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**THE EAGLE AND THE SERPENT:
A STUDY IN NIETZSCHE'S AESTHETICS**

by

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This had Zarathustra said to his heart when the sun stood at noon-tide. Then he looked inquiringly aloft, — for he heard above him the sharp call of a bird. And behold ! An eagle swept through the air in wide circles, and on it hung a serpent, not like a prey, but like a friend : for it kept itself coiled round the eagle's neck.

"They are mine animals," said Zarathustra, and rejoiced in his heart.

"The proudest animal under the sun, and the wisest animal under the sun — they have come out to reconnoitre."

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER	PAGE
I. LIFE AND PHILOSOPHY	1
II. ORIGIN OF AESTHETIC CRITICISM: PLATO AND ARISTOTLE	24
III. APOLLO AND DIONYSUS: THE BIRTH OF TRAGEDY	35
IV. CULTURE AND THE MASTER MORALITY	50
CONCLUSION	55
BIBLIOGRAPHY	57

CHAPTER I

LIFE AND PHILOSOPHY

On October 15, 1844, Friedrich Nietzsche was born in the village of Rocken in the Prussian province of Saxony. His father was a pastor in the Lutheran Church, and was the last of several generations of Nietzsches who had followed the theological profession. His mother's side of the family had also been well-represented in the theological tradition, and Friedrich was consequently well-trained in Christian thought as a child, and he is said to have been sincerely pious in his youth.

His father died when Friedrich was six years old and in 1850 the family moved to Naumburg, where Friedrich was sent to the Municipal Boys' School. He was later withdrawn and placed in a private institution in order to prepare for entry into the Cathedral Grammar School.

In 1858, at the age of fourteen, he entered the Landes-Schule at Pforta, and it is here that Nietzsche first assumed personality of his own which was significant in determining the course of his later life. The Landes-Schule seems to have been one of those institutions which provide the distinctive name, the solid traditional approach to education, and the ideally useful but practically futile discipline which is apparently necessary to convince some parents that their children are receiving a 'good' education.¹

¹The opinions expressed in the following passage are on the whole inferences from M.A. Mugge, Friedrich Nietzsche, pp. 12-14. Other critical biographers merely stress the academic training which Nietzsche received at this institution.

There can be no doubt that Nietzsche was bored. The school was conducted according to a peculiar Germanic thoroughness and methodical procedure which is almost incomprehensible to the American mind.

Like some strange mutation of Renaissance humanist educators whose system has become petrified in the process of growth the administrators had evolved a formula for the production of educated youth. It is well-known that exercise, sleep, and good nourishment are necessary for the proper functioning of the human mind, and so a fixed and regulated schedule was adopted which determined the proper balance of athletics, studies, nutrition and sleep requisite for the creation of ordered, scholarly minds.

There can be no doubt that the students were bored, and it is probable that Nietzsche's first consuming interest in classical philology was inspired as much by way of an effort to escape the monotonous routine of the school as it was by any predisposition towards classical language and literature for its own sake.

Perhaps it is reading too much into the early period of the philosopher's biography, yet one cannot help but wonder at the carrying power of the early training. It might explain the omnipresent conflict in Nietzsche's later career between the sense of freedom and the sense of control, between his persistent drive towards self-expression and affirmation of the autonomy of the ego, and his continual glorification of the virtue of self-abnegation and his admiration of the restrictive discipline of the Prussian military machine.

In any event it was at Pforta that Nietzsche first became interested in classical philology, and six years after he had entered the Landes-Schule he graduated, and enrolled at the University of Bonn. Under Friedrich Wilhelm Ritschl

Nietzsche's interest in classical philology was cultivated and developed, and when Ritschl was transferred to the University of Leipzig, Nietzsche followed him. With the growth of his interest in the classics there followed a withering of his interest in theology. At Leipzig Nietzsche also met Wagner and discovered Schopenhauer, and he entered a brief period of enthusiasm for the German culture-Renaissance of Wagner and the Philosophy of the Will.

During this period also, war broke out between Prussia and Austria, and after repeated attempts to enter the army, Nietzsche finally succeeded in gaining admittance to the artillery. He was injured in a fall from a horse, however, and it was after his consequent withdrawal from the military that continual mental and physical illness set in which remained with him till the end of his life. He returned to the University of Leipzig, and upon the recommendation of Ritschl became the Professor of Classical Philology at the University of Basle in 1869, when he was only twenty-four years of age.

In 1870-71, with the outbreak of the Franco-Prussian War, he attempted to enter the services once more, but was rejected on medical grounds. He succeeded in entering the Hospital Corps, however, and stood duty for some time as an ambulance attendant. But his health broke, and he was once more forced to retire. Before waiting until he had fully recovered from the strain, he took up his duties at the university once more, and as was to be expected his health gradually deteriorated. In spite of his condition he continued to lecture at the university, travelling much during the holidays, at first visiting Wagner often at Bayreuth, but gradually seeing him less and less frequently as they became estranged.

By 1879 his health was too poor for him to continue his work at the university, and he retired. For ten years he wandered throughout Europe, moving from place to place in Switzerland, Italy and Austria searching for some locality which might provide relief from his now constant physical and mental suffering.

In January of 1889 he suffered a stroke and seizure, and it became clear that he was afflicted with insanity. The ten years following this attack were spent in various sanatoriums in Switzerland and Germany under the constant care of his sister. There were occasional moments of lucidity, but on the twenty-fifth of August, 1900, the darkness closed in permanently in a villa at Weimar, and he was buried in his native village of Rocken.

Retgressing for a moment to the time when Nietzsche was still a student under Ritschl at Leipzig three main periods in the development of Nietzsche's thought may be distinguished.

It was during his university career that he first met the apostle of German Romantic music, Wagner. Under the influence of Wagner the young student envisaged a gigantic German-Hellenic Renaissance involving a return to the pagan attitude to life expressed in Greek art, but choosing as subject the primitive German myths and legends of a glorious past. At the same time Nietzsche discovered Schopenhauer and the Philosophy of the Will, and this lucky stroke enabled him to find a metaphysical justification for this return to primitivism and the negation of the Christian European artistic tradition, which had been laboriously constructed over a period of two thousand years.

But as Wagner developed into the apostle of new German culture, Nietzsche lost sympathy with the progressing

movement. The original impulse had taken new directions. Instead of the expected sublime and lofty conceptions of Greek art, Wagner's music was degenerating amorously into the regions of sensuous beauty and vague atmosphere. To Nietzsche the music of Wagner was fast becoming the objective correlative of the middle class desire for some narcotic to ease the pain of life, or some stimulant to accelerate life's joys. The narcotic and the stimulant were Art, and Nietzsche's conception of the function of Art was the antithesis of this.

There followed a short period of disillusionment with Wagner and Romanticism, during which time Nietzsche gathered together his shattered ideals and began building and unifying his thoughts and beliefs.

The period of disillusionment was succeeded by his greatest and most productive period, that of affirmation and attack. Schopenhauer's Philosophy of the Will was developed and expanded into Nietzsche's Philosophy of the Will-to-Power. His disappointment in the results of Romanticism was sublimated and transformed into the affirmation of life as art. He affirmed the pessimism of strength, the Superman, and the Superstate, and uttered his great "Yea-saying" to life. It was during this period (1879-1889) that he poured forth a torrent of monumental works in a frenzy of creative activity. It was as if he were aware of the impossibly short time in which he had to complete his work.

His first major work occurred in the early period of enthusiasm: The Birth of Tragedy from the Spirit of Music (1871). This was followed by Thoughts out of Season (1876), Human, All-too-human (1878), and Dawn of Day (1881).

During the period of affirmation and attack, which continued from 1881 until his mental death in 1889, he

published in rapid succession : The Joyful Wisdom (Bks. I-IV, 1882; Bk. V, 1886); Thus Spake Zarathustra (1885); Beyond Good and Evil (1886); and the Genealogy of Morals (1887). The Will to Power, written during this period, was published posthumously in 1901. In the year before his complete mental collapse appeared three important essays : "The Case of Wagner"; "The Twilight of the Idols"; and "The Antichrist"; and his autobiography — the literary herald of his approaching insanity — Ecce Homo.

When the state of Nietzsche's physical health is considered during these last ten years of creativity the extent of his production is truly marvellous. But it is inevitable that there should be some concern over the state of his mental health. For it has been argued that in a philosophy which is so pre-eminently personal and so distinctively out of the main stream of human thought as that of Nietzsche's, even without the biographical knowledge of the man, the writings themselves are a fair indication of his insanity.

His admirers and defendants claim, however, that with the exception of the Ecce Homo, there is no valid evidence of any insanity in his work. They admit the fact of Nietzsche's tremendously egotistical personality, and admit his extreme deviation from the norm of human behaviour and ethics, but nevertheless point to the logical unity and coherence of his actual writings as sufficient proof of the fact that up until the time of the Ecce Homo Nietzsche was eminently sane.

In connection with these points of view it is probably wisest to adopt a third position. The question of Nietzsche's sanity or insanity is not relevant to the question of the validity of his teaching. What is relevant is that he has made a lasting impression upon modern thought, and that he is therefore worthy of study.

Disease...First of all it is a question of who is sick, who is insane, who is epileptic or paralytic: an average dolt, whose disease, of course, lacks all intellectual and cultural aspects—or a Nietzsche, a Dostoevsky. In their cases the disease bears fruits that are more important and more beneficial to life and its development than any medically approved normality. The truth is that life has never been able to do without the morbid, and probably no adage is more inane than the one which says that "only disease can come from the diseased." Life is not prudish, and it is probably safe to say that life prefers creative, genius-bestowing disease a thousand times over to prosaic health; prefers disease, surmounting obstacles proudly on horseback, boldly leaping from peak to peak, to lounging, pedestrian healthfulness. Life is not finical and never thinks of making a moral distinction between health and infirmity. It seizes the bold product of disease, consumes and digests it, and as soon as it is assimilated, it is health. An entire horde, a generation of open-minded, healthy lads pounces upon the work of the diseased genius, genialized by disease, admires and praises it, raises it to the skies, perpetuates it, transmutes it, and bequeathes it to civilization, which does not live on the home-baked bread of health alone. They all swear by the name of the great invalid, thanks to whose madness they no longer need to be mad. Their healthfulness feeds upon his¹ madness and in them he will become healthy.

Before leaving this point one further comment ought to be made.

Much of Nietzsche's exorbitant egotism and continual vilification of any point of view other than his own can be explained quite simply and without any resort to abnormal psychology by the fact that a great part of his life was spent in an effort to find some vocal antagonist with whom he could argue effectively. Of his first book, The Birth of Tragedy, M. A. Mugge remarks

¹Thomas Mann, The Short Novels of Dostoevsky, Introduction, pp. xiv-xv.

that

At first he could not find a publisher at all, but during the last days of 1871 it appeared in print. It was an homage paid to Wagner... Naturally the maestro and his wife hailed the book with the greatest delight; but the general public ignored it, and no reviewer took it up. The philologists, Nietzsche's professional colleagues, shrugged their shoulders. One of them, a professor in Bonn, informed his students that The Birth of Tragedy was "pure nonsense." Another philologist wrote a vitriolic and abusive pamphlet against Nietzsche's book. Though one of his old and intimate friends, Rohde, published a brilliant counter-attack¹ to that pamphlet, Nietzsche felt depressed.

A similar reception awaited his next publication; although

...for matter and form (Thoughts out of Season) proved to be among the most startling productions that Germany had read since Schopenhauer's prime,²

nevertheless

the only one of the four Thoughts out of Season which created much comment was the first, concerning David Strauss, and this gave rise to a loud outcry against the young philologist.³

When A. M. Ludovici remarks that

after the publication of the last of the Thoughts out of Season Nietzsche appears to have created very little stir among his countrymen — a fact which, though it greatly depressed him, only made him redouble his energies,⁴

we have come closer to understanding much of the basis of Nietzsche's peculiarly pugnacious attitude than all the abnormal psychology in the books of Nietzsche criticism will enable us to glean.

It was the cool indifference of his contemporaries which provoked the bitterness of his attacks as much as

¹Op. cit., p. 19.

²Anthony M. Ludovici, Nietzsche, His Life and Works, p. 14.

³Ibid., p. 15.

⁴Ibid., p. 17.

any inherent morbid streak in his nature. The least he desired was the opportunity of defending his views from attack. But he was destined to be almost totally ignored during his lifetime, and the indifference of his contemporaries was too much for him intellectually.

Ecce Homo, with its chapter headings: "Why I am so wise"; "Why I am so clever"; "Why I write such excellent books"; "Why I am a fatality"; is the result of the paralyzing effect of the continued indifference of the world to the stupendous little figure that was Nietzsche. He was Pèer Ghynt striking out at the great void, cutting only the darkness and silence of the universe, which overcame him by refusing to resist him.

Nietzsche was primarily an artist, and only secondarily a philosopher. Indeed, it is only because he was an artist that his work will have any permanent appeal. His books are not carefully constructed expositions of logically ordered thought, although much skill and painstaking labor did enter into their construction. The order of thought and the direction of expression are not logically continuous. There is unity and coherence in the exposition, but it is not the unity and coherence of reason.

On the contrary, Nietzsche employs a logic of emotions, and the unity and coherence of the work is achieved by a unity of emotional associations. By means of frequent employment of images and emotionally 'colored' adjectives and adverbs, i. e., the modificatory elements in sentence structure, together with a skilful rhythmic structure in each sentence and paragraph, he manages to communicate ideas which would be unacceptable in more ordinary and more logical prose.

Consider, for example, the following prose passage:

Industrious races find it a great hardship

to be idle: it was a master stroke of English instinct to hallow and begloom Sunday to such an extent that the Englishman unconsciously hankers for his week- and work-day again:— as a kind of cleverly devised, cleverly intercalated fast, such as is also frequently found in the ancient world (although, as is appropriate in southern nations, not precisely with respect to work). Many kinds of fasts are necessary; and wherever powerful influences and habits prevail, legislators have to see that intercalary days are appointed, on which such impulses are fettered, and learn to hunger anew.

Notice the use of the phrase "a great hardship" in place of such adjective as "difficult"; both refer to the same idea, but "hardship" has emotional associations which are useful in coloring the thought. "Begloom Sunday"; "Week- and work-day"; "cleverly devised"; "cleverly intercalated"; "impulses are fettered" — the modificatory elements in each phrase are carefully chosen for their full emotional values.

It follows that as an artist Nietzsche was primarily a critic of life, and his attempts to substitute values for those which he was so anxious to destroy seem like afterthoughts, and are subject to various interpretations. His philosophy is not architectonic, and his principles must be inferred from the nature of his attacks on other philosophies and from the half-mystical utterances of Zarathustra.

As a point of departure for the study of his main ideas the following summary will be useful:

1. The world as a whole is amoral, and without a goal or purpose. It is an artistic phenomenon that will recur eternally.
2. Hitherto mankind has had no goal either. A self-set definite goal, however, is of artistic value and will increase man's power. Such a goal is set before us by the Superman, a higher and

¹Nietzsche, The Philosophy of Nietzsche, "Beyond Good and Evil", #189, p. 99.

superior species of man. The Superman is a life-furthering idea, the expression of man's Will to Power.

3. Every religion, every system of morals or politics which is hostile to life, which delays the coming of the Superman must be abolished. Only the moral code of the strong and masterful men is compatible with the true aims of life.

4. The Christian religion with its slave-morality is, above all other, life's fiercest enemy. Christianity counteracts Natural Selection. It is "the greatest of all conceivable corruptions, the one immortal blemish of mankind."

5. Our next goal, since the Superman will be but the joy of a far-distant future, is to produce a higher and superior race of men. These "Higher Men" will be, however, only a transition to be followed and superseded by the new species, the Superman.

6. The immediate steps advisable in a melioristic policy towards the "Higher Man" are: a Eugenic Revision of our present marriage laws, a sensible education of youth, a United Europe, and the annihilation of the Christian Church.¹

Underlying these six major tenets of Nietzsche's philosophy are two fundamental concepts which the artist-philosopher derived from his adopted mentor, Schopenhauer, and the current nineteenth century theory of evolution.

Schopenhauer had taught that the phenomenal world was a world of appearance and illusion. The reality underlying the world's appearance was the thing-in-itself, the Ding-an-Sich, or the Will, an eternally striving restless energy seeking satisfaction by attempting to become itself. In order to become itself, the Will objectified itself, giving birth to space, time and causality, and the whole universe of animate and inanimate phenomenon. But when the original Will objectified itself its primal unity was broken up into segments and became plurality, and the ceaseless struggle for existence which is seen taking place continually in the vegetable and animal

¹M. A. Mugge, op. cit., p.8.

worlds and in the society of man is merely an aspect of the struggle of the now many times multiplied striving of the Will to regain itself. The phenomenal world is merely an appearance and an illusion, and the ultimate reality behind the world is the eternally striving driving Will, which manifests itself in things as the Will-to-Live.

Nietzsche adopted this concept of reality, but when he became acquainted with the biological theory of evolution he asked himself the question, "Why is it that the Will-to-Live does not cease its struggle for existence when the first life-form has been evolved? What impels the Will-to-Live to surpass its own manifestations of itself, continually evolving new and higher forms of life better adapted to the struggle for existence?"

Schopenhauer had answered the question by introducing Platonic ideas into his scheme of reality. With the manifestation of each succeeding form of the Will we have an illustration of the eternal dissatisfaction which is the nature of the Will. In the vegetable kingdom, for example, the first vegetable life strove to become the perfect vegetable, strove to succeed in the objectification of its own idea. But this was not to be, because of the original nature of the primal Will. By definition it could not achieve satisfaction, it could never become itself. The original vegetable, producing a variety and plurality of forms in an effort to achieve the final ideal form, overshoot the mark by producing animal life, which, in turn, then strove to produce its ideal form, evolving a variety and plurality of forms in the process.

Nietzsche saw a much simpler solution to the problem. The manifestation of the Will in the phenomenal world was not the Will-to-Live, as Schopenhauer had thought. It was the Will-to-Power. The struggle in life was not the

struggle occasioned by a will for mere existence, it was really the Will's desire for supremacy. The Will-to-Power was the motivating force behind the appearance of life. The Will-to-Power was the explanation for the continual search of Nature for various types of existence, and supplied the reason for Nature's indifference to what was unsuited for supremacy.

In conjunction with Nietzsche's discovery of the nature of the world his philological studies led him to a startling conclusion concerning the problem of moral values : What is the real nature of good and evil?

In the summer of 1864, when he was in his twentieth year, he was given some home work to do which he was expected to have ready by the end of the holidays. It was to consist of a Latin thesis upon some optional subject, and he chose 'Theognis, the Aristocratic Poet of Megara'.

While he was preparing the work he was struck with the author's use of the words 'good' and 'bad' as synonymous with aristocratic and plebeian, and it was this valuable hint which first set him on the right track. Theognis and his friends, being desirous of making their power prevail, were naturally compelled to regard any force which assailed that power as bad — 'bad', in the sense of 'dangerous to their order of power'; and thus it came to pass that Theognis, as an aristocrat in the heat of a struggle between an oligarchy and a democracy, spoke of the democratic values as 'bad' and those of his own party as 'good'.

...in recognizing the arbitrary use made by Theognis in designating the oligarchy and the democracy respectively, Nietzsche was first induced to look upon morality merely as a weapon in the struggle for power...

The Will-to-Power and the theory of evolution convinced Nietzsche of the essential amorality of the universe of phenomena. In addition to this he was convinced of the basically arbitrary quality of man's choice of values. He therefore proceeded to examine the origin and nature

¹Anthony M. Ludovici, op. cit., pp. 29-30.

of the values of his contemporaries in order to determine whether these were in accordance with the fundamental principle of life, the Will-to-Power.

The first step was to recognize the different values which the various peoples had accepted since antiquity; and although the values themselves were relative to the peoples concerned, there was one element common to them all: the necessity of some kind of value for a people's very existence —

Many lands saw Zarathustra, and many peoples: thus he discovered the good and bad of many peoples. No greater power on earth did Zarathustra find than good and bad.

No people could live without first valuing; if a people will maintain itself, however, it must not value as its neighbor valueth.

Much that passed for good with one people was regarded with scorn and contempt by another: thus I found it. Much found I here called bad, which was there decked with purple honours.

Never did the one neighbor understand the other: ever did his soul marvel at his neighbor's delusion and wickedness.

A table of excellencies hangeth over every people. Lo! it is the table of their triumphs; lo! it is the voice of their Will to Power.

Verily, men have given unto themselves all their good and bad. Verily, they took it not, they found it not, it came not unto them as a voice from heaven.

Values did man only assign to things in order to maintain himself — he created only the significance of things, a human significance! Therefore, calleth he himself "man", that is, the valuator.¹

As to the meaning of good and evil Nietzsche observed what he considered to be two fundamental attitudes or beliefs as to the meaning of these terms:

In a tour through the many finer and coarser moralities which have hitherto prevailed or still prevail on the earth, I found certain

¹Nietzsche, The Philosophy of Nietzsche, "Thus Spake Zarathustra", I, xv, p. 72.

traits recurring regularly together, and connected with one another, until finally two primary types revealed themselves to me, and a radical distinction was brought to light. There is master-morality and slave-morality; ...The distinctions of moral values have either originated in a ruling caste, pleasantly conscious of being different from the ruled — or among the ruled class, the slaves and dependents of all sorts...The noble type of man separates from himself the beings in whom the opposite of this exalted, proud disposition displays itself; he despises them. Let it at once be noted that in this first kind of morality the antithesis "good" and "bad" means practically the same as "noble" and "despicable"; — the antithesis "good" and "evil" is of a different origin... The ability and obligation to exercise prolonged gratitude and prolonged revenge — both only within the circle of equals, — artfulness in retaliation, raffinement of the idea in friendship, a certain necessity to have enemies (as outlets for the emotions of envy, quarrelsomeness, arrogance — in fact, in order to be a good friend): all these are typical characteristics of the noble morality... It is otherwise with the second type of morality, slave-morality... The slave has an unfavorable eye for the virtues of the powerful; he has a scepticism and distrust, a refinement of distrust of everything "good" that is there honored — he would fain persuade himself that the very happiness there is not genuine. On the other hand, those qualities which serve to alleviate the existence of sufferers are brought into prominence and flooded with light; it is here that sympathy, the kind, helping hand, the warm heart, patience, diligence, humility, and friendliness attain to honour; for here these are the most useful qualities, and almost the only means of supporting the burden of existence.¹

Now it will be seen from what has already been said concerning the nature of the driving force of life, the Will-to-Power, that the slave-morality is essentially a means of escape from this natural impulse, a sublimation

¹ Nietzsche, The Philosophy of Nietzsche, "Beyond Good and Evil", #260, p. 200-202

of the Will into a means of preservation of the weak man as against the strong. In doing this, however, the whole course and process of Nature is misdirected. The purpose of Nature is not, according to nineteenth century biology, to preserve the weak in place of the strong. It is the antithesis of this. The slave-morality is in direct opposition to the law of natural selection.

Moreover, the weakness of the slave-morality springs essentially from the refusal to accept reality, the refusal to admit the fact that the phenomenal world is one vast disheartening illusion. The means of escape in society — calling "bad" "good", and "good" "bad" — becomes the basis of a similar means of escape from the existential world.

Science, religion, philosophy, and morality as we know them are all artificially created products of the weak man's mind designed to fill the gap in his courage to face reality. Each of these ways of thought are means of interpretation of the universe and existence, and they are so constructed that they manage to draw a veil over men's eyes in order to conceal the terrible truth of the futility of purpose in the natural world. Science and philosophy read into existence an order and rationality that is not there; ethics and religion postulate a value to existence which is not there. Each is designed to meet the need of escape from reality, a need which Nietzsche believes is fundamental to the constitution of the weak man.

Nietzsche places the responsibility for the growth and development of slave-morality on the shoulders of Plato and the founders of Christianity, especially St. Paul.

Plato's rejection of the body and the senses, his subtle attacks on the Greek love of life, his condemnation of the myths and Homer, his failure to understand the true spirit of Greek tragedy, and his rejection of the agon are sufficient proofs of the fact that he was actually hostile to the very foundations

of Greek culture and life. In place of the actual world of Becoming Plato set up an imaginary world of Ideas, or Being, and for two thousand years this imaginary world has exercised its hold upon the minds of weak men. Here again Plato was repudiating the pre-Socratic, and (as Nietzsche would have it) the only true period of Greek art and culture. Before the time of Plato the Greeks were a strong, proud aristocratic race; it was during Plato's time that the period of Greek decadence set in. Plato was guilty of contributing the first organized basis for slave-morality to Greek culture — even though he himself was opposed to political slave-rule, or democracy — and at the same time he is responsible for the later European misconception of true Greek culture and art.

Nietzsche similarly reverses the normal appraisal of the pre-Christian and post-Christian religion. Before Christ and St. Paul the Jews were a healthy, self-confident and prosperous race. Their morality was primitive and natural. The tribal God was a projection of the Will-to-Power capable of both good and evil.

With the political defeat of the Jews, however, the priesthood was dominated by two ambitions: to regain, and compensate for, their loss of political power over the masses by means of an increased religious control of the people; and to prepare the Jewish race for survival. It was for these two purposes that the concept of Sin was invented, and the revolution in the morality concept was undertaken. "Good" became synonymous with the poor, the lowly, and the suffering; "evil" became synonymous with the rich, the powerful, the beautiful and the worldly. In this way a continual psychological war was carried on between the Jewish slaves and their various masters.

Jesus of Nazareth instituted what Nietzsche terms "a Buddhistic peace movement" in this war. The testimony of the scriptures is unreliable with respect to the

true biography of Jesus, but Nietzsche nevertheless hazards the guess that he was an extreme decadent whose morbid sensitiveness produced an instinctive hatred of reality, and therefore of the war between the slaves and the masters. Since he denied the last form of Jewish reality — the chosen people — he was undermining the foundations of Jewish society and died as a criminal.

The disciples were filled with a desire for revenge, and misinterpreting his teachings of love and peace transformed him into the objectification of the older Hebrew God of revenge who would joust against the prosperous peoples of the earth in atonement for the sufferings of the poor and lowly.

St. Paul, "a genius in hatred" restored the priesthood to power by introducing dogma and cult, atonement by sacrifice, resurrection and personal immortality. These were substituted for Jesus's preaching of a way of life, and Nietzsche remarks that "at bottom there was only one real Christian, and he died upon the cross".

Judaized Christianity spread to Rome, where it easily accommodated itself to a society already decadent with the absorption of the Plato-poisoned culture of the Greeks. The doctrine of the glorification of the weak and suffering was so effective that even the barbarian races which descended upon Rome were infected with the sickness, and ^{it} was transmitted throughout Europe.

In this account¹ of the origin and development of two aspects of slave-morality, the one exemplified in philosophy, the other in religion, it will be seen that Nietzsche's fundamental disagreement with what might be termed the life-attitude of slave-morality was two-fold. First, the slave-morality always asserted that there was an absolute objective purpose to the existential world,

¹ Given in G. A. Morgan, What Nietzsche Means, IV, xii, "The Rise and Fall of Cultures", pp. 319-346.

and that this purpose involved the individual; second, the slave-morality asserted that pity and sympathy were the cardinal virtues, and that poverty, suffering, and misery were accessory values to goodness. In the destructive portion of Nietzsche's philosophy he attacked and denied both these attitudes; in his constructive portion he asserted their opposites.

"The world is amoral, and without a goal or purpose." Since this is so, says Nietzsche, let us accept the idea, embrace it whole-heartedly, and not waste our time casting about for some method by which we may read a meaning into the universe which is not really there. But is life without meaning possible? Is such an attitude toward life conceivable? Would not existence be intolerable if life had no meaning?

Nietzsche agrees that it would be intolerable to live without meaning and value in existence. It is permissible to give meaning to existence on one condition and on one condition only. Man must recognize that the goal and purpose which he sets for himself is a man-made goal. It must never be thought of as having an ideal extra-existential reality of its own. To impute objective absolute reality to the man-made purpose in life is a contradiction in terms, and leads to a denial of the value of man's participation in life. This is what occurs in philosophic and theological systems of thought which postulate the existence of extra-existential realms, and eventually exalt and glorify poverty and suffering in life which are existentially unnecessary.

The purpose which Nietzsche chose for man was one he thought would be in accord with the fundamental metaphysical reality in appearance (the Will-to-Power)

and the discoveries in nineteenth century biology, (the theory of evolution). Instead of Darwin's law of natural selection, however, Nietzsche would substitute purposive selection.

A thousand goals have there been hitherto, for a thousand peoples have ~~their~~ been. Only the fetter for the thousand necks is still lacking; there is lacking¹ the one goal. As yet humanity hath not a goal.

It is time for man to fix his goal. It is time² for man to plant the germ of his highest hope.

I teach you the Superman. Man is something that is to be surpassed. What have ye done to surpass man ?

All beings hitherto have created something beyond themselves: and ye want to be the ebb of that great tide, and would rather go back to the beast than surpass man ?³

What is the ape to man ? A laughing-stock, a thing of shame. And just the same shall man be to the Superman: a laughing-stock, a thing of shame.³

Man is a rope stretched between the animal and the Superman — a rope over an abyss.

A dangerous crossing, a dangerous wayfaring, a dangerous looking-back, a dangerous trembling and halting.⁴

It will be seen that the Superman is to be a new species of man. As man is to the ape, so the Superman will be to man.

.Now Nietzsche believed that man's evolution had been thwarted by the choice of values and goals of the Platonic-Christian world. As has been shown, their values were designed for the preservation of the weak masses rather than for the furtherance of the aristocratic men of power. The Platonic-Christian path to virtue has resulted

¹ Nietzsche, The Philosophy of Nietzsche, "Thus Spake Zarathustra", I, xv, pp. 74-75.

² Ibid., Prologue, p. 31.

³ Ibid., p. 27-28.

⁴ Ibid., p. 29.

in man's stagnation in the world of evolution and of progress. In order that the goal of the Superman may be attained it is necessary that man should evolve a new moral code based upon the realities of the Will-to-Power and the process of evolution.

Instead of the identification of "good" and "bad" with the weak and the prosperous, Nietzsche would reverse the values. The new code will equate "good" with the strong, the prosperous and the healthy, and "bad" with the weak, the lowly and the sickly.

The life-attitude of the Superman is paradoxical in that it asserts the futility of existence and the great value of existence at one and the same time. The new man faces life with a 'realistic' attitude. He recognizes that all is illusion, becoming, and that the universe is indifferent to man, in the sense that there is nothing in the existential world which is purposely meant for man. The world just is. And in this sense man's valuation of the world is objectively futile and a little ridiculous.

On the other hand, the fact that a man can face this reality and still derive joy from it, can embrace the illusion and transform it into something greater than illusion, is a proof of the subjective value of existence. This attitude is the only true optimism — Nietzsche calls it the "pessimism of strength" — and it involves an active dynamic participation in life, the great "Yea-saying to life".

The same kind of paradoxical logic permeates Nietzsche's philosophy. Pleasure, for example, is born out of pain. The only real pleasure in life is the full exercise of the Will-to-Power. Thus the overcoming of pain, the acceptance and digestion of it, vanquishes its power, enhances the feeling of power in the individual, and gives rise to the sensation of increased power, or pleasure.

The ability to see life as it really is; the ability to recognize that values are only human values, stamped upon existence to make it worthy of being lived; the ability to accept the uninviting conditions which life imposes upon him, to accept the pain and transmute it into joy, to accept illusion and transmute it into a new kind of reality, and above all to act in accordance with the principle of the Will-to-Power;— these are the characteristics of the new race to be.

As ^{A.}M. Mugge has pointed out, this goal cannot be achieved at one bound. It is necessary to prepare man for his higher destiny. First of all, Christianity, socialism, democracy,— all political, and religious systems whose values are antithetical to the new master-morality must be annihilated. Since the Superman will be physically and mentally superior to contemporary man, his evolution must be assisted by careful and selective breeding. The weak must be weeded out, and prevented by law from conception and birth. Youth must be re-educated in accordance with the new goal.

But perhaps most important of all, and especially so to Nietzsche personally, was a renaissance in art and aesthetics, as a means to the realization of the new goal. For the intermediary race of Higher Men had once existed on earth. There had been a time when the man of nobility, freedom, and strength had existed. This man was the pre-Socratic Greek, who represented the acme of man's climb from the animal to the Superman. The ascent had been stopped in process, however, and civilization had declined steadily since this peak had been reached.

The flower of this Greek culture was embodied in the Attic tragedy, an expression of the tragic view of life. Nietzsche wished to return to this attitude as a point of departure for the journey to the goal of the Superman.

His analysis of the birth of tragedy was not only an important event in the development of his thought, but it was also the herald of a significant change of view in aesthetic theory.

Before considering Nietzsche's aesthetic theory I shall endeavor to survey the principle contributions of the Western world's first aesthetic critics, Plato and Aristotle. The contributions of these two critics were so important in the sphere of art that even until the time of the Romantic movement in England their principles held sway in one form or another. Nietzsche's contribution points forward to the significant break with tradition which is the keynote of modern aesthetic theory.

CHAPTER II
ORIGIN OF AESTHETIC CRITICISM:
PLATO AND ARISTOTLE

Philosophical aesthetic criticism and theory as we know it today has its origin in what has been thought to have been a mild controversy between Plato and his pupil Aristotle over the value of art. Plato's real views on the function and value of art will probably never be known. Nor does he seem to have been greatly concerned with the problem, although his Dialogues are masterpieces of literary craftsmanship. The passing references which are contained in them, however, are invariably sceptical as to the value of art.

Plato contributed two terms to artistic criticism which have been catchwords for critics ever since. These were the words "inspiration" and "imitation". Both terms are attempts to describe the creative activity of the artist, and both imply a moral judgment of art.

In the Ion Plato sets forth the theory that the creation of poetry is a kind of divine seizure which occurs in the artist's mind, during which the Muses take possession of his thoughts and use him as an instrument for their own divine expression. The poet himself is not responsible for the creation of his poetry:

...all good poets, epic as well as lyric, compose their beautiful poems not by art, but because they are inspired and possessed. And as the Corybantic revellers when they dance are not in their right mind, so the lyric poets are not in their right mind when they are composing their

beautiful strains: but when falling under the power of music and metre they are inspired and possessed; like Bacchic maidens who draw milk and honey from the rivers when they are under the influence of Dionysus but not when they are in their right mind...Many are the noble words in which poets speak concerning the actions of men; but like yourself (Ion) when speaking about Homer, they do not speak of them by any rules of art: they are simply inspired to utter that to which the Muse impels them, and that only...God takes away the minds of poets, and uses them as his ministers, as he also uses diviners and holy prophets, in order that we who hear them may know them to be speaking not of themselves who utter these priceless words in a state of unconsciousness, but that God himself is the speaker, and that through them he is conversing with us.¹

From this explanation of the creative process it is clear that the poet is not responsible for his actions; he may be neither praised nor blamed for what he has only indirectly created. And the solution of the problem of what takes place in the creative act is very unsatisfactory.

In The Republic Plato entered into a wider discussion of the creative process in art and introduced the problem of moral values in aesthetics. Socrates, Adeimantus, and Glaucon discuss the question of whether the poets are worthy of being admitted to the State in Book III.

Socrates points out that the poets represent the gods in unmanly and immoral actions; the lamentations of the heroes and the gods over misfortunes, the portrayal of the gods and heroes as subject to the passions and to the fear of death, and the poets' praises of the joys of eating and drinking are impious and untruthful. And since the guardians are to be educated by example, and the poets teach the common people through examples such as have been cited above, there will be no place for the poets in the ideal state, unless they are able to teach virtuous action by example. Similarly, the only kind of

¹ Given in Smith and Parks, The Great Critics, "Ion", pp. 5-6, translation by B. Jowett

music which is to be allowed in the ideal republic is the Dorian and the Phrygian, or the martial and the holy, both of which elevate the soul to virtuous action.

In Book X of The Republic the greatest charge of all is laid against the poets or 'makers'. Not only do they teach vicious action by example, but they lead the spectators away from the path to reality. Their aim in art is to deceive and delude the spectators into a belief in illusion.

According to Plato, there were four realms of Being. The first and only true realm of existence was that of the True, the Good and the Beautiful. This realm was One, indivisible, immutable and eternal. Below this was the world of Ideas, a plurality of ideal forms which were similarly eternal and immutable. The third realm was the realm of phenomena, the world as men know it, which is an imperfect copy of the world of Ideas. The world of phenomena is forever Becoming; plurality, change, and impermanence are its characteristics, and it only approximates true existence in so far as it partakes of the existence of the realm of Ideas. There is a fourth world, the world of Art. This realm is a copy of the phenomenal realm. It is a copy of a copy, an appearance of an appearance, and is therefore three steps removed from truth and reality.

Art, such as poetry or music, must not be confused with the other arts, such as the art of riding or the art of making saddles or bridles.

...there are three arts which are concerned with all things: one which uses, another which makes, a third which imitates them.¹

Poetry and music are thus distinguished from the other arts by their purpose: imitation. It is clear from Socrates's use of the term that he means 'copy' when he charges that the poets 'imitate' the phenomenal

¹Plato, The Republic, X, #601, p. 370. Translation by B. Jowett.

world.

Then must we not infer that all these poetical individuals, beginning with Homer, are only imitators; they copy images of virtue¹ and the like, but the truth they never reach?

The fine arts of poetry, painting and music are condemned on the grounds of their purpose and method of practice:

Well, then, here are three beds: one existing in nature which is made by God, as I think that we may say — for no one else can be the maker?

No.

There is another which is the work of the carpenter?

Yes.

And the work of the painter is a third?

Yes.

Beds, then, are of three kinds, and there are three artists who superintend them: God, the maker of the bed, and the painter?

Yes, there are three of them.

...

God...desired to be the real maker of a real bed, not a particular maker of a particular bed, and therefore He created a bed which is essentially and by nature one only.

So we believe.

Shall we, then, speak of Him as the natural author and maker of the bed?

Yes, he replied; inasmuch as by the natural process of creation He is the author of this and of all other things.

And what shall we say of the carpenter— is he not also maker of the bed?

Yes.

But would you call the painter a creator and maker?

Certainly not.

Yet if he is not the maker, what is he in relation to the bed?

I think, he said, that we may fairly designate him as the imitator of that which the others make.

Good, I said; then you call him who is third in the descent from nature an imitator?

Certainly, he said.

¹Ibid., p. 368. *Italics mine.*

And the tragic poet is an imitator, and therefore, like all other imitators, he is thrice removed from the king and from truth?

That appears to be so.¹

.....

And now we may fairly take (the imitative poet) and place him by the side of the painter, for he is like him in two ways: first, inasmuch as his creations have an inferior degree of truth—in this, I say, he is like him; and he is also like him in being concerned with an inferior part of the soul; and therefore we shall be right in refusing to admit him into a well-ordered State, because he awakens and nourishes and strengthens the feelings and impairs the reason. As in a city when the evil are permitted to have authority and the good are put out of the way, so in the soul of man, as we maintain, the imitative poet implants an evil constitution, for he indulges the irrational nature which has no discernment of greater and less, but thinks the same thing at one time great and at another small—he is a manufacturer of images and is very far removed from the truth.²

In this way Plato expels the poets from his ideal State. Nevertheless he could not have been absolutely convinced of the justice of his own judgment, for Socrates adds the following comment to the conclusion with respect to art :

Notwithstanding this, let us assure our sweet friend and the sister arts of imitation, that if she will only prove her title to exist in a well-ordered State we shall be delighted to receive her — we are very conscious of her charms; but we may not on that account betray the truth. I dare say, Glaucon, that you are as much charmed by her as I am, especially when she appears in Homer?³

It is not improbable that Aristotle's Poetics is in some measure at least an answer to the challenge which his teacher had posed in The Republic. The presence of an argument justifying the moral or immoral element in poetry is certainly singular in a work which is so

¹ Ibid., pp. 363-364.

² Ibid., p. 375.

³ Ibid., p. 379.

predominantly devoted to a discussion of poetry as fact.

That is, Aristotle's method is here no different from his usual scientific, dispassionate analysis of an assemblage of data. It is at once inductive and objective. The distinguishing characteristic of the fine arts he finds to be that they "are all in their general conception modes of imitation".¹ The imitation is produced by means of "rhythm, language, or 'harmony', either singly or combined".² Poetry had its origin in two fundamental instincts of human nature: the instinct for imitation, and the instinct for harmony. There are many kinds of poetry, but he proposes to treat of only two in any detail: tragedy and comedy. Tragedy is the imitation of a serious action, comedy the imitation of a mean action; thus the two are very simply distinguished.

After surveying all the existing examples of Greek tragedy, he arrives at a definition which he feels will accommodate them: "Tragedy... is an imitation of an action that is serious, complete, and of a certain magnitude; in language embellished with each kind of artistic ornament, the several kinds being found in separate parts of the play; in the form of action, not of narrative; through pity and fear effecting the proper purgation of these emotions."³

The definition implies the six parts of every tragedy: Plot, Character, Thought, Diction, Spectacle and Song. Concerning Plot, Aristotle notes that the plot is built around a complete action; therefore each plot must have a beginning, a middle, and an end. Plots are of two kinds: simple or complex. The simple plot contains a tragic incident only.

¹ Aristotle, Poetics, I, 2. Given in Smith and Parks, The Great Critics, "Poetics", p. 28. Translation by S.H. Butcher.

² Ibid., I, 4, p. 29.

³ Ibid., VI, 2, p. 34.

In addition to the tragic incident a complex plot contains a reversal of intention in the action, and a recognition scene in which the actors and the spectators become aware of the inevitable outcome. Aristotle's remarks on the other elements in tragic drama are in a similar common sense vein.

It therefore follows that Aristotle's analysis is not by any means an airy theory constructed out of his imagination in order to support, or fit into, his metaphysics. He is simply observing the drama which he sees about him and drawing conclusions from the dramatists methods and aims.

Apart from his predominantly scientific analysis, however, he does draw certain conclusions with respect to the drama which seem to be answers to Plato's metaphysical criticisms.

...The standard of correctness is not the same in poetry and politics, any more than in poetry and any other art. Within the art of poetry there are two kinds of faults, — those which touch its essence, and those which are accidental. If a poet has chosen to imitate something, *but has imitated it incorrectly* through want of capacity, the error is inherent in the poetry. But if the error is due to a wrong choice — if he has represented a horse as throwing out both his off legs at once, or introduced technical inaccuracies in medicine, for example, or any other art — the error is not essential to the poetry. These are the points of view from which we should consider and answer the objections raised by the critics.¹

From this it follows that truth to fact is not a relevant criticism with respect to poetry. Aristotle was the first to introduce the conception of 'poetic truth' into criticism. The poet is aiming to achieve a certain kind of effect, and so long as that which he depicts is relevant to the highest attainment of this effect, it is

¹Ibid., XXV, 3, 4, p. 57.

true; in other words, the end justifies the means. But this is not all that the term 'poetic truth' implies. A further proof of the high fidelity of the poet to truth is involved in Aristotle's novel conception of the meaning of 'imitation'.

The poet being an imitator, like a painter or any other artist, must of necessity imitate one of three objects, — things as they were or are, things as they are said or thought to be, or things as they ought to be.¹

The superiority of the poet as compared with the historian lies just in this ability to portray, through imitation, 'things as they ought to be'.

...It is not the function of the poet to relate what has happened, but what may happen — what is possible according to the law of probability or necessity. The poet and the historian differ not by writing in verse or in prose. The work of Herodotus might be put into verse, and it would still be a species of history, with metre no less than without it. The true difference is that one relates what has happened, the other what may happen. Poetry, therefore, is a more philosophical and a higher thing than history: for poetry tends to express the universal, history the particular.²

Plato had accused the poets of removing reality one step farther from the truth because they made copies of appearance. The above quotation provides Aristotle's answer to the accusation.

The poet does not copy appearance. He re-creates the appearance into its ideal end. Aristotle's concept of what constituted reality was different from Plato's view. Instead of partially denying fealty to the world of phenomenon, Aristotle postulated pure form and pure matter (corresponding to Plato's world of pure Ideas and pure matter) as only hypothetical elements of reality; the

¹ Ibid., XXV, 1, p. 57.

² Ibid., IX, 1, 2, 3, p. 37.

existential phenomenal world was what constituted reality. In this world things are always becoming, they never are. It is a world of potentiality in which things are always striving to assume the ideal form which is contained within them, and never quite succeeding because of the presence of other determining elements around and about them. The poet, however, in his re-creation of existence is unhampered by the ordinary obstacles of existence. He is able to glimpse the end toward which each thing is striving, and in the drama he is able to say to the spectators, "If conditions were such that this was so, then certain results would follow", and he proceeds to unfold his conception of an ideal series of cause and effect. The poet thus approximates a higher reality in his poetry, rather than provides a copy of lesser reality as Plato reasoned.

There remains Plato's charge that poetry has an immoral effect on the spectator, either as arousing in him the weak and feminine passions, or teaching vice by the example of wicked men gaining reward and virtuous men suffering.

Aristotle's analysis of the effect of tragedy was similar to that of Plato, but his conclusions were different. At the end of the Poetics, Aristotle remarks that "each art ought to produce, not any chance pleasure, but the pleasure proper to it".¹ He is quite willing to admit that the pleasure derived from tragedy is emotional, as Plato would have it, but attacks the view that it makes men effeminate. On the contrary, it is because of the excitation of the emotions of pity and fear that men receive a beneficial effect from poetry. The whole purpose of tragedy is to excite and arouse the emotions of pity and fear:

¹Ibid., XXVI, 7, p. 61.

A perfect tragedy should, as we have seen, be arranged not on the simple but on the complex plan. It should, moreover, imitate actions which excite pity and fear, this being the distinctive mark of tragic imitation. It follows plainly, in the first place, that the change of fortune presented must not be the spectacle of a virtuous man brought from prosperity to adversity: for this moves neither pity nor fear; it merely shocks us. Nor, again, that of a bad man passing from adversity to prosperity: for nothing can be more alien to the spirit of Tragedy; it possesses no single tragic quality; it neither satisfies the moral sense, nor calls forth pity and fear. Nor, again, should the downfall of the utter villain be exhibited. A plot of this kind would, doubtless, satisfy the moral sense, but it would inspire neither pity nor fear; for pity is aroused by unmerited misfortune, fear by the misfortune of a man like ourselves. Such an event, therefore, will be neither pitiful nor terrible. There remains, then, the character between these two extremes,— that of a man who is not eminently good and just, yet whose misfortune is brought about not by vice, or depravity, but by some error or frailty.

It will thus be seen that emotional elements of pity and fear are considered so important by Aristotle that almost every element in the drama must be sacrificed for this effect. And rightly so, for it is from these two elements that tragedy derives its beneficial effect, and is thus rescued from the ethical criticism which Plato had levelled at poetry and the imitative arts in general.

In his definition of poetry Aristotle had said that tragedy is an imitation of an action "through pity and fear effecting the proper purgation of these emotions". There are two possible interpretations of the term "purgation", or catharsis. The term might be interpreted physiologically: pity and fear are humors of the body; an excess of these two humors would result in a physical purging of the humors.

On the other hand, when we consider the fact that Aristotle was probably answering Plato's charges in his

¹Ibid., XIII, 2, 3, pp. 40-41.

analysis, it is also probable that he would have answered his former teacher on his own grounds in terms of his ethics. In terms of the golden mean, pity and fear might then be interpreted as extremes which, being excited to excess, equalize each other and produce the proper temperate balance and harmony in the mind requisite for the feeling of calmness and serenity which follows the conclusion of tragedy.

Aristotle merely uses the term "catharsis". It has been left to subsequent critics to discover its meaning. Of one thing we may be certain, however. Whether physiological or ethical, the term signifies a healthy purifying process in opposition to Plato's criticism of the effects of poetry.

The charge against poetry — that its effect is immoral — and its answer, — that the effect is really beneficial — occupied critics for centuries after. Similarly, the terms "inspiration" and "imitation" and "catharsis" became bywords in aesthetic criticism until the dawn of the modern era and the new psychology of Freud.

Anticipating the new trend in criticism, and denying the validity of any moral involvements and explanations of the poetic creative spirit and effect, Friedrich Nietzsche's The Birth of Tragedy from the Spirit of Music, published in 1871, is an unacknowledged landmark in the development of aesthetic theory.

CHAPTER III

APOLLO AND DIONYSUS : THE BIRTH OF TRAGEDY

In just the same way that Nietzsche returned through history to an examination of the genesis of moral values in an attempt to account for "good" and "evil", he returned to Greek culture in order to account for the phenomena of art and tragedy. The question which he attempted to answer with respect to Greek culture was, What peculiar set of circumstances gave birth to the tragedies of Aeschylus and Sophocles? Why was it that Europe was unable to attain anything equal to this flower of Greek culture?

In surveying the civilizations of primitive pre-Socratic Greece Nietzsche discovered what he considered to be a unique solution to the problem. He recognized as universal principles in every primitive culture two natural impulses which he termed Dionysian and Apollonian.

The Dionysian impulse in primitive society signifies the psychical state of frenzy, drunkenness, orgiastic revelry. The state of intoxication and elation of the Bacchanal maidens is the best illustration of the Dionysian attitude.

The word "Dionysian" expresses : a constraint to unity, a soaring above personality, the commonplace, society, reality, and above the abyss of the ephemeral; the passionately painful sensation of superabundance in darker, fuller, and more fluctuating conditions; an ecstatic saying of yea to the collective character of existence, as that which remains the same, and equally mighty and blissful throughout the change; the great pantheistic sympathy with pleasure and pain, which declares even the most terrible and the most questionable qualities of existence good, and sanctifies them; the eternal will to procreation, to fruitfulness

and to recurrence; the feeling of unity in regard to the necessity of creating and annihilating.¹

The Apollonian impulse, on the other hand, is a restraining impulse toward a dream-world. It is the objectification of the subconscious world of fantasy, spun from the web of imagination. It is a creation of a world of illusion out of the stuff of the phenomenal world, which is itself, according to Nietzsche's metaphysics, only illusion. Restraint is a characteristic of the Apollonian impulse, since the illusions which the mind creates must be rigidly controlled in order that the creator may never forget that his creations are still illusions.

The word "Apollonian" expresses : the constraint to be absolutely isolated, to the typical "individual", to everything that simplifies, distinguishes, and makes strong, salient, definite, and typical : to freedom within the law.²

The Dionysian frenzy is a manifestation of the union of man with man and man with Nature. It is force or energy which recurs again and again expressing itself through the instincts of the primitive man. It is the divine seizure of man, the moment when he is possessed and recognizes subconsciously his affinity to the primary Will.

Under the charm of the Dionysian not only is the union between man and man reaffirmed, but Nature which has become estranged, hostile, or subjugated, celebrates once more her reconciliation with her prodigal son, man. Freely earth proffers her gifts, and peacefully the beasts of prey approach from desert and mountain.³

¹Nietzsche, from "The Will to Power in Art" as given in Rader, A Modern Book of Aesthetics, #2, p. 58-59.

²Ibid., p. 59.

³Nietzsche, The Philosophy of Nietzsche, "The Birth of Tragedy from the Spirit of Music", #1, pp. 172-173.

In the Dionysian dithyramb man is incited to the greatest exaltation of his symbolic faculties; something never before experienced struggles for utterance — the annihilation of the veil of Maya, Oneness as the soul of the race, and of nature itself.⁴

The Apollonian seizure occurs as vision. Apollo is the objectification of the principium individuationis :

The joyful necessity of the dream-experience has been embodied by the Greeks in their Apollo: for Apollo, the god of all plastic energies, is at the same time the soothsaying god. He, who (as the etymology of the name indicates) is the "shining one", the deity of light, is also ruler over the fair appearance of the inner world of fantasy...we must also include in our picture of Apollo that delicate boundary, which the dream-picture must not overstep — lest it act pathologically (in which case appearance would impose upon us as pure reality). We must keep in mind that measured restraint, that freedom from the wilder emotions, that philosophical calm of the sculptor-god...in one sense, we might apply to Apollo the words of Schopenhauer when he speaks of the man wrapt in the veil of Maya:..."Just as in a stormy sea, unbounded in every direction, rising and falling with howling mountainous waves, a sailor sits in a boat and trusts in his frail barque: so in the midst of a world of sorrows the individual sits quietly, supported by and trusting in his principium individuationis." ...we might consider Apollo himself as the glorious divine image of the principium individuationis, whose gestures and expression tell us of all the joy and wisdom of "appearance", together with its beauty.²

Now Nietzsche regards the Dionysian and Apollonian impulses as universal art-impulses of Nature. They occur in many primitive cultures without the mediating hand of the human artist. And just as the union of male and female is necessary for creation and birth in physical

⁴Ibid., #2, p. 178.

²Ibid., #1, pp. 172-173.

phenomena, so the union of apparently contradictory tendencies in primitive culture is necessary for the creation and birth of artistic phenomena.

It was with the Greeks that the two primitive art-impulses of nature, the Dionysian and the Apollonian, were reconciled and gave birth to art for the first time. The explanation for this reconciliation lies in the assault of the barbaric Dionysian spirit on the more-advanced Greek Apollonian spirit.

The Greeks, Nietzsche believed, were a truly heroic race. They penetrated at once into the heart of the mystery of existence. They recognized that existence was horrible, hard, and cruel. They also realized that the universe and they themselves were nothing more nor less than an artistic phenomenon, created by the master artificer in aesthetics, the Will.

But at the same time they recognized that existence could be joyful; they themselves could become artists and create their little world of illusion, objectifying their sufferings in the illusion of a world of Olympian gods, just as the Will had objectified its suffering in the creation of the world of phenomenon and of men.

The impulse to create a dream-world was a fundamental human need, which, in turn, was but another manifestation of the Will to objectify itself still further:

Though it is certain that of the two halves of our existence, the waking and the dreaming states, the former appeals to us as infinitely more preferable, important, excellent and worthy of being lived, indeed, as that which alone is lived: yet, in relation to that mysterious substratum of our nature of which we are the phenomenon, I should, paradoxical as it may seem, maintain the very opposite estimate of the value of dream life. For the more

clearly I perceive in nature those omnipotent art impulses, and in them an ardent longing for release, for redemption through release, the more I feel myself impelled to the metaphysical assumption that the Truly-Existent and Primal Unity, eternally suffering and divided against itself, has need of the rapturous vision, the joyful appearance, for its continuous salvation: which appearance we, completely wrapt up in it and composed of it, are compelled to apprehend as the True Non-Being, — i. e., as a perpetual becoming in time, space and causality, — in other words, as empiric reality. If, for the moment, we do not consider the question of our own "reality", if we conceive of our empirical existence, and that of the world in general, as a continuously manifested representation of the Primal Unity, we shall then have to look upon the dream as an appearance of appearance, hence as a still higher appeasement of the primordial desire for appearance. And that is why the innermost heart of Nature feels that ineffable joy in the naive artist and the naive work of art, which is likewise only an appearance of appearance".¹

Because the creation of the dream-world required restraint, control, measure and wisdom, pride and excess were regarded as the enemies of Apollo, the god of vision, and the objectification of the powers necessary for the creation of the dream-world. It was for this reason that the Titans were invented and objectified as the enemies of the gods, just as the barbarians were the enemies of the Greeks. It will be seen that the struggle of the Titans against the gods, and the struggle of the barbarians against the Greeks, were thus the objectifications of two parallel worlds of illusion, the latter being a creation of illusion from the primary Will, and the former a creation of illusion from creatures of illusion, the Greeks. In both cases the creation of a realm of illusion as a means of objectification of the primary suffering

¹Ibid., #4, pp. 184-185.

constitutes the only real pleasure or enjoyment which can possibly be derived from existence. This is the basis of aesthetic pleasure.

Further, it ought to be observed that the aesthetic joy does not really involve a denial of life, as is the case with creations of morality. The element of suffering is still present in both creations of illusion. But it is suffering objectified.

Well then, we are to imagine the Greeks as having attained the joy of an Apollonian dream-world. For the purpose of making life pleasurable they had created a realm of Olympians and Titans, objectifying their own struggle for power in this realm, and deriving an aesthetic satisfaction from it.

Into this world of the Greeks there comes an incursion of Dionysian barbarians :

For some time it would appear that the Greeks were perfectly insulated against the feverish excitements of these (Dionysian) festivals by the figure of Apollo himself rising here in full pride, who could not have held out the Gorgon's head to any power more dangerous than this grotesquely uncouth Dionysian... The opposition between Apollo and Dionysus became more hazardous and even impossible, when, from the deepest roots of the Hellenic nature, similar impulses finally burst forth and made a path for themselves : the Delphic god, by a seasonably effected reconciliation, now contented himself with taking the destructive weapons from the hands of his powerful antagonist. This reconciliation, is the most important moment in the history of the Greek cult : wherever we turn we note the revolutions resulting from this event. The two antagonists were reconciled; the boundary lines thenceforth to be observed by each were sharply defined, and there was to be a periodical exchange of gifts of esteem.¹

It was due to the reconciliation of the Dionysian and the

¹Ibid., #2, pp. 176-177.

Apollonian tendencies that "the principium individuationis for the first time becomes an artistic phenomenon." There followed four periods of great Greek culture:

...the Dionysian and the Apollonian, in new births ever following and mutually augmenting one another, controlled the Hellenic genius; that from out the age of "bronze", with its wars of the Titans and its rigorous folk-philosophy, the Homeric world developed under the sway of the Apollonian impulse to beauty; that this "naive" splendor was again overwhelmed by the influx of the Dionysian; and that against this new power the Apollonian rose to the austere majesty of Doric art and the Doric view of the world. If, then, amid the strife of these two hostile principles, the older Hellenic history thus falls into four great periods of art, we are now impelled to inquire after the final goal of these developments and processes, lest perchance we should regard the last-attained period, the period of Doric art, as the climax and aim of these artistic impulses. And here the sublime and celebrated art of Attic tragedy and the dramatic dithyramb presents itself as the common goal of both these tendencies, whose mysterious union, after many and long precursory struggles, found glorious consummation¹ in this child,— at once Antigone and Cassandra.

The Dionysian was the more primitive, instinctive and unconscious impulse of the two. It manifested itself in music and the dance. The Apollonian element was concerned with giving symbols, form, and context to the wild inapprehensible music of the Dionysian. The significance of this distinction becomes clear when Nietzsche shows that music is the basic objectification of the Will:

"In what form does music appear in the mirror of symbolism and conception?" It appears as will, taking the term in Schopenhauer's sense, i. e., as the antithesis of the esthetic, purely contemplative, and passive frame of mind. Here, however, we must make as sharp a distinction as possible between the concept of essence and the concept of phenomenon; for music, according to its essence, cannot possibly be will. To be will

¹Ibid., #4, p. 189.

it would have to be wholly banished from the realm of art — for the will is the unesthetic-in-itself. Yet though essentially it is not will, phenomenally it appears as will.¹

Thus the Dionysian frenzy is in true touch with the One behind existence. The veil of Maya is completely stripped from the eyes of the beholder. The Apollonian mind is unable to absorb this naked vision, however, without first transmitting the Will into an image. Folk-song, for example, is the effort of the Apollonian to approximate music by means of language, to clothe the pure concept in an image or symbol. In this way lyric poetry is born.

...We observe that in the poetry of the folk-song, language is strained to the utmost that it may imitate music; and hence with Archilochus begins a new world of poetry, which is basically opposed to the Homeric. And in saying this we have indicated the only possible relation between poetry and music, between word and tone: the word, the picture, the concept here seeks an expression analogous to music and now feels in itself the power of music.²

Having explained the origin of Greek poetry and the various manifestations of the Dionysian and Apollonian in art, Nietzsche attacks the problem of Attic tragedy. What is its origin?

It was a commonplace of criticism that tragedy had originated in the Greek chorus. But nineteenth century commentators, according to Nietzsche, have completely missed the point when they read nineteenth century political interpretations into the chorus. It had been regarded, for example, as the vox populi, reflecting the opinions of the democratic elements of the state upon the action which was taking place on the stage. This is absurd, said Nietzsche; originally there were no democratic elements in the state.

Schlegel had interpreted the chorus as the "ideal

¹Ibid., #6, p. 201.

²Ibid., #6, p. 199.

spectator", that is, as an abstraction of the general character of the audience. This, too, is ridiculous, said Nietzsche. The Greek chorus shows evidence of belief in the reality of the action on the stage. To attribute such belief to a spectator, ideal or otherwise, is to deny the aesthetic element in the play, which hinges upon the very fact that what is taking place on the stage is not real.

Nietzsche derives his hint as to the true nature of the chorus from Schiller, who observed that the Greek chorus constitutes a barrier between the realm of the audience (reality), and the realm of the play (illusion). This is the fundamental function of the chorus so far as the spectator is concerned.

For this chorus the Greek built up the scaffolding of a fictitious natural state and on it placed fictitious natural beings. On this foundation tragedy developed and so, of course, it could dispense from the beginning with a painful portrayal of reality.¹

Now if we consider that the metaphysical explanation of the origin of Greek art is in the conflict and reconciliation of the Dionysian and Apollonian life-attitudes, and if we bear in mind the ritualism and revelry of the bacchanalian worship of Dionysus, it becomes clear that the chorus represents the original Dionysian man.

The chorus is the "ideal spectator" in so far as it is the only beholder, the beholder of the visionary world of the scene. A public of spectators, as we know it, was unknown to the Greeks. In their theatres the terraced structure of the theatron rising in concentric arcs enabled everyone to overlook, in an actual sense, the entire world of culture around him, and in an overabundance of contemplation to imagine himself one of the chorus. According to this view, then, we may call the chorus in its primitive stage in early tragedy a self-mirroring of the Dionysian man.²

¹Ibid., #7, p. 207.

²Ibid., #8, p. 213.

At first the drama consisted in nothing but chorus. The Dionysian concept of union with the One, however, when coming into contact with the Apollonian spirit, necessarily led to an objectification of the concept in order for the Apollonian to achieve the vision. The hero was created, and placed in the world of illusion, the stage.

In accordance with this view, and with tradition, Dionysus, the proper stage-hero and focus of vision, is in the remotest period of tragedy not at first actually present, but is only so imagined, which means that tragedy is originally only "chorus" and not "drama". Later on the attempt is made to present the god as real and to display the visionary figure together with its aura of splendor before the eyes of all; here the "drama" in the narrow sense of the term begins. The dithyrambic chorus is now assigned the task of exciting the minds of the audience to such a pitch of Dionysian frenzy, that, when the tragic hero appears upon the stage, they do not see in him an unshapely man wearing a mask, but they see a visionary ¹ figure, born as it were of their own ecstasy.

From this description of the birth and development of Greek tragedy, Nietzsche turns to a discussion of the importance of myth in the drama. Nietzsche's discovery, which appears to be original, is very interesting in that it is the forerunner of a type of criticism which has become fashionable in modern literary criticism.

The tradition is undisputed that Greek tragedy in its earliest form had for its sole theme the sufferings of Dionysus, and that for a long time the only stage-hero was Dionysus himself. With equal confidence, however, we can assert that, until Euripides, Dionysus never once ceased to be the tragic hero; that, in fact, all the celebrated figures of the Greek stage — Prometheus, Oedipus, etc. ² are but masks of the original hero, Dionysus.

That is to say, one fundamental myth lies behind the whole culture of a people. The myth appears in various

¹ Ibid., #8, p. 218.

² Ibid., #10, p. 229.

guises as each succeeding artist gives his particular version of the original concept. But it is nevertheless essentially the same throughout.¹ Nietzsche, of course, colors the myth by interpreting its meaning in terms of his own, not the Greek, metaphysic.

Using Plato's terms we should have to speak of the tragic figures of the Hellenic stage somewhat as follows: the one truly real Dionysus appears in a variety of forms, in the mask of a fighting hero and entangled, as it were, in the net of the individual will. In the latter case the visible god talks and acts so as to resemble an erring, striving, suffering individual. That, generally speaking, he appears with such epic precision and clarity is the work of the dream-reading Apollo, who through this symbolic appearance indicates to the chorus its Dionysian state. In reality, however, and behind this appearance, the hero is the suffering Dionysus of the mysteries, the god in himself experiencing the agonies of individuation...we are therefore to regard individuation as the origin and prime cause of all suffering, as something objectionable in itself...In this existence as a dismembered god, Dionysus possesses the dual nature of a cruel barbarized demon and a mild, gentle-hearted ruler. But the hope of the epopts looked towards a new birth of Dionysus, which we must now in anticipation conceive as the end of individuation...it is this hope alone that casts a gleam of joy on the features of a world torn asunder and shattered into individuals...This view of things already provides us with all the elements of a profound and pessimistic contemplation of the world, together with the mystery doctrine of tragedy: the fundamental knowledge of the oneness of everything existent, the conception of individuation as the prime cause of evil, and of art as the joyous hope that the bonds of individuation² may be broken in a inaugury of a restored oneness.²

Such a myth, for example is the legend of the Holy Grail, which received its most popular expression in Malory's *Morte d'Arthur*. Originally the magic staff, the overflowing vessel, the maimed youth, the fish-emblem, and the waste land were parts of the ritual of Adonis-worshippers, whose rites stemmed from the Mediterranean to the Irish coast. When the Christian writers of the Middle Ages adopted the myth the crude phallic symbols were adapted to a spiritual interpretation and equated with

The responsibility for the death of Greek myth and the "suicide" of tragedy is attributed to Euripides. Instead of the identification of the spectator with the Dionysian spirit of the chorus, Euripides transferred the identification to the actors on the stage. Euripides was the first realist. He destroyed the world of illusion and substituted the natural realm in its place. It follows that (according to Nietzsche's definition) Euripides was no longer an artist. But even here the full responsibility for the decay of Attic tragedy cannot be placed upon the shoulders of Euripides. For he was not the real spectre behind the new Attic drama.

Dionysus had already been scared from the tragic stage; he had been scared by a demonic power speaking through Euripides. For even Euripides was, in a sense, only a mask: the deity that spoke through him was neither Dionysus nor Apollo. It was an altogether new-born demon. And it was called Socrates. Thus we have a new antithesis — the Dionysian and the Socratic; and on that antithesis the art of Greek tragedy was wrecked.²

It was the spectre of the new rationalist spirit of Socrates that destroyed Greek art. The supreme law of "esthetic Socratism" was " 'To be beautiful everything must be intelligible', as the counterpart to the Socratic identity: 'Knowledge is virtue!' " Nietzsche observes that

the Euripidean drama is a thing both cool and fiery, equally capable of freezing and burning. It is impossible for it to attain the Apollonian effect of the epos, while, on the other hand, it has alienated itself as much as possible from Dionysian elements. Now, in order to develop

the Christian symbols of the bleeding lance, the Holy Grail, the maimed king, the Fisher King, and the desert. The original myth has been adapted once more to modern symbolism by T. S. Eliot in The Waste Land.

² Ibid., #10, pp. 230-231.

³ Ibid., #12, p. 244.

at all, it requires new stimulants, which can no longer lie within the sphere of the two unique art-impulses, the Apollonian and the Dionysian. These stimulants are cool, paradoxical thoughts, replacing Apollonian intuitions, — and fiery passions, replacing Dionysian ecstasies; and, it may be added, thoughts and passions copied very realistically and in no sense suffused with the atmosphere of art.¹

The creation of art can only spring from the union of the mutually opposed Dionysian and Apollonian attitudes, the one being an insight into the mystery of existence, the other being the impulse to beauty. All art, and aesthetic perception, is an instinctive act; the rationalist act of perception, although it may involve some measure of joy and satisfaction, is nevertheless inartistic, and basically opposed to the aesthetic impulses :

Whereas in all productive men it is instinct that is the creatively affirmative force, and consciousness that acts critically and dissuasively; with Socrates it is instinct that becomes critic, and consciousness that becomes creator — a perfect monstrosity per defectum !²

The Euripidean prologue, which informs the spectator of the history of the myth, the Euripidean realism which destroys the former Apollonian dream-world, and the Euripidean deus ex machina are all evidence of the fact that "Euripides as a poet is essentially an echo of his own conscious knowledge".³ The decadence of Greek drama was a result of the new consciousness in Greek thought in place of the older, healthier life lived by instinct (Dionysian) and by subconscious self-projection (Apollonian). Socratic rationalism had been communicated to the artist and the spectator, banishing the Apollonian and Dionysian realms from the stage.

But what precisely was the effect of the great

¹ Ibid., #12, p. 247.

² Ibid., #13, p. 254-255.

³ Ibid., #12, p. 249.

Attic tragedy ? Again Nietzsche interprets the facts in terms of his two basic antithetical principles of art. In the first place, he attributes a profound meta-physical consciousness to the Greek spectator, who was always aware of the real, meaning of the symbols of Dionysus and Apollo, according to Nietzsche. Like Nietzsche, the Greek spectator was supposed to have seen

Apollo as the transfiguring genius of the principium individuationis through which alone the redemption in appearance is truly obtained; while by the mystical triumphant cry of Dionysus the spell of individuation is broken, and the way lies open to the Mothers of Being, to the innermost heart of things.¹

And in accordance with his metaphysic, Nietzsche distinguished three life-attitudes which were designed to make existence possible under the pressure of the Will.

(Life) is an eternal phenomenon: the insatiate will can always, by means of an illusion spread over things, detain its creatures in life and compel them to live on. One is chained by the Socratic love of knowledge and the delusion of being able thereby to heal the wound of existence; another is ensnared by art's seductive veil of beauty fluttering before his eyes; still another by the metaphysical comfort that beneath the flux of phenomenon eternal life flows on indestructably... These three planes of illusion are on the whole designed for the more nobly formed natures, who in general feel profoundly the weight and burden of existence, and must be deluded by exquisite stimulants into forgetfulness of their sorrow. All that we call culture is made up of these stimulants; and, according to the proportion of the ingredients, we have either a dominantly Socratic or artistic or tragic culture: ... or an Alexandrian or a Hellenic or a Buddhistic culture.²

¹Ibid., #16, p. 271.

²Ibid., #18, p. 288.

The misunderstanding of the true Attic tragic effect is a result of the substitution of the values of one culture into those of another. Greek tragedy did not have a moral effect. The Attic tragedian would not have understood what was meant by describing tragedy in this way. His culture was not a moral culture, until the time of Socrates and the rationalist spirit. The effect of tragedy was purely aesthetic in the sense that it was above and beyond moral and pathological explanation. The catharsis of Aristotle is not the true explanation whether interpreted ethically or pathologically.

According to Nietzsche the tragic experience is the experience of the transmutation of pain into joy. It is the subconscious objectification of the sufferings of existence accompanied by the realization of, and the joy in, the unity of all things.

Here it becomes necessary to raise ourselves with one daring bound into a metaphysics of Art. Therefore I repeat my former proposition that only as an esthetic phenomenon may existence and the world appear justified: and in this sense it is precisely the function of the tragic myth to convince us that even the ugly and the inharmonious is an artistic game which the will plays with itself in the eternal fulness of its joy.¹

¹Ibid., #24, p. 336.

CHAPTER IV

CULTURE AND THE MASTER MORALITY

In the preceding chapter it has been shown that Nietzsche believed that existence itself was an aesthetic phenomenon. It necessarily follows that art — great art — was of the highest value in Nietzsche's concept of life.

The tragic experience was the product of a culture whose members had achieved the great view of life which was essentially the same as that which would be held by the Superman. The Greeks of the pre-Socratic period of tragedy had pierced to the heart of existence, and had achieved that vision of the joyous life which was necessary for a full and complete existence.

Nietzsche's admiration for the pre-Socratic Greek community becomes clear when we realize that the Dionysian impulse in art is the aesthetic equivalent of the Will-to-Power in metaphysics. The feeling of superabundance, of appropriation and the capacity for dispensation, of stored energy and healthfulness with the accompanying desire for its sudden purge and discharge, are the essential features of living life at white heat in the tremendous struggle for supremacy.

The Dionysian man is the forerunner of the Superman.

The Greeks were a race of Dionysian men. They had achieved the same vision of life as the Superman would achieve in the future. They saw life as an illusion, and yet embraced it for what it was, and in embracing it overcame it. They saw suffering and pain as the reality behind the illusion, and yet embraced the suffering and the pain, and created joy from it. Plunging into the struggle for power they achieved power, and mastered themselves and their neighbors. This, Nietzsche knew, would be

the goal of the Superman.

Like the Greeks, the Superman would have the tragic view of life. This view implies strength: strength to face the pain and cruelty of existence, both of the body and of the mind. It implies realism: the courage to see that existence is an illusion. It implies pessimism, the pessimism of strength: to be able to recognize that the goals which man sets for himself have no value, and yet to assert their value, knowing that, objectively, the struggle to achieve them is futile.

Pre-Socratic Greek tragedy was the Apollonian objectification of this Dionysian attitude toward life. The Attic tragedy was the psychological projection of the hero-image of the race.

When he turned from the worlds of the past and the future to the world of the present, Nietzsche was justifiably depressed. The last vestiges of the outworn Romantic element in art were everywhere to be seen in the latter half of the nineteenth century.

The high morality and turbulent emotion of the original Romantic movement had given way to ethical didacticism and mawkish sentimentality in the popular literature of the period. The reading public had increased enormously during the 1830's, and a more or less discriminating public had disappeared. Perhaps the worst offender of all the new art-objects was the popular novel. Complacent, bourgeois morality and the worst kind of sentiment were the selling-cards of these literary manufactures, and Nietzsche rightly condemned them as narcotics, more poisonous because of their seeming innocence, but dangerous nevertheless. They were escape devices conceived to falsify reality in order to facilitate easy living. These were not the vigorous

objectifications of the struggle for existence and power; these were the objectifications of the middle-class desire for escape from the struggle. They were the symptoms of the subconscious denial of life of the nineteenth century 'average man'.

There was also the l'art pour l'art school of aesthetes, but Nietzsche saw in them also the desire of a more select, cultivated group objectified into the denial of the Will-to-Power.

Wagner, as was pointed out earlier, was Nietzsche's greatest disappointment. Music was the fundamental appearance of the Will; from the spirit of music the Attic tragedy had sprung. Nietzsche felt that Wagner was capable of introducing the new yet primeval spirit of tragic music into German culture, using the pure untouched German myths to inspire the German people to a new realization of the meaning of life. Yet Wagnerian opera, in its final development, was the antithesis of everything Nietzsche felt was characteristic of great music.

Wagner had attempted to force the reconciliation of drama, poetry, spectacle, myth and music. In order to do this, he had sacrificed musical elements in the interests of the drama and the poetry. He was attempting to make opera intelligible rather than instinctive.

The decadence of contemporary culture was reflected in the practices of contemporary artists.

Modern counterfeit practices in the arts : regarded as necessary — that is to say, as fully in keeping with the needs most proper to the modern soul.

First : A less artistic public is sought which is capable of unlimited love (and is capable of falling upon its knees before a personality). The superstition of our century, the belief in "genius" assists this process.

Secondly : Artists harangue the dark instincts of the dissatisfied, the ambitious, and the self-deceivers of a democratic age : the importance

of poses.

Thirdly : The procedures of one art are transferred to the realm of another; the object of art is confounded with that of science, with that of the Church, or with that of the interests of the race (nationalism), or with that of philosophy — a man rings all bells at once, and awakens the vague suspicion that he is a god.

Fourthly : Artists flatter women, sufferers, and indignant folk. Narcotics and opiates are made to preponderate in art. The fancy of cultured people, and of the readers of poetry and ancient history is tickled.¹

The decadence in art was symptomatic of the decadence in morality and culture; in place of the art of the master-morality Nietzsche saw everywhere the art of the slave-morality.

Economically, the philosophy of laissez-faire was coming into its own during this period. Bismark was planning an imperialist expansion of Germany — an aim with which Nietzsche was in perfect agreement — but because the expansion required the money and support of the people, Bismark was granting most of the demands of the now powerful bourgeois class. Here again Nietzsche saw the illustration of the combined weakness of the masses overcoming the singular strength of the aristocracy. Socialization of transportation, of public utilities, of education and of health was being put into effect in return for the support of the middle classes in the economic struggle for power.

The culture of the slave-morality was destroying everything that Nietzsche dreamed of; and worst of all, it had destroyed Art. If only the strong men could be rallied to make a stand against the coming destruction ! If only they could be made to recognize the importance of their part in the evolution of the Superman! The means

¹ Nietzsche, The Complete Works of Friedrich Nietzsche, XV, "The Will to Power in Art", #824, pp. 265-266.

was at hand. A revolution in art and the taste for art might accomplish the desired revolution in the life-attitude of the strong.

...A preference for questionable and terrible things is a symptom of strength; whereas the taste for pretty and charming trifles is characteristic of the weak and the delicate. The love of tragedy is typical of strong ages and characters : its non plus ultra is perhaps the Divina Commedia. It is the heroic spirits which in tragic cruelty say Yea unto themselves; they are hard enough to feel pain as a pleasure.¹

Without either prejudice or indulgence we should try and investigate upon what soil a classical taste can be evolved. The hardening, the simplification, the strengthening, and the bedevilling of man are inseparable from classical taste.²

The artist is essentially the Dionysian man. As such he is the valuator, the seer, the visionary. In him the hopes for a greater future are realized. He is the ally of the Superman. The birth of tragic art will be the herald of a new future.

Art and nothing else! Art is the great means of making life possible, the great seducer to life, the great stimulus of life.

Art is the only superior counteragent to all will to the denial of life; it is par excellence the anti-Christian, the anti-Buddhistic, the anti-Nihilistic force.

Art is the alleviation of the seeker after knowledge,— of him who recognizes the terrible and questionable character of existence, and who will recognize it,— of the tragic seeker after knowledge.

Art is the alleviation of the man of action,— of him who not only sees the terrible and questionable character of existence, but also lives it, will live it,— of the tragic and warlike man, the hero.

Art is the alleviation of the sufferer,— as the way to states in which pain is willed, is transfigured, deified, where suffering is a form of great ecstasy.³

¹ Ibid., #852, p. 287.

² Ibid., #824, pp. 265-266.

³ Ibid., #II, pp. 290-291.

CONCLUSION

Apart from the reference of art to his own metaphysics and theory of the master and slave morality, Nietzsche made a significant contribution to aesthetic theory when he laid his finger prematurely on two significant modern developments well in advance of his time.

In the first place he saw clearly the immense importance of the myth in artistic composition.

It is the absence of any common myth in modern life which represents the single obstacle to the modern poet's 'being understood'. Obscurity, lack of communication, and extreme individualism and eccentricity are the results of the nineteenth century destruction of common belief in the Biblical narrative, which has represented the Western European artistic myth up until the advent of the modern era.

Nineteenth century science and theology, which were repeatedly forced into accord and harmony only to be separated again and again into ever-widening realms of disagreement, were the motivating factors behind the general loss of belief in the Biblical myth. Now, without this belief, what is the modern artist to substitute in its place? What can he count on as a general psychological background of his reader? The individuation of the world is almost complete, and the artist is left floundering in an attempt to construct some kind of general background of the knowledge of his readers within which he may work at ease.

T. S. Eliot has returned to the Thomistic concept

of society in the attempt; Auden, Spender and Lewis have seized on the new Marxist movement hoping to find a common background in the Leftist audience; others, like e. e. cummings and Robinson Jeffers retreat from a large audience and address themselves to the chosen few who are gifted enough, or have a 'key' by which to interpret them. It cannot be denied that the modern artist is faced with the problem of communication, and that communication is a problem because of the general absence of common myth.

Nietzsche was the first to recognize the importance of the myth in art. Great poetry, he saw, was the result of a great age, and great ages were characterized by a common background of belief.

In the second place, Nietzsche's theory of the Apollonian creation of the dream-world, of the Apollonian as that which gives the symbols to the Dionysian vision bears a remarkable resemblance to the Freudian interpretation of art.

Like Nietzsche, SIGMUND FREUD constructs his interpretation of art upon a voluntaristic basis, and emphasizes the derivation of art from love. The "libido", a term which Freud applies to the psychic energy of the sexual instinct, manifests itself in a continual striving for expression. When it is actively repressed by the mind, or when circumstances do not permit its direct expression, it assumes a multitude of disguises in order to circumvent the repressive forces. The chief of these disguises are the imagery of dreams and phantasies, and the symptoms of neurotic disorders. But the artist has an additional resource. By means of what Freud calls "sublimation" he can deflect the psychic energy generated by the sexual instinct into higher and non-sexual channels of creative endeavor. He then learns to control his phantasies, and thus to sublimate his sexual impulses in creative art. Or, in other words, the vague and instinctive forces of life are made to serve the critical demands of esthetic taste.¹

¹Rader, op. cit., p. 56.

Nietzsche's philosophical Dionysian and Apollonian man are here given their first modern symbolization.

Nietzsche's emphasis on value, meaning, and belief have their modern counterpart in pragmatism and realism. His emphasis on non-purposive character of existence has its counterpart in existentialism. Fascist Italy and Nazi Germany derived much of their political philosophies from the concept of the Superman. His influence on modern thought has been subterranean, and exceptionally extensive.

But invariably we must return to his aesthetics for the finest expression of his very keen intellect. Despite the prejudices and the occasional axe-grinding of the author, despite the fundamental voluntaristic basis of the work, The Birth of Tragedy from the Spirit of Music, is a fine piece of penetrative aesthetic criticism.

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