

Schopenhauer Contra Nietzsche: The Moral Response to Suffering

By Kelly Higgins

UWTSD Master of Arts in Philosophy Thesis

Date: 2022

Advisor: Rebekah Humphreys

Master's Degrees by Examination and Dissertation

Declaration Form

1. This work has not previously been accepted in substance for any degree and is not being concurrently submitted in candidature for any degree.

Name.....Kelly Higgins

Date 20 September, 2022.....

2. This dissertation is being submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of MA in Philosophy.....

Name... ..Kelly Higgins.....

Date 20 September, 2022.....

3. This dissertation is the result of my own independent work/investigation, except where otherwise stated.

Other sources are acknowledged by footnotes giving explicit references.

A bibliography is appended.

Name.....Kelly Higgins.....

Date: 20 September, 2022.....

4. I hereby give consent for my dissertation, if accepted, to be available for photocopying, inter-library loan, and for deposit in the University's digital repository

Name.....Kelly Higgins.....

Date.....20 September, 2022.....

Supervisor's Declaration.

I am satisfied that this work is the result of the student's own efforts.

Signed: Rebekah Humphreys.....

Date: 20 September, 2022.....

Abstract:

In this thesis I will examine the moral systems of Arthur Schopenhauer and Friedrich Nietzsche. I will study the structure of the 'will' in both systems, why the 'will' causes suffering, and what each philosopher believes the proper moral response to suffering is. I will argue that Nietzsche's moral response to suffering is pragmatically superior to Schopenhauer on the grounds that (1) it is possible for humans to follow it and (2) humans *should* follow it. I argue that Nietzsche's moral response demands freedom and critical analysis of beliefs, which would break us from dogmas of the past and allow us to move forward in history.

Schopenhauer Contra Nietzsche: The Moral Response to Suffering

Table of Contents

Chapter I: Introduction.....	1
Chapter II: Schopenhauer's Moral System.....	2
Chapter III: Nietzsche Critique of Schopenhauer.....	12
Chapter IV: Nietzsche's Moral System.....	26
Chapter V: Conclusion.....	33

I.

In this thesis, I will be examining the moral systems of Arthur Schopenhauer and Friedrich Nietzsche. Both believe that the 'will' is the fundamental aspect of life, and both believe that we should treat the will differently. The will is the cause of human suffering, according to both philosophers, but where Schopenhauer believes this to be bad, Nietzsche claims that it is not only good, it is necessary. First I will provide each thinker's account of suffering, and explain their moral response. On the basis of pragmatism (which I will explain further on in this paper) I will argue that Nietzsche's moral response to suffering is superior to Schopenhauer's.

This thesis will be broken into five parts. In Chapter II, I will delve into Schopenhauer's system, which will be split into two parts - metaphysics and morality. In Chapter III, I will discuss Nietzsche's critique on Schopenhauer's system and raise some of the most important worries that Nietzsche had of the system. In Chapter IV, I will describe Nietzsche's own system, and discuss what the implications are should his system be correct. Finally, in Chapter V, I will conclude my thesis with an examination of both moral systems, demonstrating that Nietzsche's system is pragmatically superior to Schopenhauer's.

II.

In order to understand Schopenhauer's system, we must understand his metaphysical stance and how he claims his ethical system necessarily follows. I will break this chapter down into two subsections, (i) metaphysics and (ii) ethics.

i. Metaphysics

Schopenhauer's response to suffering is reliant on his belief that suffering is the rule of existence. It is not an exception to life's joys, but the law by which everyone must naturally abide. This is substantiated in the first paragraph of his essay, *On the Suffering of the World*. He states,

If the immediate and direct purpose of our life is not suffering then our existence is the most ill-adapted to its purpose in the world: for it is absurd to suppose that the endless affliction of which the world is everywhere full, and which arises out of the need and distress pertaining essentially to life, should be purposeless and accidental. Each individual misfortune, to be sure, seems an exceptional occurrence; but misfortune in general is the rule.¹

Schopenhauer claims that suffering is a positive attribute. To clarify, 'positive' here means what is there and existent, rather than what is morally good or righteous. Schopenhauer says in *On the Suffering of the World*, "I therefore know of no greater absurdity than the absurdity which characterizes almost all metaphysical systems: that of explaining evil as something negative"². (Again, it must be clarified that he uses both the moral qualifier 'evil' and the term 'negative', however he is not equating the two, rather, he is assigning 'evil' as a descriptor of 'suffering'.) Suffering is what is, rather than what is not. Suffering is a constant facet in our lives, something

¹ *Essays and Aphorisms*, Arthur Schopenhauer, Penguin Books (1970), p. 41

² *Essays and Aphorisms*, Arthur Schopenhauer, Penguin Books (1970), p. 41-42

that we consistently face - an innate state of existence. Joy, happiness, contentment, or anything of that nature, is simply the negation of suffering at some point in time, and is oftentimes fleeting.

This concept of positive versus negative is the basic groundwork of Schopenhauer's metaphysical system, and actually serves to temper the otherwise morbid outlook the philosopher poses.

The next vital aspect of understanding this system is precisely pinpointing Schopenhauer's idea and definition of life, as suffering can only occur to those which have the ability to be affected. This is where the idea of the will is introduced. Schopenhauer abides by the idea of voluntarism - the belief that the will is the fundamental, dominant factor in an individual or, in some cases, the universe as a whole. In his system, every living thing has a will – plants included – thus he must further consider how to differentiate humans from the rest. He notes that, despite how the physical gratifications of the will are similar in animals as they are in humans, the emotions humans experience are significantly stronger.

In *On the Suffering of the World*, Schopenhauer claims, "...[the material basis of humans] consists of health, food, protection from the wet and cold, and sexual gratification; or the lack of these things. Man has consequently, no larger share of real physical pleasure than the animals have... Yet how much stronger are the emotions aroused in him than those roused in animals! How incomparably more profound and vehement are his passion! – and all to achieve exactly the same result in the end: health, food, covering, etc."³. This phenomenon arises, Schopenhauer claims, from humans' ability of summation. According to him, animals lack this faculty and must only suffer in the present. He says, "With the animal, present suffering, even if repeated countless

³ *Essays and Aphorisms*, Arthur Schopenhauer, Penguin Books (1970), p. 43-44

times, remains what it was the first time; it cannot sum itself up”⁴. Man, on the other hand, suffers from the memories of the past, the events of the present, and the thoughts of the future. Schopenhauer coins this distinct humanly attribute the *principium individuationis*, or the individuation principle.

He delves into this principle in his work, *The World as Will and Representation*, stating,

In this last regard I shall call time and space the *principium individuationis*, borrowing an expression from the old schoolmen, and I beg to draw attention to this, once for all. For it is only through the medium of time and space that what is one and the same, both according to its nature and to its concept, yet appears as different, as a multiplicity of co-existent and successive phenomena.⁵

Human beings’ awareness of these essential forms of knowledge - time and space, experienced simultaneously - provides us with the unique ability of abstraction. This, in turn, allows us to form the illusion that we are individuals, separate from other objects in the world. Schopenhauer, however, will make the argument that this is an illusion.

Our awareness of time, and the ability to compile past, present, and future - what Schopenhauer calls ‘summation’ - serves only to intensify humans’ inclination for suffering. For example, things such as alcohol, sweets, tobacco, drugs, and other things pleasing to a particular person are only pursued because they can allow man to ascertain intensification of pleasure, if only for a short amount of time. Schopenhauer says, “To these is then added, also as a result of reflection, a source of pleasure, and consequently of suffering, available to him alone and also one which preoccupies him beyond all measure, indeed more than all the rest put together”.⁶

⁴ *Essays and Aphorisms*, Arthur Schopenhauer, Penguin Books (1970), p. 44

⁵ *The World as Will and Representation*, Arthur Schopenhauer, Kegan Paul, Trench, Trübner & Co. (1909), p. 146

⁶ *Essays and Aphorisms*, Arthur Schopenhauer, Penguin Books (1970), p. 44

The simple event of being born human already condemns one to exaggerated suffering, something that one wishes to momentarily correct by intensified pleasures. But the intensified pleasures will eventually not be so intensified anymore, and will demand more to reach the same feeling again, allowing the steady volume of suffering one experiences on a daily basis to rise.

Furthermore, humans have the capacity for intellectual pleasures, much more so than the animal, and when there is a lack of such pleasures, the human is riddled by boredom, a phenomenon that does nothing but breed want. To drive this point further, Schopenhauer posits what would happen if we lived in a utopia. He says, “And yet, just as our bodies would burst asunder if the pressure of the atmosphere were removed from it, so would the arrogance of men expand, if not to the point of bursting then to that of the most unbridled folly, indeed madness, if the pressure of the want, toil, calamity and frustration were removed from their lives.”⁷ In other words, we could never live in a utopia. While our most prominent problems – earning money, always having enough to eat, never having worries – would be alleviated, we would be left with at least one thing, and that is boredom. We would simply have nothing to do and then, Schopenhauer claims, we would be driven to suicide or homicide, or – through the worst parts of ourselves – the creation of some sort of suffering. He says, “...in such a place, some men would die of boredom or hang themselves, some would fight and kill one another, and thus they would create for themselves more suffering than nature inflicts on them as it is”⁸. In other words, the removal of suffering in this way simply cannot be the proper response to suffering, as it would only create more of what we are trying to eliminate.

⁷ *Essays and Aphorisms*, Arthur Schopenhauer, Penguin Books (1970), 42-43

⁸ *Ibid*, 43

Along with intellectual pleasures, our capacity for thought and higher reasoning multiplies our sensations of suffering even though we are subjected to the same physical obstacles that other animals are. Schopenhauer's example is death.⁹ The moment humans learn of death, there is an ever-present nagging in the back of their thoughts regarding their own and others close to them. Animals, on the other hand, may have the instinct to flee it, but react only to the instinct without knowing what exactly that instinct is saving them from. That capacity of thought, or knowledge, Schopenhauer claims enhances suffering exponentially.¹⁰

Schopenhauer says, "knowledge is in itself always painless. Pain affects only the will and consists in an obstruction, impediment or frustration of it: nonetheless, this frustration of the will, if it is to be felt as pain, must be accompanied by knowledge."¹¹ Knowledge does not cause the pain we feel. As Schopenhauer states, knowledge, itself, is painless. It is the combination of both the will and knowledge that creates pain. In this way, inorganic matter and plants cannot feel pain because they lack knowledge, but animals, no matter how simplistic, can. The more an animal is capable of knowledge, the more intense the pain becomes. This can be seen in nature quite often. While fish do little to care for their children after their hatching, the death of a baby gorilla will leave their mother's mourning for months, if not years. One plausible explanation for this is that the pain of such loss is intensified in gorillas because the gorilla has a higher faculty for knowledge. But knowledge is not wholly bad. Schopenhauer believes it is only when this capacity reaches its peak through the existence of reason that the proper response to suffering could be discovered: the denial of the will.

⁹ *Essays and Aphorisms*, Arthur Schopenhauer, Penguin Books (1970), 45

¹⁰ *ibid*, 45-46

¹¹ *ibid*, 46

Metaphysically, the will, according to Schopenhauer, is a thing-in-itself, and the essence of the world, as the world is nothing but ‘the mirror of the will.’ In other words, the world is a phenomenon that arises out of the will’s objectivity. It is the representation of the will’s idea of life. Schopenhauer says,

Life is, therefore, assured to the will to live; and so long as we are filled with the will to live we need have no fear for our existence, even in the presence of death. It is true we see the individual come into being and pass away; but the individual is only phenomenal, exists only for the knowledge which is bound to the principle of sufficient reason, to the *principio individuationis*. Certainly, for this kind of knowledge, the individual receives his life as a gift, rises out of nothing, then suffers the loss of this gift through death, and returns again to nothing.¹²

Here, Schopenhauer explains how this representation affects humans. With the will replacing the metaphysical purpose of God, our existence is the phenomenal manifestation of the will to life, something we would consider given to us without anything given in return, but then taken away through the generally slow process of death. As birth and death – fleeting phenomena within time – belong solely to the phenomenon that arises from the will to life, which is out of time, neither birth nor death affect the will to live or the non-phenomenal will-in-itself. In other words, if a person should die without utilizing Schopenhauer’s denial of the will to slowly chip away at the existence of the timeless, non-phenomenal will, then no damage will be dealt to it. The will to life and the non-phenomenal would still exist and persevere.

But since Schopenhauer has already established that suffering arises from life, the perseverance of the will to life is something that he vehemently argues against. Our goal to end suffering must be accomplished through the destruction of the source – the will to life. To this end, he argues asceticism is the most advantageous tool. Through asceticism, one no longer desires raising

¹² *The World as Will and Representation*, Arthur Schopenhauer, Kegan Paul, Trench, Trübner & Co. (1909), 354

himself above others and, as we will see, one rejects egoistic actions. More importantly, through asceticism, one no longer wills anything – this alone negates the will to life. The ascetic no longer wills sexual gratification – which disallows the further production of the phenomenal will to life through children. They live in voluntary poverty, alleviate the suffering of others, indulge no satisfactions, abstains from eating, and even, Schopenhauer suggests, self-torture. They welcome maliciousness, as this, too, is a tool to assure the will to live is stunted. Schopenhauer believes that asceticism as the answer to suffering can be seen by the fact that the ascetic lifestyle is most revered in religions, all of which have vastly different dogmas.

Despite how ‘negation of the will to live’ sounds, Schopenhauer is not a proponent of suicide. He believes that the body is the ‘phenomenal form of the will to live.’ Therefore, if you destroy the form – killing the body via suicide – you no longer have access to the will to live and can no longer destroy it. Additionally, suicide is not the lack of a will. He claims it, in all actuality, is either the will to nothingness or the will to a life you do not have, and the affirmation of such only strengthens the will. To Schopenhauer, this affirmation is problematic in more ways than one. The will to live is not only in your own body, but in the phenomena of all humans. By strengthening your own will through suicide, you are strengthening the will of the phenomena, making it more difficult to destroy the will of the phenomena as a whole. In other words, you are single handedly continuing the suffering of other humans because you have given into your will and committed suicide. In other words, since the destruction of the will in its totality is the goal, suicide cannot have any part of that, because it is just another expression of the will.

ii. Ethics

Within all of this seeming pessimism from his metaphysics, Schopenhauer still believes that an ethical system can - and should - be put into place. In order to set up this system, he proposes nine axioms which I will quote at length:

- 1) No action can take place without a sufficient motive, any more than a stone can move without a sufficient push or pull.
- 2) In precisely the same way, an action cannot fail to take place when there is a present motive that is sufficient for the character of the doer, unless a stronger countermotive renders inevitable its nonperformance.
- 3) What moves the will is simply weal or woe in general and is taken in the widest sense of the term; just as, conversely, weal and woe signify 'in agreement with or contrary to a will'. Hence every motive must have reference to weal or woe.
- 4) Consequently, every action refers to, and has as its ultimate object, a being susceptible to weal or woe.
- 5) This being is either the doer himself or another, who then takes a *passive* part in the action, since it is done to his detriment or advantage and benefit.
- 6) Every action which has the ultimate object the weal or woe of the doer himself is *egoistic*.
- 7) All that is said here about actions applies equally to nonperformance of such actions for which motive and counter-motive exist.
- 8) As a result of the discussion given in the previous section *egoism* and the *moral worth* of an action absolutely exclude each other. If an action has as its motive an egoistic aim, it cannot have any moral worth. If it is to have moral worth, its motive cannot have an egoistic aim, direct or indirect, near or remote.
- 9) In consequence of the elimination, carried out in §5, of the so-called duties to ourselves, the moral significance of an action can lie only in its reference to others. Only in respect to these can it have moral worth or worthlessness, and accordingly be an action of justice or philanthropy, as well as the reverse of them.¹³

In this moral system, any actions that are driven by weal or woe - happiness or suffering - cannot have moral worth. Actions that are driven by weal or woe are considered egoistic and are only applied to your desires. This is not to say others cannot be affected by them, but they were

¹³ On *The Basis of Morality*, Arthur Schopenhauer, Swan Sonnenschein & Co., Limited (1903), 141-142

not the intention. For example, suppose person A gives person B a present to make herself seem thoughtful and caring. The main intention was not to give a present to person B, but rather to make person A - the doer - seem like a thoughtful and caring person, which would be to person A's advantage. This action is solely egoistic. Even though person B may get weal out of the act of person A, Schopenhauer claims that there can be no moral valuation of the action. This is because Schopenhauer claims one cannot act morally or immorally to oneself. Only in reference to others can moral actions occur - in other words, in acts of attempting to create weal or woe in another - in compassion or malice. Schopenhauer believes that all actions fall under these three criteria, either egoism - the desire of your own weal, malice - the desire of another's woe, or compassion - the desire of another's weal. Thus, malice would be considered an immoral action and compassion, a moral one.

This system of morality ties to the destruction of the will to live in an interesting and complex way. It seems Schopenhauer made the conscious move to keep morality out of egoistic actions. Most acts of asceticism could be considered cruel, such as the denial of food or self-torture. It could easily be considered malice, if his system allowed for morality to be applied to actions towards oneself, but it doesn't, and therefore asceticism can stay within his system without any moral or systematic problems arising. Schopenhauer isn't a sadist, and doesn't believe the people should be - otherwise compassion wouldn't be a part of his system, or even morality at all. Schopenhauer's metaphysical system could have survived without this ethical component if tweaked just a bit, and its inclusion plays an interesting part in his philosophy as a whole. The incorporation of compassion - and the knowledge that it won't be universal, proven in his statement that malicious acts of others should be taken by the ascetic - plus deliberate acts of asceticism are combined to indicate the proper steps to destroy the ego. If you stop egoistic actions and turn to

compassion - only thinking of others - then logically, you cannot be thinking of yourself. The neglect - while serving ascetic purposes - diminishes the ego, which is vital for the destruction of the will to live. This is so because the 'will to life' is an act of the ego. You desire your own life. But the flame of desire can be extinguished. Compassion and asceticism, however, can drain the fuel (ego), which in turn dims the flame (will to life). With time and resolve, the fuel will soon be completely drained - you will have no ego left - and the flame that is the will to life will go out. Schopenhauer believes that this is the only way to end suffering. You must destroy the ego and, in turn, the will to live, and you must do this by the means of compassion and asceticism.

III.

Friedrich Nietzsche, a former disciple of Schopenhauer's school of thought, respected Schopenhauer as the first strong atheist in the field of philosophy of the time, but also saw many faults in his predecessor's system as a whole, both in terms of metaphysics and in responses to what both Schopenhauer and Nietzsche take as their first philosophical premise: existence necessarily involves suffering. The most prominent critique Nietzsche offers of Schopenhauer revolves around Schopenhauer's ethical system. Schopenhauer's denial of the will is based on his ideal that happiness is simply a negation of pain, which is the positive and pervasive feature of existence. To Schopenhauer, the will specifically belonging to one being (a personal will), as outlined in the previous chapter, along with biological and intellectual differences between man and other lifeforms, is the vehicle which drives the desire for gratification and happiness, something which is fleeting at best and is often found wanting. Nietzsche agrees with much of Schopenhauer's system, but what Nietzsche vehemently argues against, however, is Schopenhauer's employment of the idea of pity and the bestowing of responsibility to one another, forcing charity, tolerance, patience, and forbearance. In other words, Schopenhauer utilizes what Nietzsche considers a Judeo-Christian idea of morality even though Schopenhauer is openly atheistic. Nietzsche claims that Schopenhauer has no grounds for this system of morals – a system which abhors and starves the will. Furthermore, the path which Schopenhauer's system would lead a follower is not only useless, but detrimental to humans as a whole. Nietzsche deems Schopenhauer a pessimist – as he has the saving grace of an ethical system – but, in reality,

Schopenhauer's system, if stripped from the metaphysical fallacies, would be nothing more than nihilism.

i. *Critique on Ethics*

One of Nietzsche's most important critiques of Schopenhauer lies in Schopenhauer's ethics. As seen in the previous chapter, Schopenhauer uses nine axioms to lay out his system of morality, eight of which Nietzsche would grant. To reiterate, axioms one through eight can be summarized as follows: All actions must have a motive in reference to weal or woe, and will not fail to take place unless another motive overpowers the first. All actions have an object that is vulnerable to the weal or woe, whether it be the doer or the passive object being acted upon. Everything above which applies to action also applies to inaction, and every action or inaction that is motivated by the agent's weal or woe is egoistic. All of this – which is composed of axioms one through seven – Nietzsche will allow.

It is in the ninth axiom of Schopenhauerian ethics that Nietzsche will display his disagreement. In *On The Basis of Morality*, Schopenhauer describes his ninth axiom, "In consequence of the elimination, carried out in § five, of the so-called duties to ourselves, the moral significance of an action lies only in its reference to others. Only in respect to these can it have moral worth and worthlessness, and accordingly be an action of justice and philanthropy, as well as the reverse of them."¹⁴ To make this axiom perfectly clear, the fifth section that Schopenhauer

¹⁴ *On The Basis of Morality*, Arthur Schopenhauer, Swan Sonnenschein & Co., Limited (1903), 142

is referring to discusses how one may not act morally or, more importantly, immorally to oneself, something that defends and bolsters his claim to asceticism, since denying oneself food could otherwise be considered malicious and immoral. Even this claim, however, isn't a nagging concern for Nietzsche, since he will argue that asceticism can be utilized as a useful tool. What is a concern, is how Schopenhauer's ninth axiom is the bridge from an otherwise sound axiomatic and ethical system to a groundless employment and valuation of compassion.

With this axiomatic groundwork, Schopenhauer lays out the 'three fundamental incentives' for a will – egoism, malice, and compassion – two of which have metaphysical and mystical foundations. As described in the previous chapter, egoism, the only incentive that has solid and provable foundations is considered amoral. It is neither good nor bad. The incentive of malice, on the other hand, is immoral, and compassion, moral, and neither have provable foundations given to us by Schopenhauer. It seems that his sole goal for adding the metaphysical component of malice was to allow for the opposite to unquestionably take place – compassion. Schopenhauer does not delve deeply into malice (not much deeper than defining it), only reinforcing this point, but *does* examine compassion, as it is the solution that he wishes to press. Schopenhauer claims that our goal as lifeforms with will is non-existence – non-suffering. It does not necessarily follow that compassion is a stipulation of that claim, and this is where Nietzsche finds fault in his ethics. Nietzsche will not deny that compassion can be a mover of the will, but he will deny the

assumption that it is somehow moral. This move, on Schopenhauer's part, is nothing more than a final resort which saves his system from complete nihilism.

Nietzsche does, however, have an explanation as to why Schopenhauer would feel so strongly about compassion and fear the possibility of dismissing it as something without intrinsic moral good. In *The Dawn*, Nietzsche writes,

All of those spiritual leaders of people who succeeded in stirring something in the inert but fertile mud of their mores, had need not only of madness but also of voluntary torture to engendered faith – and most and first of all, as always, their faith in themselves. The more their own spirit moved along novel paths and was therefore tormented by pangs of conscience and anxieties, the more cruelly they raged against their own flesh, their own desires, and their own health – as if they wanted to offer the deity some substitute gratification in case it should perhaps be embittered on account of customs one had neglected and fought against and new goals one had championed.¹⁵

As described in this aphorism, Nietzsche argues that even though there are sprinkles of 'spiritual leaders' throughout history who do 'stir something' or, in other words, stray from the communal norm, those spiritual leaders still feel indebted to that from which they strayed. This applies distinctly to Schopenhauer. He is very clear in his denial of God, and there is not much in his system that would argue otherwise – aside, of course, from inferring God from his ethics. And even there, it wouldn't be argued that his writings *prove* that he believes in God, but rather that he hasn't broken from the Judeo-Christian dogma that follows from the belief in God. Compassion is a chief tenet to Judeo-Christian principles. There are clear teachings of Christ that instruct one to turn the other cheek and love thy neighbor. Within the Judeo-Christian metaphysical system, this

¹⁵ Nietzsche, Friedrich, *Dawn*, Stanford University Press (2011), p.186

tenet of compassion is justified by it being the will of God. What Schopenhauer does, however, seems illogical. He takes the tenet but denies the metaphysical system that would justify it.

ii. Critique on Nihilism

As seen in the previous chapter, Schopenhauer makes it clear that the will comes first and foremost and is the seed from which everything phenomenal stems. Furthermore, while existence is the source of suffering, the will exacerbates it. Because of this – and because Schopenhauer deems suffering bad – his answer is to starve the will and fade from existence. This, Nietzsche claims, is pessimism, an ideology which promotes life-deniers.

Nietzsche makes clear that Schopenhauer's form of pessimism – and the pessimism which ran rampant with intellectuals after him – is something he coined as 'modern pessimism.' This pessimism is entrenched with the philosophical and rather romantic idea of eudaimonia. Eudaimonia – consisting of the Greek 'eu,' good, and 'daimon,' spirit – was an important tenet of Aristotelian ethics, which pressed the idea that one's purpose is to seek out happiness and flourishing. Nietzsche claims that because this modern pessimism comes from the eudaimonological mindset that flourishing and happiness is good and, logically, the opposite is bad, then one comes to the conclusion that the reduction of 'gloom' is the purpose of life.

If one knew nothing more about pessimism, it still is clear how and why Nietzsche equated it with Schopenhauer's system. Pessimism and Schopenhauer both bring pain and pleasure to the foregrounds, proposing that everything else is nothing but secondary if necessary at all. According

to Nietzsche, the pessimist maintains that one must resign to the fact that life is not worth living, to which he responds, “*Un monstre gai vaut mieux qu'un sentimental ennuyeux.*”¹⁶ – “a cheerful monster is better than a dull sentimental.” In this way, Nietzsche seems to be posing an option between being cheerful or dull. This option can be further explained in *Beyond Good and Evil*,

Whoever, like myself, prompted by some enigmatical desire, has long endeavoured to go to the bottom of the question of pessimism and free it from the half-Christian, half-German narrowness and stupidity in which it has finally presented itself to this century, namely, in the form of Schopenhauer's philosophy; whoever, with an Asiatic and supra-Asiatic eye, has actually looked inside, and into the most world-renouncing of all possible modes of thought—beyond good and evil, and no longer like Buddha and Schopenhauer, under the dominion and delusion of morality,—whoever has done this, has perhaps just thereby, without really desiring it, opened his eyes to behold the opposite ideal: the ideal of the most world-approving, exuberant, and vivacious man, who has not only learnt to compromise and arrange with that which was and is, but wishes to have it again AS IT WAS AND IS, for all eternity, insatiably calling out da capo.¹⁷

Modern pessimism, as Nietzsche states, can be linked to both Buddha and Schopenhauer. Both have connected morality to their world-denying system, which Nietzsche thinks is where their folly lies. He claims that should a person investigate further the reasonings of a pessimistic system and what would reasonably follow – certainly not morality – one would inevitably be aware of the opposite reaction to the same basic set of premises, which would condemn them further if they still chose to be a pessimist. In other words, if you study the foundations of a world-denying system, then you would also be aware not only that morality *doesn't* follow, but that there is an

¹⁶Nietzsche, Friedrich, *The Complete Works of Friedrich Nietzsche* (Vol. 14, *Will to Power*) Edinburgh: and London, 1914, p. 30

¹⁷ Nietzsche, Friedrich, *Beyond Good and Evil*, Boni and Liveright Inc. (1917), p.56

option for a world-affirming system that can be derived from the foundations. If you have nothing to gain (that is, morality) from a world-denying system, then there is no valid reason to accept it.

Nietzsche believes that pessimism is a preparatory state to nihilism, which he fervently argues against. While pessimism promotes life-deniers, nihilism takes the ideology a step further by deeming that existence has no truth, values, or purpose. His clearest description of nihilism can be found in *The Will to Power*. He writes,

Thorough Nihilism is the conviction that life is absurd, in the light of the highest values already discovered; it also includes the view that we have not the smallest right to assume the existence of transcendental objects or things in themselves, which would be either divine or morality incarnate. This view is a result of fully developed ‘truthfulness’: therefore a consequence of the belief in morality¹⁸

The morality Nietzsche is referring to in this section is Judeo-Christian morality, and while he is known to condemn it, he claims that when this pervasive morality is stripped away from a person and coupled with the pessimistic resignation that the purpose of existence is to reduce the suffering and pain, their response is nihilism.

Furthermore, what is most troublesome to Nietzsche, *truthfulness* – a force, he claims, that was reared by morality – is used as a weapon against any morality: “This in the end turns against morality, exposes the *teleology* of the latter, its interestedness, and now the *recognition* of this lie so long incorporated, from which we despaired of ever freeing ourselves, acts just like a

¹⁸ Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Complete Works of Friedrich Nietzsche* (Vol. 14, *Will to Power*) Edinburgh: and London, 1914, p.8

stimulus.”¹⁹ Morality once wielded truth as its justification. This truth, in the past, had been determined by religion, and the Judeo-Christian religion, being the most pervasive, seemed to hold the highest Truth. What God ordained and what Jesus spoke were the Truth. But we have killed God, Nietzsche claims²⁰. Schopenhauer denies God, he denies the commander of Truth and in the process inadvertently denies his morality’s justification without granting us a new and plausible one. If it must be *true* to be justifiable, and the foundation is false, then the nihilist may very easily use truth as a weapon to defend their stance that morality is a Universal is false.

But this unraveling due to faulty foundations doesn’t stop simply there. Needs that we feel within ourselves are now questioned by the nihilist according to whether or not they are also consequences of morality and quickly deemed an untruth. Those needs, however, are the values that Nietzsche claims allow us to endure life. Nietzsche also focuses on the application of worth. Worth cannot be attached to the feelings which are attached to untrue morals that were taught to us. For example, there is no worth in charity or compassion, as it can be traced back to the Judeo-Christian system of morality. The nihilist, moreover, is hand-shy to attach worth to something which may not have been taught through morals, yet still gives us pleasure, in fear that this, too, would be an untruth. In this way, the introduction of Schopenhauer’s pessimistic system has made a skeptic to all those shrewd enough to question his system of ethics, just as a dog recoils at the

¹⁹ Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Complete Works of Friedrich Nietzsche* (Vol. 14, *Will to Power*) Edinburgh: and London, (1914), p. 9-10

²⁰ Nietzsche, Friedrich, *The Gay Science*, Random House (1974)

sight of a hand when it's been hit before. Nietzsche assigns this phenomenon as a type of antagonism, one which would only lead to dissolution.

iii. Critique of the Will

As seen above, Nietzsche argues that Schopenhauer has no basis for the virtue of compassion in his ethical system, and in fact, has no basis for morality at all, even if his account of the will is correct. His system becomes even more problematic if the account is wrong. And as it happens, Nietzsche will argue for the latter anyway, as is characteristic of him.

Nietzsche's belief that Schopenhauer misinterpreted the will, or, at least, over judged his confidence in what it was is perhaps the most basic of all of Nietzsche's critiques. He argues that Schopenhauer's description of the will is at best incomplete and at worst inaccurate. Nietzsche writes, "Philosophers are accustomed to speak of the will as though it were the best-known thing in the world; indeed, Schopenhauer has given us to understand that the will alone is really known to us, absolutely and completely known, without deduction or addition."²¹ Nietzsche maintains that Schopenhauer takes for granted what past philosophers had given him as fact. In *Beyond Good and Evil*, Nietzsche writes,

Schopenhauer also only did what philosophers are in the habit of doing—he seems to have adopted a POPULAR PREJUDICE and exaggerated it. Willing seems to me to be above all something COMPLICATED, something that is a unity only in name—and it is precisely in a name that popular prejudice lurks, which has got the mastery over the inadequate

²¹ Nietzsche, Friedrich, *Beyond Good and Evil*, Boni and Liveright Inc. (1917), p.25

precautions of philosophers in all ages. So let us for once be more cautious, let us be ‘unphilosophical’.²²

The will, Schopenhauer assumes, is a thing that one can both know of its existence – something that Nietzsche will not touch on – and of its qualities. Nietzsche, in his critique of Schopenhauer, takes the position that the will is not just the unity that Schopenhauer and others before him have claimed, therefore making Schopenhauer’s assumption specious. It is much more complex of a system and we know little of it in its completeness, but it *does* involve and require more than one mode of expression. However, before we get into Nietzsche’s account, we will quickly recap Schopenhauer’s view. He claims in *The World as Will and Representation*, “An act of the will and an act of the body are not two different states cognized objectively, linked together in a causal chain, they do not stand in a relation of cause and effect; they are one and the same thing, only given in two entirely different ways; in one case immediately and in the other case to the understanding in intuition.”²³ Nietzsche clearly disputes this. He states that we may assume that willing involves at least all of the following: a sensation of condition, muscular sensations, ruling thoughts, and affect, all of which culminate within one ‘willing.’ The “sensation of condition” accompanied by “muscular sensation,” is the body’s response to the thought of the will. These are entirely different constituents of any particular ‘act of will.’ They are likely linked

²² Nietzsche, Friedrich, *Beyond Good and Evil*, Boni and Liveright Inc. (1917), p.25

²³ Schopenhauer, Arthur, *The World as Will and Representation*, (Vol. I), London, Kegan Paul, Trench, Trübner & Co. (1909), p. 124-125

causally, just as if one touches something hot, the central nervous system is causally linked to a particular muscle to involuntarily move, and yet the central nervous system and the muscle are two different actors of the action. Take, for example, the will to eat. Schopenhauer's view implies that the will to eat is simply that you feel hunger and your will to eat suddenly appears. Nietzsche disagrees. His account would include the following: one is sitting down and suddenly feels a pang in his stomach. This is the sensation of condition. You are not sated, you are in a condition of hunger, and it has been expressed through biological signs. Next comes the ruling thought. I must end this condition, I must eat something, or, more simply, I want food. This employs the muscular sensations – the vehicle that allows you to stand and cross to the kitchen to acquire the food your will is desiring (which also goes through these steps – should I have something sweet or salty, a meal or a snack, etc.). And of course, to sate this will, you eat, which marks the completion of the will. Even if you don't sate the desire directly – by the means of food – it may be ended by reason. Thoughts such as, 'I should wait the twenty minutes it takes for my sister to get home so we can go out to eat,' or 'this piece of cake doesn't bode well with my half-marathon I'm running tomorrow' can be used to satiate the will so long as its purpose can boost gratification and be used to enhance the will. Schopenhauer combines all of those steps to satiate the will as one thing, a grave mistake, Nietzsche claims.

Nietzsche also makes the distinction between the *ruling thought* of the act of the will and the actual act of the will. The act of the will, in fact, is at the mercy of the ruling thought and would

not exist without it: “Let us not imagine it possible to sever this thought from the ‘willing,’ as if the will would then remain over!”²⁴ The thought of wanting or needing to go from a sitting to a standing position is a prerequisite of the actual realization of ‘yes, I need to stand,’ which, of course, triggers the array of constituents that allows that act of will to be executed and completed.

Nietzsche’s careful examination of the different features of the will leads him to recognize a further problem with Schopenhauer’s account. Schopenhauer misses the most important constituent of the will: the affect of the command. The affect of the command is the idea that the execution of a particular set of constituents of the will is supreme. Humans see their desires or wills as the most important thing in the moment of the desire or the will. One example would be, ‘I can’t focus right now, I’m hungry.’ There is a judgment within all mankind that they are subject to obey their will. In this way, they are the obeyers of the will. However, as you are the producer of your will, you are also the one who is necessitating and commanding it. You are both the obeyer and commander of your own will. In *Beyond Good and Evil*, Nietzsche states,

Insofar as in the case we are simultaneously the commanders *and* the obeyers, and as obeyers we know the sensations of forcing, pushing, pressing, resisting, moving that usually begin immediately after that act of willing; and insofar as, on the other hand, we have a habit of disregarding and deceiving ourselves about the duality by virtue of the synthetic concept “I”, a whole chain of erroneous conclusions and consequently of false valuations has attached itself to willing – to such an extent that the willing individual believes in good faith that willing *suffices* for action.²⁵

²⁴ Nietzsche, Friedrich, *Beyond Good and Evil*, Boni and Liveright Inc. (1917), p.26

²⁵ Nietzsche, Friedrich, *Beyond Good and Evil*, Boni and Liveright Inc. (1917), p.27

Here, Nietzsche establishes his understanding that the execution of the constituents of a particular willing is a duality and separates it from Schopenhauer's understanding, which Nietzsche claims is veiled by the deception of the synthetic concept "I." More to the point, Schopenhauer overlooks Nietzsche's commander and obeyer idea of the will and simply believes it is a single agent. Nietzsche believes the demarcation of the commander and the obeyer aspect of the will is vital for valid conclusions about willing, more specifically he holds that willing is not simply a necessity of effect.

The wrong definition of the will, while not necessarily vital in order to discredit Schopenhauer's ethical system, is important when delving further into his metaphysical system. Furthermore, defining the will is not the only issue that is faced by these two philosophers. Even if Schopenhauer were to accept all of Nietzsche's corrections to the composition of the will, Nietzsche believes that Schopenhauer grossly misuses and, perhaps, abuses it.

The culmination of these Nietzschean critiques of Schopenhauer lead to only one conclusion: Schopenhauer's system is nihilistic. It is not necessary that we can know nothing of the existence of absolute truths or of God himself, because we are not assuming Schopenhauer's system is correct. What we are doing is trying to see if there is value in Schopenhauer forcing this nihilistic system. If we accepted all of Schopenhauer's metaphysical premises – including the one that denies the existence of God – then we cannot logically accept his ethical system. But, of course, one may claim that perhaps his ethical system is the one we accept and we deny his

metaphysical 'dead God' premise. The problem that arises with that alteration is that Nietzsche is speaking solely to those philosophers who have already dismissed the idea of God, thus such a premise would not be accepted.

IV.

With the previous chapter in mind, it is clear that nihilism is something Nietzsche vehemently argues against. Thus he advocates a system that involves accepting life and all that comes with it - the good and the bad. Suffering, in this system, is not inherently bad. In fact, it is a useful and necessary tool for becoming a greater person. This begins with Nietzsche's study of the origin of good, bad, and evil. This particular section has caused controversy because of what seemed to be questionable undertones of anti-Semitism and Nazism, but I will offer a closer reading that will hopefully clarify the grittier sections of Nietzsche's works.

According to Nietzsche, the concepts of good and bad were the inklings of morality. Evil came later, when there was a shift in power. In *The Genealogy of Morals*, Nietzsche says,

Now it is plain to me, first of all, that in this theory the source concept 'good' has been sought and established in the wrong place: the judgments 'good' did *not* originate with those to whom 'goodness' was shown! Rather it was 'the good' themselves, that is to say, the noble, powerful, high-stationed and high-minded, who felt and established themselves and their actions as good, that is, of the first rank, in contradistinction to all the low, low-minded, common and plebeian.²⁶

The 'good' were men of power and nobility – knights, kings, people of this sort. The 'bad' were ignoble. The 'good' were capable of repaying debts, the 'bad' were not. In this way, the 'bad' were often poor and weak. They could neither repay a debt of kindness, which would perhaps concern

²⁶ Nietzsche, Friedrich, *On The Genealogy of Morals And Ecce Homo*, New York: Vintage Books (1989), p.25

money, or repay a debt of honor, which could concern the physical defending of it (possibly in battle). The ‘bad,’ however, were not fixed within their class. They had the possibility of achieving ‘good,’ should they work hard to seize it. This achievement required both necessary suffering and the *pathos of distance*. The latter, Nietzsche explains as, “The protracted and domineering fundamental total feeling on the part of the higher ruling order in relation to a lower order, to a ‘below’.”²⁷ The ‘bad,’ in order to realize that they were the ‘bad,’ needed an obvious disconnect from the ‘good.’ They needed to be treated so vastly different from the ‘good,’ and realize that to them, the ‘good’ were nearly untouchable as masters, that they would suffer from this, either physically or mentally by way of understanding that they were lesser. Through this suffering, the ‘bad’ were able to begin the climb to the ‘good.’ In this way, suffering was not only pervasive throughout humankind, but also compulsory for the achievement of any sort of human greatness - something that Nietzsche claims should be our goal.

Stepping back even further, Nietzsche examines the origins of the terms ‘good’ and ‘bad.’ The *pathos of distance* worked for the ‘good’ as well, as it allowed them to distinguish the two polar values. The ‘good’ saw the *pathos of distance* between themselves and the ‘bad’ – the differences in power, intellect, wealth, nobility, and the like – and they seized it to shape the lives of both castes. In *Genealogy of Morals*, Nietzsche says, “It was out of this *pathos of distance* that

²⁷ Nietzsche, Friedrich, *On The Genealogy of Morals And Ecce Homo*, New York: Vintage Books (1989), p.2

they first seized the right to create values and to coin names for values.”²⁸ In other words, the powerful had the capability of creating the values that were to be used by the people and furthermore, deem them as ‘good’ or ‘bad.’ This naturally allowed them to deem things that they were doing as ‘good’ and things that people unlike them - the weak - were doing as ‘bad.’

Of course, this value of power didn’t last. ‘Good,’ once used in reference to power, became a reference for the weak, and from this shift, the term ‘evil’ replaced ‘bad.’ This shift in morality, Nietzsche claims, was caused by the Jews.

The Jews—a people "born for slavery," as Tacitus and the whole ancient world say of them; "the chosen people among the nations," as they themselves say and believe—the Jews performed the miracle of the inversion of valuations, by means of which life on earth obtained a new and dangerous charm for a couple of millennia. Their prophets fused into one the expressions "rich," "godless," "wicked," "violent," "sensual," and for the first time coined the word "world" as a term of reproach. In this inversion of valuations (in which is also included the use of the word "poor" as synonymous with "saint" and "friend") the significance of the Jewish people is to be found; it is with THEM that the SLAVE-INSURRECTION IN MORALS commences.²⁹

The Jews, who were not treated as significant and ‘good’ in the moral system of ‘good’ and ‘bad’ followed by most ancient and influential groups of peoples including the Greeks and Romans, decided to invert it entirely. By doing this, their significance and worth was found.

While it must be noted that this seizing and flipping of the then current system of morals is a form of the *will to power* which Nietzsche preaches, it is a problematic form, because it

²⁸ Nietzsche, Friedrich, *On The Genealogy of Morals And Ecce Homo*, New York: Vintage Books (1989), p.25

²⁹ Nietzsche, Friedrich, *Beyond Good and Evil*, Boni and Liveright Inc. (1917), p.195

espouses virtues of weakness. The Jews appointed the altruistic and weak as the new 'good' and the powerful and violent as the new 'bad.' The problem, according to Nietzsche, is that the new 'good' is overly inclusive. Anybody can be altruistic and within seconds of performing an altruistic act would shift from a once 'evil' person to a 'good' one. This means minimum suffering and *pathos of distance*, both of which stanches human growth. The Jews' *will to power* - Nietzsche phrase of world-affirming willing or acts of will - resulted in an easy path to 'good' and the disdain of power which in turn greatly stunted the growth of man and mankind. In *The Genealogy of Morals*, Nietzsche says,

The slave revolt in morality begins when the *ressentiment* itself becomes creative and gives birth to values: the *ressentiment* of natures that are denied the true action, that of deeds, and compensate themselves with imaginary revenge. While ever noble morality develops with a triumphant affirmation of itself, slave morality from the onset says No to what is 'outside,' what is 'different,' what is 'not itself'; and *this* No is its creative deed. This inversion of the value-positing eye - this *need* to direct one's view outward instead of back to oneself - is of the essence of *ressentiment*: in order to exist, slave morality always needs a hostile external world; it needs, physiologically speaking, external stimuli in order to act at all - its action is fundamentally reaction.³⁰

Nietzsche claims that the slave morality that the Jews have instituted is not *self-affirming*. Their morality is not a morality that springs from action, but reaction. This sort of morality relies upon outside stimuli to create a moral deed. Most commonly - as Nietzsche points out - the creative deed is simply the reply 'no' to whatever outside stimuli has appeared: 'no' to sensual pleasures,

³⁰ Nietzsche, Friedrich, *On The Genealogy of Morals And Ecce Homo*, New York: Vintage Books (1989), p.36

lavish lifestyles, exorbitant amounts of food, etc. This is the power that the slave morality offers, and in this way, it is reactive. It requires outside provocation and hostility. This is unlike the aristocratic morality because the latter doesn't require outside stimuli. The will of the actor who has an aristocratic morality is, in himself, the stimuli. It is purely subjective and self-serving. Since the slave morality with no employment of *will to power* is not self-affirming, there can be no growth from it. It is reliant on outside stimuli, which seems to be contradictory to what would seem necessary for the growth of humans as a race - for example, self-reliance.

A further blow to the growth of man is the preservation of Christianity into the modern world. In fact, Nietzsche believes the essential worth of the modern man is lesser than the man of European Renaissance because of it and the continuation of the Jewish slave mentality. In *The Antichrist*, Nietzsche writes, "Christianity has taken the part of all the weak, the low, the botched; it has made an ideal out of *antagonism* to all the self-preserved instincts of sound life; it has corrupted even the faculties of those natures that are intellectually most vigorous, by representing the highest intellectual values as sinful, as misleading, as full of temptation."³¹ The inversion of the aristocratic morality has made great men into devils, as their wit, or their strength, or simply their ability to exist through hardships, is seen as a sin – something contemptible. Slave morality sees the joys of a healthy life as something that ought to be shunned. War, dancing, sex, hunting – things that Nietzsche believes are activities which the healthy aristocratic indulge in – are shameful

³¹ Nietzsche, Friedrich, *The Antichrist*, Alfred A. Knopf, Inc. (1918), p.45

to the ‘masters’ of Christianity: the priests. But they should not be; these are natural, human urges. Nietzsche’s contempt for this sudden inversion is perhaps due not to the Jews’ *seizing* of the moral system, but to the criticism and *disdain* of the physical world. Nietzsche writes, “The Christian resolve to find the world ugly and bad has made the world ugly and bad.”³² What were once acceptable and joyful - if not beautiful - things, had become things of disdain, not because of the things in themselves but because of the shifted lenses of the viewer.

In this sense, it seems that Nietzsche’s view of morality is not fixed but something that is relative to the actor of the morals. This is important to realize, because he is not claiming that the slave morality is not a moral system or that the moral system is *a priori* wrong (because it cannot be determined *a priori* and therefore lacks necessity), he’s claiming that the moral system is outdated and currently has no justification. Perhaps Nietzsche’s most prominent quote is “God is dead,” but the implications that these three words hold are much more robust than just the demise of religion. Looking deeper into it, from *The Gay Science*, Nietzsche writes, “God is dead. God remains dead. And we have killed him...Must we ourselves not become gods simply to appear worthy of it? There has never been a greater deed; and whoever is born after us – for the sake of this deed he will belong to a higher history than all history hitherto.”³³ We, as humans, have single handedly killed the ‘holiest and mightiest’ being with science. We have felled faith for reason and

³² Nietzsche, Friedrich, *On The Genealogy of Morals And Ecce Homo*, New York: Vintage Books (1989) p.192

³³ Nietzsche, Friedrich, *The Gay Science*

with it, brought down an omnipotent god nearly two millennia old. While it is clear that Nietzsche praises this feat, that is not the only facet to this claim. We have accepted science as the new power of the world, and yet we still wallow in the morality that this dead god has borne. There seems to be very little logic in that.

V.

The purpose of this final chapter is solely to determine which of the two systems previously discussed is superior. Both Schopenhauer and Nietzsche agree that the will is the primary element of man, from which suffering is born. As we have seen, their opinions on suffering differ vastly – as if they were complete opposites. David E. Cartwright, a scholar of Schopenhauer, suggests that Nietzsche was not simply a student of Schopenhauer who went rogue, but was rather effectively groomed to become Schopenhauer’s antipode by Schopenhauer himself through his works. Cartwright points out the clear parallel between the strategy Schopenhauer uses to dispel Kantian morality and the strategy Nietzsche uses to dispel Schopenhauerian morality.

Just as Schopenhauer argues that Kant’s ethics is ultimately egoistic and is, therefore, fatally flawed, Nietzsche argues that egoism is the motive behind actions to which Schopenhauer attaches moral value, i.e. that egoism is the motive for actions done out of *Mitleid*³⁴ and malice. By reducing both *Mitleid* and malice to egoism, Nietzsche endorses the type of moral skepticism Schopenhauer attempts to refute in *On The Basis of Morality*, the view that there is no natural³⁵ morality because all morality rests on ‘ultimately egoistic grounds.’³⁶

This is just one case, but it seems to agree with the fact that Nietzsche read Schopenhauer closely and was groomed with Schopenhauer’s own works to act as the latter’s antipode. He used

³⁴ *Mitleid* here translates as ‘pity’ and is central to Schopenhauer’s philosophy, something which Nietzsche doesn’t believe is a virtue and disagrees with completely.

³⁵ Nietzsche does endorse a ‘natural’ morality, but I believe Cartwright uses ‘natural’ in the sense that there is a correct, innate morality within humans, which Nietzsche disagrees with.

³⁶ *Nietzsche’s Use and Abuse of Schopenhauer’s Moral Philosophy for Life*, David E. Cartwright, Clarendon Press, Oxford (1998), p.134

the technique of Schopenhauer against him, shifting the moral paradigm as Schopenhauer did with Kant, so to say that they were simply opposites does not seem strong enough.

Kathleen Marie Higgins, describes a different outlook. She argues that perhaps Nietzsche is not only critiquing the system of his predecessor, but has a different goal entirely. Higgins writes,

I shall suggest that the difference between their reactions stems from different paradigms of willing, which in turn are temperamentally based. Specifically, I will suggest that when Schopenhauer refers to the human will, he envisages individuals aspiring towards specific objectives. Nietzsche, by contrast, treats the specific objects of willing as more or less irrelevant in his discussions of will.³⁷

I would agree with Higgins that Schopenhauer and Nietzsche certainly have different ideas that separate them, and that they are temperamental. By nature, the concept of the will that each employs is different. Still, however, this comes down to metaphysics. Schopenhauer clearly lays out his metaphysics which is voluntaristic, and defines the will as the active agent. Nietzsche, on the other hand, has no metaphysical system as cleanly described as Schopenhauer's. The latter's metaphysics requires an individuation because there is only one Will that phenomenally manifests humans and their illusion of individual wills. Because he has this as background knowledge, we can move forward with the specific purpose of ending the individual wills, which are individual specific objectives. For Nietzsche, we have no background knowledge of the nature of the will, aside from the theory that we must affirm it, so our goal is a bit more simple. Give the will what it wants. It does not matter what specifically that is. The different temperaments that Higgins

³⁷ *Schopenhauer and Nietzsche: Temperament and Temporality*, Kathleen Marie Higgins, Clarendon Press, Oxford (1998), p.134

describes above seems to stem from the fact that Nietzsche simply has accepted that he does not know the metaphysical nature of the will.

In that vein, one may make the case that Nietzsche is not only the latest product of the critique of moral motivation (as Schopenhauer seems to lack this), but also more honest in his metaphysical claims, so Nietzsche's system ought to be considered superior, better. While I understand the reasoning behind that, I would argue that that is not quite the case. I make the point that Nietzsche is honest about what he does not know, but as far as metaphysics is concerned, there is no one true way to know if Schopenhauer is *wrong*. In this way, Schopenhauer has given us a positive metaphysical and Nietzsche a negative one. These systems are not synonymous and simply can't be compared. Because of this, we must find a standard on which to judge which system is superior.

The seemingly most basic of these would be truth value. But of course, if we could be positive that one of the two systems examined in the previous chapters had innate truth within it, then there would be no further examination of any philosophy – at least in the fields of morals and metaphysics. Simply put, we cannot use truth value as the standard while considering the superiority of one system over the other, as we have not – at least up to this point – proven beyond all reasonable doubt that either Schopenhauer or Nietzsche's system is the correct system according to our abiding world. The next standard that we must judge these systems by is pragmatics. On this ground, I will split the examination into two parts: (1) Can humans accept it? and (2) Should humans accept it?

i. Schopenhauer

Schopenhauer poses the idea of a singular Will represented as phenomena, which manifests the Will's desire for life. The idea is that all of the 'individual,' phenomenal wills must be starved and eventually destroyed through negating the will. Schopenhauer's only worries are the phenomena which are represented as humans. He believes that animals and plants would follow the footsteps of humans should we achieve the ultimate starvation of the Will. Thus, our only worry would be the practical possibility of all humans achieving the starvation of their will. This would require the entire human population to don an ascetic lifestyle and act only on desires of compassion. If this happened, the Will as represented in humans surely would cease to exist the moment the final human died off, but the odds of this happening seem astronomical. I suppose the most pragmatic case of this is Schopenhauer. Not even the author of the system abided by it. Is it beneficial to inflict suffering upon yourself via an ascetic and unegoistic lifestyle when the goal you're working towards is not even a practical possibility? While Schopenhauer's system theoretically seems like a way to end suffering, in practice it simply isn't. If you distinguish between the two parts of pragmatism above, you will note that part (2) is not touched upon. This observation, however, is superfluous in nature, because if we cannot even satisfy (1) - as Schopenhauer's system failed to do - we cannot consider (2).

ii. Nietzsche

We must also apply the standard of pragmatics to Nietzsche's system. Nietzsche's *will to power* is a unique philosophical idea to apply to real life situations by the fact that it does not rely upon everyone to abide by it. In fact, it is quite the opposite. Nietzsche's system relies upon most people to be the 'weak,' the slaves, the mob. Because of his idea of *pathos of distance*, there must be weak in order for the strong to strive for better - for more power. In this case, rather than proving that this can be applicable to all people, we need only prove that there are the 'weak.' According to recent surveys, about 33% of people are Christian, about 6% are Buddhist, and a little less than 1% are Jewish³⁸. This means that at the very least, 40% of the population still believe in the *Mitleid*³⁹ as a virtue, 40% are amongst the weak. Despite this number being smaller than seemingly needed, it's very likely to assume that more people unaffiliated with religion still believe in *Mitleid*. Since we have evidence that there are those who fit Nietzsche's conception of the weak, we can also assume that *pathos of distance* can still be utilized and *will to power* can be achieved. To be fair, it must be noted that Nietzsche did not follow his philosophy (similar to Schopenhauer) to a tee, as it is noted that he protected a horse from being whipped, an act of pity. But that does not negate his philosophy, it only proves that Nietzsche is amongst the weak. In other words, Nietzsche's system can support the pragmatic question (1) *can humans follow it?* due to the fact that the world that we live in offers the tools needed to abide by it.

³⁸Robinson, B. (2015). *Numbers of adherents of major religions, their geographical distribution, date founded, and sacred texts*. Retrieved from <http://www.religioustolerance.org/worldrel.htm>

³⁹ *Mitleid* translates into English as 'pity'.

Now, should we? I believe that Nietzsche's system was not entirely created to be a procedure for people shrewd enough to follow. I believe it also acted as a warning and a lesson. Do not blindly follow beliefs and morals. Do not accept them without thoroughly examining and justifying them. This goes for Nietzsche's system as well. Nietzsche posed an extreme system to counter the dogmatic systems of the past. He was philosophizing with a hammer. Something we must do as well. Nietzsche believed that we must live our lives in such a way that we yell '*da capo!*' on our deathbeds. Nietzsche poses the question "*What is the seal of attained freedom?*" and answers immediately, "No longer being ashamed in front of oneself." The dead god makes us ashamed of the most basic of human desires by calling them sins. But we *are* human, and experience no god while we are alive. We should consider ourselves the gods that we want to live up to. We should make the rules for ourselves, and strive to achieve them. In our achievement, we are proud, and in our pride, we are free. This freedom will allow us to fulfill our desires in such an abundant way that when we are at our final breaths, we will cry, 'again!'. Our final desire.

In this way, if we read Nietzsche the way he wanted us to read it - not as a lemming to follow what he says to a tee, but rather as an intelligent, free thinking, self-criticizing, being, then this certainly fulfills the second criteria of pragmatism. In other words, I deem Nietzsche's moral system - which demands freedom and requires critical analysis of beliefs - superior to Schopenhauer's, which does nothing but enslaves us to the Will and turns a blind eye to the lack

of justification to his morality. Freedom, as many philosophers before me have claimed, is far superior to suppression.

Bibliography

Schopenhauer, Arthur. (2010). *The World as Will and Representation Volume I*. Cambridge Press

Schopenhauer, Arthur. (2004). *Essays and Aphorisms*. Penguin UK

Nietzsche, Friedrich. (1976). *On The Genealogy of Morals*. Random House Inc.

Nietzsche, Friedrich. (1908). *Human, All Too Human*. Charles K. Kerr and Company

Nietzsche, Friedrich. (1914). *The Will to Power*. Edinburgh: and London

Nietzsche, Friedrich. (1911) *Ecce Homo*. Edinburgh: and London

Nietzsche, Friedrich. (1983) *Untimely Meditations*. Cambridge University Press

Dolson, Grace Neal. (1901) "The Influence of Schopenhauer on Friedrich Nietzsche".

Philosophical Review. Vol.10 #3. p.241-250

Berman, David. (1998) "Schopenhauer and Nietzsche: Honest Atheism, Dishonest Pessimism".

Clarendon Press-Oxford

Cartwright, David E. (1998) "Nietzsche's Use and Abuse of Schopenhauer's Moral Philosophy

of Life", Clarendon Press-Oxford

Clark, Maudemarie (1998) "On Knowledge, Truth, and Value: Nietzsche's Debt to Schopenhauer

and the Development of his Empiricism", Clarendon Press-Oxford

Cooper, David E. (1998) "Self and Morality in Schopenhauer and Nietzsche"

Higgins, Kathleen Marie (1998) "Schopenhauer and Nietzsche: Temperament and Temporality"

Clarendon Press-Oxford

Janaway, Christopher (1998) "Willing and Nothingness Schopenhauer as Nietzsche's Educator"

Clarendon Press-Oxford

