the origin of a philosophical or a moral concept, following its historical metamorphosis from a concrete, physical meaning to an abstract, metaphysical one.

When applied to moral "goodness," the historical method yields the startling insight that, contrary to common belief, this notion does not originate with the beneficiaries of a good deed. On the contrary, "it was the 'good' themselves, that is to say the noble, mighty, highly placed, and high-minded who decreed themselves and their actions to be good, i.e., belonging to the highest rank, in contradistinction to all that was base, low-minded and plebeian" (160). According to Nietzsche, the origin of the opposition between good and bad is to be found in the "pathos of distance" between the ruling elite and the lower, dependent social groups. The lords have the power of bestowing, indeed calling, names, and in this sense one "would almost be justified in seeing the origin of language itself as an expression of the rulers' power." By saying "this *is* that or that," the lords can "seal off each thing and action with a sound and thereby take symbolic possession of it" (160). From the outset, then, Nietzsche links the notions of good and bad to the Will to Power, and thus distances himself not only from Christian, Kantian, and idealist ethics in general but also from the English utilitarians (including the Darwinian evolutionists), who see morality largely as a function of the struggle for survival.

The aristocratic genealogy of good and bad, Nietzsche further argues, can also be supported etymologically. He points out that a close look at the words denoting "good" in several Indo-European languages shows that they invariably had the original meaning of "noble" in a social-hierarchical sense and only afterwards came to mean "nobility of spirit," regardless of social distinctions. In turn, words denoting "bad" can be traced back to terms with which the aristocracy characterized the situation of the commoner and meant "unhappy," "pitiable," "base," and "humble" rather than morally bad or "evil."[3]

Nietzsche distinguishes between the valuation set of good and bad and that of good and evil, contending that these sets have divergent historical sources. The first set belongs to the aristocratic code of conduct, or a "master ethics," while the second is the outcome of a rancorous "slave ethics." For Nietzsche, however, both these ethics have upper-class origins, being different manifestations of the same Will to Power.

They come into being as a result of a "jealous clash" between the warriors and the priests. The values of the warrior caste presuppose "a strong physique, blooming, even exuberant health, together with all the conditions that guarantee its preservation: combat, adventure, the chase, the dance, war games."[4] Whereas aristocratic values arise in and are defined as agonistic play, priestly values are founded upon deadly serious "morality," and Nietzsche points to the historical origin of the conflict between play and (modern) ethics in the conflict between the physically strong and weak: "As we all know, priests are the most evil enemies to have—why should this be so? Because they are the most impotent. It is their impotence which makes their hate so violent and sinister, so cerebral and poisonous. The greatest haters in history—but also the most intelligent haters—have been priests. . . . Human history would be a dull and stupid thing without the intelligence furnished by its impotents" (167). Nietzsche thus relates both ethics and sociology to physiology and biology: a strong or a weak physique largely predetermines the kind of ethical and sociological views that an individual is likely to adopt in his or her community. He even suggests, in a note at the end of the first essay, that a philosophical investigation of morality requires a proper knowledge not only of linguistics and etymology but also of physiology and medicine (188).

In addition to a sociological and a physiological dimension, for Nietzsche the valuation sets of good/ bad and good/ evil have an ethnic and a racial component as well. He singles out the Jews as a historical example of a "priestly people," opposing them to the "aristocratic" Romans. According to Nietzsche, the Jews "dared to invert the aristocratic value equations good/noble/ powerful/ beautiful/happy/favored-of-the-gods and maintain, with the furious hatred of the underprivileged and impotent that 'only the poor, the powerless are good; only the suffering, sick, and ugly truly blessed'" (167). What the noble warrior values as good, the priest values as evil, and vice versa—an "inversion of values" that is responsible for both the decadence of the Western world and the interesting turn its history has taken. Starting from his typological opposition of Roman and Jew, Nietzsche proposes his own version of Western history in terms of a fierce agon between the "two sets of valuations, good/bad and good/evil" (186). The Roman aristocratic idea, which is also the "classical" one, witnesses a "strong and splendid awakening"

during the Renaissance, but is buried again owing to "the plebeian rancor of the German and English Reformation, together with its natural corollary, the restoration of the Church" (186). The French Revolution means another triumph of "Israel over the classical ideal," despite Napoléon, who appears as "a last signpost to an *alternative* route," being the "most isolated and anachronistic of men, the embodiment of the noble ideal" (187).

Nietzsche closes the argument of the first essay by assigning himself the historical role of a latter-day harbinger of the aristocratic ideal and its impending reawakening. He insists that by the "dangerous slogan" on the title page of his previous book, *Beyond Good and Evil*, he had hardly meant "beyond good and bad." On the contrary, he had urged a revival of the valuation standard of good and bad, and a return to a "true hierarchy of values," based on aristocratic contest (188).

What is the merit of these cultural historical theses? As far as the history of the Western mentality is concerned, Nietzsche's dichotomy between a "master" and a "slave" ethics provides an important insight, even though it is less a historical account than a highly personal value judgment. A cursory look at the history of the Western world shows that over the centuries our mentality has invariably remained divided between two basic sets of values: an archaic one, which rests on the principle of "might makes right" and is particularly prevalent in traditional communities; and a modern or a "median" one, which prevails mostly in large-scale, democratic societies and which attempts, with various degrees of success, to separate might from right, often enlisting the help of religion to this purpose. These two valuation sets can be traced back to certain social groups, such as a warrior aristocracy, whose viewpoint largely determines cultural values, say, in archaic Greece or early medieval Europe, and various median groups (priests, rich farmers, merchants, craftsmen, artists, and so forth) whose viewpoint gains considerable influence, say, in classical Greece or modern Europe. Thus, what Nietzsche disparagingly calls a "slave ethics" can neutrally be called a median morality, the aim of which is to restrain and moderate the often self-destructive, violent competitiveness of warlike communities.[5]

It is a historical error, however, to identify too closely, as Nietzsche often does, a certain mentality with a specific social group. Although one can retain Nietzsche's insight that both a "master" and a "slave" ethics originate with the rulers, these ethics are far from belonging

exclusively to either a warrior or a priestly caste. Historically speaking, Greek archaic communities, for example, seem to have made no distinction between lords and priests, and Hellenic religious beliefs were far from excluding a "master" ethics, as can be seen in Homer and Hesiod.[6] Nietzsche himself acknowledges that a priestly caste can equally share in the mentality of might makes right when he observes that "it at first creates no difficulties (though difficulties may arise later), if the ruling caste is also the priestly caste and elects to characterize itself by a term which reminds us of its priestly function."[7] He also claims, not without some historical accuracy, that religious terms like "pure" and "impure" initially oppose each other as signs of class and only later become ethical notions independent of social hierarchies.

In the absolute monarchies (based on divine right) of the Middle Ages and of later times, moreover, the king was the head of both the state and the church, and the separation of political power from the religious one is a relatively recent development in Western history. The two sets of values that Nietzsche associates with specific social groups can often be shared by aristocrats and commoners alike. Napoléon, Nietzsche's prime example of a noble "Roman," was a commoner who rose through the ranks from noncommissioned officer to emperor; conversely, there are aristocrats who have decisively contributed to the rise of a "slave" ethics, such as Solon and Plato in antiquity, or Leibnitz and Schiller in the Age of Reason. Finally, there are modern priests who adopt a thoroughly warlike, aristocratic mentality (e.g., the papal state throughout the Middle Ages and the Renaissance, the Maltese and Teutonic orders, and so forth).[8]

In sum, although both the "master" and the "slave" ethics originate with the ruling classes, they appear on the historical record from the earliest times and can indifferently be adopted by any individual or social group. The question of a shift from one valuation set to another is not an evolutionary one, nor is it determined by biology, physiology, and temperament, although it may itself determine the specific nature of all three; rather, it is a question of cultural emphasis: whereas the archaic mentality seems to dominate the beginnings of a certain community, settlement, or city (ancient and modern alike—witness, for example, the Anglo-Saxon communities in the Middle Ages or those of the Wild West in nineteenth-century America), it gradually recedes into

the background and allows its counterpart to become more visible. The two mentalities thus engage in an incessant contest, with one or the other gaining temporary, inconclusive victories. In this light, Nietzsche and his poststructuralist heirs such as Eugen Fink, Georges Bataille, Gilles Deleuze, and Michel Foucault can themselves be seen as modern proponents of an archaic mentality; in turn, Nietzsche's ethical radicalism can be seen as a reversal of the median values that prevailed in nineteenth-century rationalist thought. It is in this sense (but only in this sense) that one can say that Nietzsche constructs an alternative genealogy of morals, aimed at replacing the predominantly median genealogies of his time.

If identifying the "master" and the "slave" ethics with monolithic social groups is highly questionable, associating them with ethnic, national, or racial entities is downright misleading. For example, Nietzsche's typological opposition of Roman and Hebrew has little historical merit. Rancor or resentment can hardly be the attribute of a whole people or a whole race. According to Nietzsche himself, this resentment can appear within any class or group of individuals, including the aristocracy (compare Nietzsche's argument that the slave ethics originated with the ruling classes, in the conflict between the physically strong and weak). In the third essay of the *Genealogy*, moreover, Nietzsche seems to undermine his own racial typology when he praises the Old Testament as an expression of aristocratic (that is, "Roman") values and attacks only the New Testament as an expression of slavish rancor:

> The Old Testament is another story. I have the highest respect for that book. I find in it great men, a heroic landscape, and one of the rarest things on earth, the naïveté of a strong heart. What is more, I find a *people*. In the New Testament, on the other hand, I find nothing but petty sectarianism, a rococo of the spirit . . . to say nothing of that occasional whiff of bucolic mawkishness which is characteristic of the epoch (and the locale) and which is not so much Jewish as Hellenistic. . . . These little men are fired with the most ridiculous of ambitions: chewing the cud of their private grievances and misfortunes, they try to attract the attention of the Great Demiurge, to force him to *care!*[9]

Here Nietzsche ends up with the proposition that the Jews of the Old Testament are more "Roman" than the Romans and that the late Helle-

nistic world is more "Jewish" than the Hebrews—an obvious philosophical paradox of dubious historical value.

Furthermore, examples of what Nietzsche calls a "slave" ethics and what I have called a median mentality abound in many ancient texts that predate the New Testament, and this ethics or mentality certainly emerged in the Graeco-Roman world long before the latter's extensive cultural contacts with the Hebraic one. For instance, in Hesiod's *Works and Days*, such terms as μέτριος (moderate), μέσος (in the middle), and καιρός (due measure) describe the life proper to a rich farmer. In the early sixth century B.C., sayings like "Know thyself" (γνώθι σεαυτόν), "Nothing in excess" (μηδέν ἄγαν), "Measure [μέτρον] is best," "Understand due measure" (καιρός), "Honor moderation" (σωφροσύνη), and "Flee from sensuous pleasure" (ἡδονή)" are attributed to some of the Seven Sages, such as Cleobulus, Chilon, Pittacus, and Solon. During the same century, "Know thyself" and "Nothing in excess" are inscribed over the entrance of Apollo's temple at Delphi, and Apollo's shaman-priests preach due measure and restrain. With the growth of the Hellenic polis, these injunctions become more and more common, for example, in the poetry of Theognis, Alcman, Pindar, Phocylides, Bacchylides and others, as well as in fifth-century Greek tragedy. The origins of these sayings are largely aristocratic and, as such, they are used by statesmen like Pittacus of Mytilene and Solon to support εὐνομία (good rule under aristocratic law), even though they gradually acquire a democratic flavor, being placed in the service of ἰσονομία (equality before the law), for instance in classical Athens. The example of ancient Greece shows again that a median ethics is not necessarily connected with any particular social class, let alone any ethnic or racial group, being used indifferently by any culture based on a mentality of power.

One should also note that although Nietzsche cannot in all fairness be accused of anti-Semitism, his ambivalent evaluation of the role of the Jews in Western culture is unfortunate because this evaluation was taken over without any philosophical qualifications or niceties by Nazi ideology—itself a prime example of social rancor and only superficially related to the "aristocratic" or archaic kind of values advocated by Nietzsche. The self-serving Nazi appropriation of his racial speculations is all the more ironical because, in the *Genealogy* itself, Nietzsche ridicules German anti-Semitism, prophetically pointing out its fatal danger

for the German nation: "I am equally out of patience with those newest speculators in idealism called anti-Semites, who parade as Christian-Aryan worthies and endeavor to stir up all the asinine elements of the nation by that cheapest of propaganda tricks, a moral attitude. (The ease with which any wretched imposture succeeds in present-day Germany may be attributed to the progressive stultification of the German mind. The reason for this general spread of inanity may be found in a diet composed entirely of newspapers, politics, beer, and Wagner's music)" (294–95).

Despite some glaring ambiguities in his historical argument, Nietzsche's contribution to the history of Western civilization is nevertheless durable, because he accurately locates the historical origins and the prevailing value-systems of this civilization in a mentality of power. He shows that both archaic and modern ethics stem from this mentality and implies that the exorbitant psychological price of modern civilization may offset the latter's benefits. In fact, Nietzsche appears most persuasive as a diagnostician of the diseased modern psyche, fatally split between might and right, between willful pleasure and guilty self-denial.

In his second essay, entitled "'Guilt,' 'Bad Conscience' and Related Matters," Nietzsche chiefly develops two theses that are directly connected with his view of human history as a relentless agon between aristocratic and priestly values. The first thesis is that human civilization is a result of a violent suppression of the animal instincts and that man had to pay a high price for "reason, seriousness, control over his emotions . . . those grand human prerogatives and cultural showpieces." Behind all good things lies a tremendous amount of "blood and horror" (194). Nietzsche's historical examples in support of this thesis include archaic ludic forms, such as the religious festival, in which the ancient Greeks "could offer their gods no more pleasant condiment than the joys of cruelty" (201). Punishment, too, had its "festive features": witness the Middle Ages, when no royal wedding or public celebration would have been complete without "executions, tortures, or an *auto da fe*" (198). Nietzsche thus points to the archaic link between play, pleasure, and violence, a link that was severed when Hellenic philosophy separated play from immediate power and turned it into a rational instrument. As I have shown elsewhere, this separation has been endorsed and perpetuated by a median mentality throughout the history of Western

rationalism.[10] According to Nietzsche, however, rationalist thought it-self is not a renunciation of the Will to Power, but a covert and, in some cases, even perverted form of it. He will come back to this idea in the third essay, when attacking modern scholarship and the modern scientific mentality as distorted expressions of the ascetic ideal.

Nietzsche's second thesis, related to the first, is that guilt and bad conscience are among the highest prices paid by culture for suppressing man's violent instincts:

> All instincts that are not allowed free play turn inward. This is what I call man's interiorization [*Verinnerlichung des Menschen*]; it alone provides the soil for the growth of what later is called man's *soul*. Man's interior world, originally meager and tenuous, was expanding in every dimension, in proportion as the outward discharge of his feelings was curtailed. The formidable bulwarks by means of which the polity protected itself against the ancient instincts of freedom . . . caused those wild extravagant instincts to turn in upon man.[11]

Nietzsche sees the phenomenon of the "animal soul" turning in upon itself as one of the "most unexpected throws in the game of dice played by Heraclitus's great 'child,' be he called Zeus or Chance" (219), that is, as a highly ambiguous historical development. On the one hand, he considers it a positive step in the (self-)creation of civilized man, even though this step is neither necessary nor predictable, as his dice metaphor indicates. On the other hand, Nietzsche sees the *Verinnerlichung des Menschen* as a devastating malady, for it is at the root of both guilt and bad conscience: "Hostility, cruelty, the delight in persecution, raids, excitement, destruction all turned against their begetter. Lacking external enemies and resistances, and confined within an oppressive narrowness and regularity, man began rending, persecuting, terrifying himself, like a wild beast hurling itself against the bars of its cage" (218). Nietzsche further describes guilt and bad conscience as man's "sickness of himself, brought on by the violent severance from his animal past . . . by his declaration of war against the old instincts that had hitherto been the foundation of his power, his joy, and his awesomeness" (218).

Nietzsche is fully aware of the paradoxical character of his argument and at the end of his second essay imagines the reader asking him: "Are you constructing an ideal or destroying one?" His predictable answer is

that he is doing both, for the "raising of an altar" requires the breaking of another (228). Here Nietzsche temporarily abandons his historical-genealogical project and relapses into the prophetic language of Zarathustra, whom he appropriately invokes in the last sentence of the essay. He echoes the closing argument of his first essay by predicting the arrival of the overman, who will restore archaic, warlike values and thus free humanity of pity, guilt, and bad conscience.

Nietzsche's psychological theses constitute the point of departure not only of the twentieth-century psychoanalytical movement but also of some of its contemporary opponents.[12] They offer a plausible explanation of the schizoid character of the Western collective psyche, divided between mind and body, love and hate, contest and cooperation, gentleness and violence, law and transgression, peace and war. But they also offer a holistic, psychosomatic view of individuals inseparable from their physical and social environment. It has by now become clear, I hope, that Nietzsche attempts more than a genealogy of morals in his book. He probes into the nature of Western mentality as a whole, and it is for this reason that he insists on regarding ethics as being inextricably linked not only to axiology but also to physiology, biology, medicine, pathology, psychology, linguistics, and etymology.

A mentality comprises not only a community's ethos (mode of thought and behavior) but also its pathos, i.e., the psychoemotional investment or interest that both underlies and upholds its values, whether material or spiritual. Furthermore, a certain ontoepistemological framework is always the expression of a certain ethopathology, rather than the other way around. As Nietzsche notes, "Our thoughts should grow out of our values with the same necessity as the fruit out of the tree."[13] To "thoughts," Nietzsche would certainly agree to adding "behavior," since for him "ethos" means both. Indeed, in the context of the present study, one should always understand "ethos" as "thought-behavior," because for me, as for Nietzsche or any other holistic thinker, behavior is a mode of thought, and thought is a mode of behavior. As Nietzsche's psychosomatic view further implies, one cannot change one's world without first changing one's mentality (i.e., ethos and pathos), and this is why in subsequent works he will seek to elaborate an alternative ethopathology for his overman, a project in many respects as ambitious as the one Socrates envisioned for his philosopher-king in the *Republic*.

On the other hand, the experience of two devastating world wars, several communist and fascist dictatorships, and the rapid rise of a ruthless multinational technocracy with global hegemonic interests, all within the present century, ought to render us very skeptical of the Nietzschean overman, called upon to heal the diseased Western collective psyche through a return to an archaic ethopathology. Full and lasting changes in this psyche can be achieved neither through social, ethical, and axiological hierarchies based on warlike contest nor through a periodical, violent erasure of all individual differences in Dionysian collective ecstasy. We need to look outside a mentality of power, whether in its archaic or median guise, for such radical changes. One alternative would be to construct an irenic mentality, based on an integrative ethopathology that would in turn ground and support a variety of nonviolent sets of values. But wouldn't this irenic mentality be just another "ascetic ideal," as Nietzsche would undoubtedly charge? This question cannot be answered in a satisfactory manner before examining the third and last essay of the *Genealogy*, in which Nietzsche critically defines and explores such ideals.

"What Do Ascetic Ideals Mean?" is an extended commentary on one of Zarathustra's aphorisms that equally belongs to an aristocratic warrior's mentality: "Wisdom likes men who are reckless, scornful and violent; being a woman, her heart goes out to a soldier" (231). In the end, however, Nietzsche's answer to the question he poses in the title of the essay remains profoundly ambivalent: ascetic ideals may mean different things in the case of different temperaments and they can both further and retard the healthy development of mankind. But, ultimately, they are "indicative of a basic trait in the human will, its fear of the void" (231). In other words, for Nietzsche, ascetic ideals are both products and instruments of a mentality of power and, as such, they can be both good and evil.

Nietzsche concentrates mainly on four personality types that profess embracing ascetic ideals: the artist, the philosopher, the priest, and the scientist or the scholar. He sets the first two in opposition, comparing the specific cases of Wagner and Schopenhauer. One may immediately point out that whenever philosophers embark upon such comparisons, they almost inevitably tend to favor their brethren. Nietzsche is hardly an exception to this rule, and his partiality to the philosopher cannot be put down simply to his personal preference for Schopenhauer rather

than Wagner. The charges he brings against artists are age-old: artists are protean, they lack any sense of commitment or loyalty to anyone including themselves, they are political opportunists. Behind Nietzsche's ironic sentences one can hear the condescending voice of Socrates ridiculing Ion: "Artists have never stood sufficiently proudly and independently in (or against) the world for their changes of attitude to be deserving notice. They have ever been in the service of some ethics or philosophy or religion, and all too often they have been tools in the hands of a clique, smooth sycophants either of vested interests or of forces newly come to power. . . . Artists never stand resolutely for themselves; standing alone goes against their deepest instincts" (236). In other words, artists cannot be taken seriously when they claim to pursue *any* ideal, including the ascetic one, and thus cannot be the object of a serious, philosophical discussion.

In turn, the philosopher, as embodied by Schopenhauer, seems at first to get his share of ridicule under Nietzsche's merciless, ironic scrutiny:

> We must take account of the fact that Schopenhauer, who treated sexuality (including woman, that *instrumentum diaboli*) as a personal enemy, absolutely required enemies to keep him in good spirits; . . . that he would have sickened, become a *pessimist* (which he was not, much as he would have liked to be) had he been deprived of his enemies, of Hegel, of woman, of sensuality, of the human will to survival. . . . Just as with the ancient Cynics, his rage was his balm, his recreation, his compensation, his specific against tedium, in short, his happiness. (241)

This time, however, there is a positive valuation behind Nietzsche's ironic tone: for Schopenhauer, just as for the Cynics (and, one might add, for the Sophists, Socrates, Plato, and Nietzsche himself), taking on a worthy opponent is a vital source of both enjoyment and creativity, a particularly productive form of intellectual play. As to the ascetic ideal, Nietzsche tells the reader confidingly, most philosophers exhibit an inveterate prejudice against the senses. This prejudice is no proof, however, of their moral purity, saintliness, or chastity. It is simply that asceticism provides the philosopher with "the condition most favorable to the exercise of his intelligence." Far from denying existence, the philosophers affirm their existence alone, "perhaps even to the point of

hubris: *pereat mundus, fiat philosophia, fiat philosophum, fiam*! It is clear: these philosophers are by no means unprejudiced witnesses and judges of the value of the ascetic ideal. They think only of themselves" (243). In the case of the philosopher, then, the ascetic ideal appears as a positive manifestation of the Will to Power, in which a dominant instinct—the instinct to create—subordinates and channels all the other instincts, attaining the conditions most favorable to optimal functioning.

One can certainly argue that there is no reason why this creative instinct should not prevail in the artist as well. Elsewhere, Nietzsche himself relates the ascetic ideal to the artist in the same positive way that he relates it to the philosopher. In *The Will to Power*, for example, he writes: "Artists are *not* men of great passion, whatever they may like to tell us and themselves. And this for two reasons: they lack any sense of shame before themselves . . . and they also lack any sense of shame before great passion. . . . Secondly, however, their vampire, their talent, grudges them as a rule that squandering of force which one calls passion.—If one has a talent, one is also its victim: one lives under the vampirism of one's talent."[14] Therefore, artists, no less than philosophers, are fully able to subordinate all of their instincts, including the sexual one, to the instinct to create, and know how to gather and channel their force into their work, without dissipating it in useless passion. Along the same lines, Nietzsche points out, in another note of *The Will to Power,* that sexual chastity has nothing to do with morality, but with a "will to mastery" that manifests itself particularly in the artistic personality: "A relative chastity, a prudent caution on principle regarding erotic matters, even in thought, can belong to the grand rationale of life even in richly endowed and complete natures. This principle applies especially to artists, it is part of their best wisdom of life." Consequently, the artist, "under the pressure of his task, of his will to mastery," is "actually moderate, often even chaste." His dominant creative instinct "does not permit him to expend himself in any casual way, for the "force that one expends in artistic conception is the same as that expended in the sexual act: there is only one kind of force."[15] If there is "only one kind of force," then it will manifest itself equally in all intellectual and creative endeavors, including philosophical and artistic ones.

In light of Nietzsche's remarks about artistic chastity as focused force in *The Will to Power*, Wagner no less than Schopenhauer can be said to be

a prime example of the ascetic ideal as a positive expression of the Will to Power. Yet Nietzsche, like Socrates, ultimately sides with the philosophers in their contest with the artists. To this purpose, he even changes the connotation of the word "artist," just as Socrates did in Plato's *Republic* when he transferred the meaning of σοφός from the poet to the philosopher. As I have shown in *Dionysus Reborn*, for Nietzsche only the philosopher, the soldier, and the statesman are "true artists." Although what is usually called *art* may exhibit traces of a warlike, archaic mentality, Nietzsche sees it only as an intermediary stage in his project of transvaluating all values.

In the *Genealogy of Morals*, the case of the priest as an embodiment of the ascetic ideal is even more ambivalent than that of the artist. Although religious asceticism is equally a manifestation of the Will to Power, it assumes largely a negative form because, through it, the Will turns in upon itself and becomes perverted. According to Nietzsche, the priest is a typical modern hybrid of strength and weakness. On the one hand, the priest ministers to the sufferers, because he is one of them. He "must be sick himself, he must be deeply akin to all the shipwrecked and diseased, if he is to understand them and be understood by them."[16] On the other hand, the priest "must also be strong, master over himself even more than over others, with a will to power that is intact, if he is to be their support, overlord, disciplinarian, tyrant, god" (262). He is a new kind of beast of prey, waging "a war of cunning ('intellect') rather than of brute force" (263).

Consequently, according to Nietzsche, the priest's mission is double-edged. He defends his sick flock against healthy predators by sowing among the latter "pain, inner division, self-contradiction—confident of his rule over all sufferers." But he also defends his flock against themselves, "against all the wickedness and malice smoldering within the herd and whatever other troubles are bred among the sick" (263). The priest, moreover, carries out his double-edged mission through a subtle, sophistic twist: "Every suffering sheep says to himself, 'I suffer; it must be somebody's fault.' But his shepherd, the ascetic priest, says to him, 'You are quite right, my sheep, somebody must be at fault here, but that somebody is yourself. You alone are to blame—you alone are to blame for yourself'" (264). The priest thus wages "a clever, hard, secret battle

against anarchy and disintegration, always aware of the piling-up of ran-
cor, that most dangerous of dynamites" (263).

Despite its positive effect of controlling the rancorous herd, how-
ever, the priest's reasoning is "not only bold but also abundantly false"
(264). In the short term, this kind of remedy has a certain curative vir-
tue, raising a protective barrier between the healthy and the sick. In the
long run, however, it cannot result in a physiologically effective cure,
because it does not tap the "vital instinct . . . for the rehabilitation of the
personality" (265). In other words, it ultimately fails to be effective,
because its source is not in the affirmation but in the denial of the Will
to Power. It is for this reason that religious asceticism is ultimately more
destructive than creative, and Nietzsche ranks its pernicious effect on
the health of humanity among the three deadliest, ahead of alcohol and
syphilis (280).

Nietzsche also sketches a typology of the modern scholar or scien-
tist, who claims to have rendered his rival, the priest, obsolete through a
cultivation of the scientific "counterideal." This counterideal allegedly
is "a truly realistic philosophy" that "believes only in itself, has the cour-
age of its convictions, and has managed splendidly thus far to get along
without God, transcendence and restrictive virtues" (284). But, to
Nietzsche, this is only "noisy propaganda," for the scholar or the scien-
tist is little more than a latter-day avatar of the priest. Barring a few
exceptions, "learning today is a hiding place for all manner of maladjust-
ment, lukewarmness, self-depreciation, guilty conscience. Its restless
activity thinly veils a lack of ideals, the want of a great love, dissatisfac-
tion with a continence imposed on it from without" (285). Nietzsche
contends that scholarship often is an opiate for sufferers who, in a way,
are even worse than priests, because they are "unwilling to admit their
suffering to themselves," turning into "stupefied and unconscious men,
mortally afraid of regaining their consciousness" (286). In that sense,
Nietzsche asks, "Haven't we all grown familiar with learning as a drug?"
(285). Since the contemporary world still shares, implicitly or explicitly,
Nietzsche's mentality of power, perhaps it is superfluous to point out
that his observations about the ailing ethopathology of Western academia
and the Western scientific community in general are as pertinent today
as they were a hundred years ago.

After he analyzes the four personality types that embrace and pro-
mote ascetic ideals, Nietzsche implicitly acknowledges that in the end
no one type is higher than the others, because all of them "still believe
in truth" (287). In this regard, all of them should learn what the Chris-
tian Crusaders in the East should have learned from "the invincible
Society of Assassins, that order of free spirits *par excellence*, whose lower
ranks observed an obedience stricter than that of any monastic order"
and whose higher ranks reserved for themselves the liberating slogan:
"Nothing is true; everything is permitted" (287). In the absence of such
genuine intellectual and emotional freedom, which would do away with
any kind of ideal, the ascetic ideal remains of utmost importance in the
life of mankind. This is so, Nietzsche concludes, because up to now it
has been the only ideal that has given human life some meaning, and
"any meaning is better than none" (298). Although the ascetic ideal
signifies "a will to nothingness, a revulsion from life, a rebellion against
the principal conditions of living," it nevertheless "is and remains a *will*,"
and man "would sooner have the void for his purpose than be void of
purpose" (298–99). Here Nietzsche reveals the central tautology of any
thought that makes power its grounding principle. For such thought,
power must always constitute its own justification or raison d'être. No
matter how perverted the ascetic ideal may be, it is "justified" because
it remains an expression of the Will. Indeed, it is a strong bulwark against
what power abhors most, the void or nothingness.

   The Genealogy of Morals, then, is an "attack" not only on those ideal-
ist philosophers who do not recognize that power is at the root of West-
ern mentality but also on "pessimistic" thinkers such as Schopenhauer—
the latter understands the sorry state of human affairs only too well and
attempts to offer, if not a remedy, at least some palliative for it. In fact,
"What Do Ascetic Ideals Mean?" can be read as a direct response to the
last few chapters of *Die Welt als Wille und Vorstellung*, Schopenhauer's
philosophical masterpiece. In this regard, Nietzsche's contrast of
Schopenhauer and Wagner has a hidden subtext as well: an implied com-
parison between Schopenhauer and Nietzsche himself. Even though
Nietzsche has wrestled himself free of Richard Wagner, the idol of his
youth whom he now largely dismisses as a histrionic, irresponsible court
jester, he still feels the need to distance himself from Schopenhauer, to
show in what ways he departs from his master's thought.

But what is the basic difference between Nietzsche and Schopenhauer as revealed in the *Genealogy*? It resides precisely in their symmetrically opposite valuations of the ascetic ideal and its cultural agents. A far-ranging critique of the ascetic ideal is of vital importance to Nietzsche, as he takes seriously Schopenhauer's claim that "no philosophy can leave undecided the theme of quietism and asceticism," because "this theme is in substance identical with that of all metaphysics and ethics."[17]

According to Schopenhauer, asceticism and quietism are moral positions (in my terms, ethopathological stances) that humans can assume in regard to the "Will to Live" *(der Wille zum Leben)*, Schopenhauer's philosophical first principle. The Will to Live is immanent in the cosmos as well as in humans, but humans can adopt two contrary attitudes toward it: affirmation or denial. The affirmation of the Will means involvement in the physical world of becoming, violence, and death. All life, at bottom, means striving, suffering, and perishing. The Will to Live is therefore involved in a "delusion," and "injustice, wickedness, cruelty are signs . . . of deep entanglement in that delusion" (610). Conversely, moral virtues such as justice and philanthropy are signs that "the appearing will is no longer firmly held in [its] delusion, but that disillusionment already occurs" (610). Clinging to life and its pleasures must now "make way for a universal renunciation," which also brings about a denial of the Will. This denial is demanded by human intelligence itself, which "can only be reaction to the will; but since all willing is error, the last work of intelligence is to abolish willing, whose aims and ends it has hitherto served" (610). Hence Schopenhauer's positive valuation of the religious teachings of Gautama Buddha and Christ, which seem to him to start from a denial of the Will to Live. For him, the Buddhist and the Christian renunciation of the Will is the highest manifestation of philosophical consciousness in its heroic, if ultimately futile, attempt to transcend itself. In turn, asceticism is a major step toward this renunciation and must therefore be valued positively.

Nevertheless, Schopenhauer contends that asceticism, when defined in a narrow sense as "the giving up of all property, the deliberate search for the unpleasant and repulsive, self-torture, fasting, the hairy garment, mortification of the flesh" (607), is a violent manifestation of the denial of the Will to Live. So Buddhism, for example, rejects this "strict and

excessive" form of asceticism, contenting itself with "celibacy, volun-
tary poverty, humility, and obedience of the monks, with abstinence
from animal food, as well as from all worldliness" (607); Buddhism, that
is, contents itself with quietism.

Moreover, according to Schopenhauer, certain Oriental thinkers are
fully aware of the mentality of power that lies behind asceticism both in
a narrow and in a broad sense: "The Vedanta philosophy rightly says
that, after the entrance of the true knowledge with complete resigna-
tion in its train, and so after the arrival of the new birth, the morality or
immorality of the previous conduct becomes a matter of indifference"
(107). Here Schopenhauer alludes to his fundamental distinction be-
tween philosophical knowledge and "mystical" or "true" knowledge.
In his view, philosophical knowledge can concern itself only with the
individual and nature, that is, with Will both in its subjective guises
(what one may call "ego-will") and its objective guises (what one may
call "natural will" or play of physical forces). Because reflection itself is
an instrument of the Will, "there is a limit up to which [it] can pen-
etrate, and *so far* illuminate the night of our existence, although the
horizon remains dark. This limit is reached by my doctrine in the will-
to-live that affirms and denies itself in its own phenomenon. To want to
go beyond this is, in my view, like wanting to fly beyond the atmo-
sphere" (591–92).

But, of course, mystical knowledge does just that: it "flies beyond
the atmosphere" or beyond the point at which philosophy must inevita-
bly stop. If mystical knowledge begins where philosophical knowledge
ends, then it must begin with nothingness. This fact explains, Schopen-
hauer notes, the negative nature of his philosophy, which ends with the
denial of the Will, that is, with nothingness. Yet, he adds, the consola-
tion may be offered that this is a relative rather than an absolute noth-
ingness: "For, if something is no one of all the things that we know,
then certainly it is for us in general nothing. Yet it does not follow from
this that it is nothing absolutely, namely that it must be nothing from
every possible point of view and in every possible sense, but only that
we are restricted to a wholly negative knowledge of it; and this may
very well lie in the limitation of our point of view. Now it is precisely
here that the mystic proceeds positively, and therefore, from this point,
nothing is left but mysticism" (612). From the standpoint of the mystic,

nothingness can be described positively as a "consciousness of the iden-
tity of one's own inner being with that of all things, or with the ker-
nel of the world" (610). This holistic consciousness is the opposite of
the consciousness leading to the affirmation of life, of the *principium
individuationis* expressed through "the phenomenal world, diversity of
all beings, individuality, egoism, hatred, wickedness" (610). The latter
consciousness is equally holistic, but it springs from a different root, the
Will to Live.

For Schopenhauer, the two kinds of consciousness mark the differ-
ence between the mystic and the philosopher. The mystic starts from
within, whereas the philosopher starts from without. The mystic begins
from his "inner, positive, individual experience, in which he finds him-
self as the eternal and only being." But since none of this is communi-
cable, he is "unable to convince." On the other hand, the philosopher is
able to do so, for he starts from "what is common to all, the objective
phenomenon lying before us all, and from the facts of self-conscious-
ness as they are to be found in everyone" (611). These two experiences
are incommensurable, and Schopenhauer's philosophy remains neces-
sarily suspended between them, with the paradoxical effect that what it
affirms, it negates, and what it negates, it affirms.

One can now readily see how Nietzsche both subscribes to and re-
vises Schopenhauer's philosophy of the Will. One of Nietzsche's lasting
contributions to the history of Western thought is to have replaced, in
his mature work, Schopenhauer's philosophical principle of the *Wille
zum Leben* with that of the *Wille zur Macht*. He thus brings into focus the
Will's objective, which is not life for the sake of living, but life for the
sake of power. As in the case of the Will to Live, the Will to Power is
immanent in the cosmos, and humans can adopt only two attitudes toward
it: affirmation or denial. Unlike Schopenhauer, however, Nietzsche ad-
vocates the affirmation of the Will to Power at all costs, that is, the affir-
mation of the world of becoming, multiplicity, and individuality—a world
that equally includes violence, suffering, death, and the void. Conse-
quently, for Nietzsche the denial of the Will is a sign of weakness, of
physical and cultural decadence rather than one of strength or supreme
self-knowledge. Hence his highly ambiguous, mostly negative, valua-
tion of Buddhism and Christianity as a manifestation of a perverted Will
to Power. In the context of the present study, then, it becomes clear

that the main difference between Nietzsche and Schopenhauer is actually one of pathos, which in turn underlies and supports two symmetrically opposite forms of ethos or thought-behavior.

Yet Schopenhauer's willingness to entertain the possibility of a "mystical" knowledge that is not based on the Will opens a number of ethical and ontoepistemological choices that Nietzsche effectively bars again. In Nietzsche, the world is eternally returning to the same agonistic game of ego-wills and natural forces that, to paraphrase Heidegger, play because they play, causing humans to oscillate perpetually between the extremes of a tragic and a sublime ethopathology.[18] Thus, whereas Nietzsche's justification of the Will to Power is tautological, his attitude (or pathos) toward this Will is both ambivalent and self-contradictory. If power exists only for the sake of power, or if power is its own justification, then there is no good reason why Nietzsche should not joyfully and unequivocally hail the advent of modern ethics as the greatest achievement of the Will. For one can argue that the Will disguises itself under the garb of justice, rationality, and compassion simply to enable a fistful of overmen to dominate the herd with enhanced effectiveness. It is a well-known historical fact (brilliantly dramatized by Orwell in *1984,* as chapter 6, section 3 below will show) that the most efficient rulers are not those who rule in their own name or as unmediated presences, but those who rule as representatives or surrogates, in the name of some abstract idea such as God, the People, Freedom, Universal Equality, and so forth.

As to "man's interiorization" *(Verinnerlichung des Menschen),* there is no reason why Nietzsche should not welcome it as an entirely positive development, for now power becomes immanent and invisible, operating from within the consciousness of the slave. This interiorization, moreover, may apply only to some "men," not all men (here women, as implied in Zarathustra's aphorism introducing the third essay, presumably have no role to play, being nothing but mirrors of the male Will). Contrary to what Nietzsche often implies in tragical overtones, the consciousness of a master need not be affected at all by that of a slave, for true masters will never waste their energies on pity and guilt; otherwise they will lose their ability to rule and will no longer be what they are. On the other hand, it is not clear at all that one can readily manufacture "overmen" out of "slaves" (in the sense of median humans) any more