

FRIEDRICH NIETZSCHE

Beyond Good and Evil

Prelude to a Philosophy of the Future

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Contents

<i>Introduction</i>	<i>page</i> vii
<i>Chronology</i>	xxix
<i>Further reading</i>	xxxii
<i>Note on the text</i>	xxxiv
Beyond Good and Evil: Prelude to a Philosophy of the Future	
Preface	3
Part 1 On the prejudices of philosophers	5
Part 2 The free spirit	25
Part 3 The religious character	43
Part 4 Epigrams and entr'actes	58
Part 5 On the natural history of morals	75
Part 6 We scholars	93
Part 7 Our virtues	109
Part 8 Peoples and fatherlands	131
Part 9 What is noble?	151
From high mountains: Aftersong	178
<i>Glossary of names</i>	181
<i>Index</i>	186

Part I On the prejudices of philosophers

I

The will to truth that still seduces us into taking so many risks, this famous truthfulness that all philosophers so far have talked about with veneration: what questions this will to truth has already laid before us! What strange, terrible, questionable questions! That is already a long story – and yet it seems to have hardly begun? Is it any wonder if we finally become suspicious, lose patience, turn impatiently away? That *we ourselves* are also learning from this Sphinx to pose questions? *Who* is it really that questions us here? *What* in us really wills the truth? In fact, we paused for a long time before the question of the cause of this will – until we finally came to a complete standstill in front of an even more fundamental question. We asked about the *value* of this will. Granted, we will truth: *why not untruth instead?* And uncertainty? Even ignorance? The problem of the value of truth came before us, – or was it we who came before the problem? Which of us is Oedipus? Which one is the Sphinx? It seems we have a rendezvous of questions and question-marks. – And, believe it or not, it ultimately looks to us as if the problem has never been raised until now, – as if we were the first to ever see it, fix our gaze on it, *risk it*. Because this involves risk and perhaps no risk has ever been greater.

2

“How *could* anything originate out of its opposite? Truth from error, for instance? Or the will to truth from the will to deception? Or selfless action from self-interest? Or the pure, sun-bright gaze of wisdom from a covetous leer? Such origins are impossible, and people who dream about

such things are fools – at best. Things of the highest value must have another, separate origin *of their own*, – they cannot be derived from this ephemeral, seductive, deceptive, lowly world, from this mad chaos of confusion and desire. Look instead to the lap of being, the everlasting, the hidden God, the ‘thing-in-itself’ – *this* is where their ground must be, and nowhere else!”¹ – This way of judging typifies the prejudices by which metaphysicians of all ages can be recognized: this type of valuation lies behind all their logical procedures. From these “beliefs” they try to acquire their “knowledge,” to acquire something that will end up being solemnly christened as “the truth.” The fundamental belief of metaphysicians is the *belief in oppositions of values*. It has not occurred to even the most cautious of them to start doubting right here at the threshold, where it is actually needed the most – even though they had vowed to themselves “*de omnibus dubitandum*.”² But we can doubt, first, whether opposites even exist and, second, whether the popular valuations and value oppositions that have earned the metaphysicians’ seal of approval might not only be foreground appraisals. Perhaps they are merely provisional perspectives, perhaps they are not even viewed head-on; perhaps they are even viewed from below, like a frog-perspective, to borrow an expression that painters will recognize. Whatever value might be attributed to truth, truthfulness, and selflessness, it could be possible that appearance, the will to deception, and craven self-interest should be accorded a higher and more fundamental value for all life. It could even be possible that whatever gives value to those good and honorable things has an incriminating link, bond, or tie to the very things that look like their evil opposites; perhaps they are even essentially the same. Perhaps! – But who is willing to take charge of such a dangerous Perhaps! For this we must await the arrival of a new breed of philosophers, ones whose taste and inclination are somehow the reverse of those we have seen so far – philosophers of the dangerous Perhaps in every sense. – And in all seriousness: I see these new philosophers approaching.

3

I have kept a close eye on the philosophers and read between their lines for long enough to say to myself: the greatest part of conscious thought

¹ Cf. *Human, All too Human*, I, §1.

² Everything is to be doubted.

must still be attributed to instinctive activity, and this is even the case for philosophical thought. This issue needs re-examination in the same way that heredity and “innate characteristics” have been re-examined. Just as the act of birth makes no difference to the overall course of heredity, neither is “consciousness” *opposed* to instinct in any decisive sense – most of a philosopher’s conscious thought is secretly directed and forced into determinate channels by the instincts. Even behind all logic and its autocratic posturings stand valuations or, stated more clearly, physiological requirements for the preservation of a particular type of life. For example, that the determinate is worth more than the indeterminate, appearance worth less than the “truth”: despite all their regulative importance for *us*, these sorts of appraisals could still be just foreground appraisals, a particular type of *niaiserie*,³ precisely what is needed for the preservation of beings like us. But this assumes that it is not man who is the “measure of things” . . .

4

We do not consider the falsity of a judgment as itself an objection to a judgment; this is perhaps where our new language will sound most foreign. The question is how far the judgment promotes and preserves life, how well it preserves, and perhaps even cultivates, the type. And we are fundamentally inclined to claim that the falsest judgments (which include synthetic judgments *a priori*) are the most indispensable to us, and that without accepting the fictions of logic, without measuring reality against the wholly invented world of the unconditioned and self-identical, without a constant falsification of the world through numbers, people could not live – that a renunciation of false judgments would be a renunciation of life, a negation of life. To acknowledge untruth as a condition of life: this clearly means resisting the usual value feelings in a dangerous manner; and a philosophy that risks such a thing would by that gesture alone place itself beyond good and evil.

5

What goads us into regarding all philosophers with an equal measure of mistrust and mockery is not that we are struck repeatedly by how innocent

³ Silliness.

they are – how often and easily they err and stray, in short, their childish childlikeness – but rather that there is not enough genuine honesty about them: even though they all make a huge, virtuous racket as soon as the problem of truthfulness is even remotely touched upon. They all act as if they had discovered and arrived at their genuine convictions through the self-development of a cold, pure, divinely insouciant dialectic (in contrast to the mystics of every rank, who are more honest than the philosophers and also sillier – they talk about “inspiration” –): while what essentially happens is that they take a conjecture, a whim, an “inspiration” or, more typically, they take some fervent wish that they have sifted through and made properly abstract – and they defend it with rationalizations after the fact. They are all advocates who do not want to be seen as such; for the most part, in fact, they are sly spokesmen for prejudices that they christen as “truths” – and *very* far indeed from the courage of conscience that confesses to this fact, this very fact; and very far from having the good taste of courage that also lets this be known, perhaps to warn a friend or foe, or out of a high-spirited attempt at self-satire. The stiff yet demure tartuffery used by the old Kant to lure us along the clandestine, dialectical path that leads the way (or rather: astray) to his “categorical imperative” – this spectacle provides no small amusement for discriminating spectators like us, who keep a close eye on the cunning tricks of the old moralists and preachers of morals. Or even that hocus pocus of a mathematical form used by Spinoza to arm and outfit his philosophy (a term which, when all is said and done, really means “*his* love of wisdom”) and thus, from the very start, to strike terror into the heart of the attacker who would dare to cast a glance at the unconquerable maiden and Pallas Athena: – how much personal timidity and vulnerability this sick hermit’s masquerade reveals!

6

I have gradually come to realize what every great philosophy so far has been: a confession of faith on the part of its author, and a type of involuntary and unself-conscious memoir; in short, that the moral (or immoral) intentions in every philosophy constitute the true living seed from which the whole plant has always grown. Actually, to explain how the strangest metaphysical claims of a philosopher really come about, it is always good (and wise) to begin by asking: what morality is it (*is he* –) getting at? Consequently, I do not believe that a “drive for knowledge” is the father of

philosophy, but rather that another drive, here as elsewhere, used knowledge (and mis-knowledge!) merely as a tool. But anyone who looks at people's basic drives, to see how far they may have played their little game right here as *inspiring* geniuses (or daemons or sprites –), will find that they all practiced philosophy at some point, – and that every single one of them would be only too pleased to present *itself* as the ultimate purpose of existence and as rightful *master* of all the other drives. Because every drive craves mastery, and *this* leads it to try philosophizing. – Of course: with scholars, the truly scientific people, things might be different – “better” if you will –, with them, there might really be something like a drive for knowledge, some independent little clockwork mechanism that, once well wound, ticks bravely away *without* essentially involving the rest of the scholar's drives. For this reason, the scholar's real “interests” usually lie somewhere else entirely, with the family, or earning money, or in politics; in fact, it is almost a matter of indifference whether his little engine is put to work in this or that field of research, and whether the “promising” young worker turns himself into a good philologist or fungus expert or chemist: – it doesn't *signify* anything about him that he becomes one thing or the other. In contrast, there is absolutely nothing impersonal about the philosopher; and in particular his morals bear decided and decisive witness to *who he is* – which means, in what order of rank the innermost drives of his nature stand with respect to each other.

7

How malicious philosophers can be! I do not know anything more venomous than the joke Epicurus allowed himself against Plato and the Platonists: he called them Dionysiokolakes.⁴ Literally, the foreground meaning of this term is “sycophants of Dionysus” and therefore accessories of the tyrant and brown-nosers; but it also wants to say “they're all *actors*, there's nothing genuine about them” (since Dionysokolax was a popular term for an actor). And this second meaning is really the malice that Epicurus hurled against Plato: he was annoyed by the magnificent style, the *mise-en-scène* that Plato and his students were so good at, – that Epicurus was not so good at! He, the old schoolmaster from Samos, who sat hidden in his little garden in Athens and wrote three hundred books,

⁴ Epicurus, Fragment 93.

Beyond Good and Evil

who knows? perhaps out of anger and ambition against Plato? – It took a hundred years for Greece to find out who this garden god Epicurus had been. – Did it find out?

8

In every philosophy there is a point where the philosopher’s “conviction” steps onto the stage: or, to use the language of an ancient Mystery:

adventavit asinus
pulcher et fortissimus.⁵

9

So you want to *live* “according to nature?” Oh, you noble Stoics, what a fraud is in this phrase! Imagine something like nature, profligate without measure, indifferent without measure, without purpose and regard, without mercy and justice, fertile and barren and uncertain at the same time, think of indifference itself as power – how *could* you live according to this indifference? Living – isn’t that wanting specifically to be something other than this nature? Isn’t living assessing, preferring, being unfair, being limited, wanting to be different? And assuming your imperative to “live according to nature” basically amounts to “living according to life” – well how could you *not*? Why make a principle out of what you yourselves are and must be? – But in fact, something quite different is going on: while pretending with delight to read the canon of your law in nature, you want the opposite, you strange actors and self-deceivers! Your pride wants to dictate and annex your morals and ideals onto nature – yes, nature itself –, you demand that it be nature “according to Stoa” and you want to make all existence exist in your own image alone – as a huge eternal glorification and universalization of Stoicism! For all your love of truth, you have forced yourselves so long, so persistently, and with such hypnotic rigidity to have a *false*, namely Stoic, view of nature, that you can no longer see it any other way, – and some abysmal piece of arrogance finally gives you the madhouse hope that *because* you know how to tyrannize yourselves – Stoicism is self-tyranny –, nature lets itself be

⁵ “In came the ass / beautiful and very strong.” According to *KSA* these lines could be taken from G. C. Lichtenberg’s *Vermischte Schriften (Miscellaneous Writings)* (1867), V, p. 327.

tyrannized as well: because isn't the Stoic a *piece* of nature? . . . But this is an old, eternal story: what happened back then with the Stoics still happens today, just as soon as a philosophy begins believing in itself. It always creates the world in its own image, it cannot do otherwise; philosophy is this tyrannical drive itself, the most spiritual will to power, to the "creation of the world," to the *causa prima*.⁶

IO

All over Europe these days, the problem "of the real and the apparent world" gets taken up so eagerly and with such acuity – I would even say: shrewdness – that you really start to think and listen; and anyone who hears only a "will to truth" in the background here certainly does not have the sharpest of ears. In rare and unusual cases, some sort of will to truth might actually be at issue, some wild and adventurous streak of courage, a metaphysician's ambition to hold on to a lost cause, that, in the end, will still prefer a handful of "certainty" to an entire wagonload of pretty possibilities. There might even be puritanical fanatics of conscience who would rather lie dying on an assured nothing than an uncertain something. But this is nihilism, and symptomatic of a desperate soul in a state of deadly exhaustion, however brave such virtuous posturing may appear. With stronger, livelier thinkers, however, thinkers who still have a thirst for life, things look different. By taking sides *against* appearance and speaking about "perspective" in a newly arrogant tone, by granting their own bodies about as little credibility as they grant the visual evidence that says "the earth stands still," and so, with seemingly good spirits, relinquishing their most secure possession (since what do people believe in more securely these days than their bodies?), who knows whether they are not basically trying to re-appropriate something that was once possessed even *more securely*, something from the old estate of a bygone faith, perhaps "the immortal soul" or perhaps "the old God," in short, ideas that helped make life a bit better, which is to say stronger and more cheerful than "modern ideas" can do? There is a *mistrust* of these modern ideas here, there is a disbelief in everything built yesterday and today; perhaps it is mixed with a bit of antipathy and contempt that can no longer stand the bric-a-brac of concepts from the most heterogeneous sources, which is

⁶ First cause.

how so-called positivism puts itself on the market these days, a disgust felt by the more discriminating taste at the fun-fair colors and flimsy scraps of all these reality-philosophasters who have nothing new and genuine about them except these colors. Here, I think, we should give these skeptical anti-realists and epistemo-microscopists their just due: the instinct that drives them away from *modern* reality is unassailable, – what do we care for their retrograde shortcut! The essential thing about them is not that they want to go “back”: but rather, that they want to get – *away*. A bit *more* strength, flight, courage, artistry: and they would want to get *up and out*, – and not go back! –

II

It seems to me that people everywhere these days are at pains to divert attention away from the real influence Kant exerted over German philosophy, and, in particular, wisely to overlook the value he attributed to himself. First and foremost, Kant was proud of his table of categories,⁷ and he said with this table in his hands: “This is the hardest thing that ever could have been undertaken on behalf of metaphysics.” – But let us be clear about this “could have been”! He was proud of having *discovered* a new faculty in humans, the faculty of synthetic judgments *a priori*. Of course he was deceiving himself here, but the development and rapid blossoming of German philosophy depended on this pride, and on the competitive zeal of the younger generation who wanted, if possible, to discover something even prouder – and in any event “new faculties”! – But the time has come for us to think this over. How are synthetic judgments *a priori possible*? Kant asked himself, – and what really was his answer? *By virtue of a faculty*, which is to say: *enabled by an ability*:⁸ unfortunately, though, not in these few words, but rather so laboriously, reverentially, and with such an extravagance of German frills and profundity that people failed to hear the comical *niaiserie allemande*⁹ in such an answer. In fact, people were beside themselves with joy over this new faculty, and the jubilation reached its peak when Kant discovered yet another faculty, a moral faculty: – because the Germans were still moral back then, and

⁷ The reference in this section is to Kant’s *Kritik der reinen Vernunft* (*Critique of Pure Reason*) (1781, 1787).

⁸ In German: *Vermöge eines Vermögens*.

⁹ German silliness.

very remote from *Realpolitik*. – The honeymoon of German philosophy had arrived; all the young theologians of the Tübingen seminary¹⁰ ran off into the bushes – they were all looking for “faculties.” And what didn’t they find – in that innocent, abundant, still youthful age of the German spirit, when Romanticism, that malicious fairy, whispered, whistled, and sang, when people did not know how to tell the difference between “discovering” and “inventing”!¹¹ Above all, a faculty of the “supersensible”: Schelling christened it intellectual intuition, and thus gratified the heart’s desire of his basically piety-craving Germans. We can do no greater injustice to this whole high-spirited and enthusiastic movement (which was just youthfulness, however boldly it might have clothed itself in gray and hoary concepts) than to take it seriously or especially to treat it with moral indignation. Enough, we grew up, – the dream faded away. There came a time when people scratched their heads: some still scratch them today. There had been dreamers: first and foremost – the old Kant. “By virtue of a faculty” – he had said, or at least meant. But is that really – an answer? An explanation? Or instead just a repetition of the question? So how does opium cause sleep? “By virtue of a faculty,” namely the *virtus dormitiva* – replies the doctor in Molière,

*quia est in eo virtus dormitiva,
cujus est natura sensus assoupire.*¹²

But answers like this belong in comedy, and the time has finally come to replace the Kantian question “How are synthetic judgments *a priori* possible?” with another question, “Why is the belief in such judgments *necessary*?” – to realize, in other words, that such judgments must be *believed* true for the purpose of preserving beings of our type; which is why these judgments could of course still be *false*! Or, to be blunt, basic and clearer still: synthetic judgments *a priori* do not have “to be possible” at all: we have no right to them, and in our mouths they are nothing but false judgments. It is only the belief in their truth that is necessary as a foreground belief and piece of visual evidence, belonging to the perspectival optics of life. – And, finally, to recall the enormous effect that “the German philosophy” – its right to these quotation marks

¹⁰ A reference to Hegel, Hölderlin, and Schelling.

¹¹ In German: “‘finden’ und ‘erfinden.’”

¹² “Because there is a dormative virtue in it / whose nature is to put the senses to sleep.” From Molière’s *Le Malade imaginaire* (*The Hypochondriac*) (1673).

is, I hope, understood? – has had all over Europe, a certain *virtus dormitiva* has undoubtedly had a role: the noble idlers, the virtuous, the mystics, artists, three-quarter-Christians, and political obscurantists of all nations were all delighted to have, thanks to German philosophy, an antidote to the still overpowering sensualism that was spilling over into this century from the previous one, in short – “*sensus assoupire*” . . .

12

As far as materialistic atomism goes: this is one of the most well-refuted things in existence. In Europe these days, nobody in the scholarly community is likely to be so unscholarly as to attach any real significance to it, except as a handy household tool (that is, as an abbreviated figure of speech). For this, we can thank that Pole, Boscovich, who, together with the Pole, Copernicus, was the greatest, most successful opponent of the visual evidence. While Copernicus convinced us to believe, contrary to all our senses, that the earth does *not* stand still, Boscovich taught us to renounce belief in the last bit of earth that *did* “stand still,” the belief in “matter,” in the “material,” in the residual piece of earth and clump of an atom: it was the greatest triumph over the senses that the world had ever known. – But we must go further still and declare war – a ruthless fight to the finish – on the “atomistic need” that, like the more famous “metaphysical need,” still leads a dangerous afterlife in regions where nobody would think to look. First of all, we must also put an end to that other and more disastrous atomism, the one Christianity has taught best and longest, the *atomism of the soul*. Let this expression signify the belief that the soul is something indestructible, eternal, indivisible, that it is a monad, an *atomon*: *this* belief must be thrown out of science! Between you and me, there is absolutely no need to give up “the soul” itself, and relinquish one of the oldest and most venerable hypotheses – as often happens with naturalists: given their clumsiness, they barely need to touch “the soul” to lose it. But the path lies open for new versions and sophistications of the soul hypothesis – and concepts like the “mortal soul” and the “soul as subject-multiplicity” and the “soul as a society constructed out of drives and affects” want henceforth to have civil rights in the realm of science. By putting an end to the superstition that until now has grown around the idea of the soul with an almost tropical luxuriance, the *new* psychologist clearly thrusts himself into a new wasteland and a new suspicion. The

old psychologists might have found things easier and more enjoyable – but, in the end, the new psychologist knows by this very token that he is condemned to *invention* – and, who knows? perhaps to *discovery*.¹³ –

13

Physiologists should think twice before positioning the drive for self-preservation as the cardinal drive of an organic being. Above all, a living thing wants to *discharge* its strength – life itself is will to power –: self-preservation is only one of the indirect and most frequent *consequences* of this. – In short, here as elsewhere, watch out for *superfluous* teleological principles! – such as the drive for preservation (which we owe to Spinoza's inconsistency –). This is demanded by method, which must essentially be the economy of principles.

14

Now it is beginning to dawn on maybe five or six brains that physics too is only an interpretation and arrangement of the world (according to ourselves! if I may say so) and *not* an explanation of the world. But to the extent that physics rests on belief in the senses, it passes for more, and will continue to pass for more, namely for an explanation, for a long time to come. It has our eyes and our fingers as its allies, it has visual evidence and tangibility as its allies. This helped it to enchant, persuade, *convince* an age with a basically plebeian taste – indeed, it instinctively follows the canon of truth of the eternally popular sensualism. What is plain, what “explains”? Only what can be seen and felt, – this is as far as any problem has to be pursued. Conversely: the strong attraction of the Platonic way of thinking consisted in its *opposition* to precisely this empiricism. It was a *noble* way of thinking, suitable perhaps for people who enjoyed even stronger and more discriminating senses than our contemporaries, but who knew how to find a higher triumph in staying master over these senses. And they did this by throwing drab, cold, gray nets of concepts over the brightly colored whirlwind of the senses – the rabble of the senses, as Plato said.¹⁴ There was a type of *enjoyment* in overpowering

¹³ Nietzsche is again making a pun by contrasting the terms *Erfinden* (invention) and *Finden* (discovery).

¹⁴ Cf. *Nomoi (Laws)* 689a–b.

and interpreting the world in the manner of Plato, different from the enjoyment offered by today's physicists, or by the Darwinians and anti-teleologists who work in physiology, with their principle of the "smallest possible force" and greatest possible stupidity. "Where man has nothing more to see and grasp, he has nothing more to do" – this imperative is certainly different from the Platonic one, but for a sturdy, industrious race of machinists and bridge-builders of the future, people with *tough* work to do, it just might be the right imperative for the job.

15

To study physiology with a good conscience, we must insist that the sense organs are *not* appearances in the way idealist philosophy uses that term: as such, they certainly could not be causes! Sensualism, therefore, at least as a regulative principle, if not as a heuristic principle. – What? and other people even say that the external world is the product of our organs? But then our body, as a piece of this external world, would really be the product of our organs! But then our organs themselves would really be – the product of our organs! This looks to me like a thorough *reductio ad absurdum*:¹⁵ given that the concept of a *causa sui*¹⁶ is something thoroughly absurd. So does it follow that the external world is *not* the product of our organs –?

16

There are still harmless self-observers who believe in the existence of "immediate certainties," such as "I think," or the "I will" that was Schopenhauer's superstition: just as if knowledge had been given an object here to seize, stark naked, as a "thing-in-itself," and no falsification took place from either the side of the subject or the side of the object. But I will say this a hundred times: "immediate certainty," like "absolute knowledge" and the "thing in itself" contains a *contradictio in adjecto*.¹⁷ For once and for all, we should free ourselves from the seduction of words! Let the people believe that knowing means knowing to the very end; the philosopher has to say: "When I dissect the process expressed in the proposition

¹⁵ Reduction to an absurdity (contradiction).

¹⁶ Cause of itself.

¹⁷ Contradiction in terms.

'I think,' I get a whole set of bold claims that are difficult, perhaps impossible, to establish, – for instance, that *I* am the one who is thinking, that there must be something that is thinking in the first place, that thinking is an activity and the effect of a being who is considered the cause, that there is an 'I,' and finally, that it has already been determined what is meant by thinking, – that I *know* what thinking is. Because if I had not already made up my mind what thinking is, how could I tell whether what had just happened was not perhaps 'willing' or 'feeling'? Enough: this 'I think' presupposes that I *compare* my present state with other states that I have seen in myself, in order to determine what it is: and because of this retrospective comparison with other types of 'knowing,' this present state has absolutely no 'immediate certainty' for me." – In place of that "immediate certainty" which may, in this case, win the faith of the people, the philosopher gets handed a whole assortment of metaphysical questions, genuinely probing intellectual questions of conscience, such as: "Where do I get the concept of thinking from? Why do I believe in causes and effects? What gives me the right to speak about an I, and, for that matter, about an I as cause, and, finally, about an I as the cause of thoughts?" Whoever dares to answer these metaphysical questions right away with an appeal to a sort of *intuitive* knowledge, like the person who says: "I think and know that at least this is true, real, certain" – he will find the philosopher of today ready with a smile and two question-marks. "My dear sir," the philosopher will perhaps give him to understand, "it is improbable that you are not mistaken: but why insist on the truth?" –

17

As far as the superstitions of the logicians are concerned: I will not stop emphasizing a tiny little fact that these superstitious men are loath to admit: that a thought comes when "it" wants, and not when "I" want. It is, therefore, a *falsification* of the facts to say that the subject "I" is the condition of the predicate "think." It thinks: but to say the "it" is just that famous old "I" – well that is just an assumption or opinion, to put it mildly, and by no means an "immediate certainty." In fact, there is already too much packed into the "it thinks": even the "it" contains an *interpretation* of the process, and does not belong to the process itself. People are following grammatical habits here in drawing conclusions, reasoning that "thinking is an activity, behind every activity something is

active, therefore –.” Following the same basic scheme, the older atomism looked behind every “force” that produces effects for that little lump of matter in which the force resides, and out of which the effects are produced, which is to say: the atom. More rigorous minds finally learned how to make do without that bit of “residual earth,” and perhaps one day even logicians will get used to making do without this little “it” (into which the honest old I has disappeared).

18

That a theory is refutable is, frankly, not the least of its charms: this is precisely how it attracts the more refined intellects. The theory of “free will,” which has been refuted a hundred times, appears to owe its endurance to this charm alone –: somebody will always come along and feel strong enough to refute it.

19

Philosophers tend to talk about the will as if it were the most familiar thing in the world. In fact, Schopenhauer would have us believe that the will is the only thing that is really familiar, familiar through and through, familiar without pluses or minuses. But I have always thought that, here too, Schopenhauer was only doing what philosophers always tend to do: adopting and exaggerating a *popular prejudice*. Willing strikes me as, above all, something *complicated*, something unified only in a word – and this single word contains the popular prejudice that has overruled whatever minimal precautions philosophers might take. So let us be more cautious, for once – let us be “unphilosophical.” Let us say: in every act of willing there is, to begin with, a plurality of feelings, namely: the feeling of the state *away from which*, the feeling of the state *towards which*, and the feeling of this “away from” and “towards” themselves. But this is accompanied by a feeling of the muscles that comes into play through a sort of habit as soon as we “will,” even without our putting “arms and legs” into motion. Just as feeling – and indeed many feelings – must be recognized as ingredients of the will, thought must be as well. In every act of will there is a commandeering thought, – and we really should not believe this thought can be divorced from the “willing,” as if some will would then be left over! Third, the will is not just a complex of feeling and

thinking; rather, it is fundamentally an *affect*: and specifically the affect of the command. What is called “freedom of the will” is essentially the affect of superiority with respect to something that must obey: “I am free, ‘it’ must obey” – this consciousness lies in every will, along with a certain straining of attention, a straight look that fixes on one thing and one thing only, an unconditional evaluation “now this is necessary and nothing else,” an inner certainty that it will be obeyed, and whatever else comes with the position of the commander. A person who *wills* –, commands something inside himself that obeys, or that he believes to obey. But now we notice the strangest thing about the will – about this multifarious thing that people have only one word for. On the one hand, we are, under the circumstances, both the one who commands *and* the one who obeys, and as the obedient one we are familiar with the feelings of compulsion, force, pressure, resistance, and motion that generally start right after the act of willing. On the other hand, however, we are in the habit of ignoring and deceiving ourselves about this duality by means of the synthetic concept of the “I.” As a result, a whole chain of erroneous conclusions, and, consequently, false evaluations have become attached to the will, – to such an extent that the one who wills believes, in good faith, that willing *suffices* for action. Since it is almost always the case that there is will only where the effect of command, and therefore obedience, and therefore action, may be *expected*, the *appearance* translates into the feeling, as if there were a *necessity of effect*. In short, the one who wills believes with a reasonable degree of certainty that will and action are somehow one; he attributes the success, the performance of the willing to the will itself, and consequently enjoys an increase in the feeling of power that accompanies all success. “Freedom of the will” – that is the word for the multi-faceted state of pleasure of one who commands and, at the same time, identifies himself with the accomplished act of willing. As such, he enjoys the triumph over resistances, but thinks to himself that it was his will alone that truly overcame the resistance. Accordingly, the one who wills takes his feeling of pleasure as the commander, and adds to it the feelings of pleasure from the successful instruments that carry out the task, as well as from the useful “under-wills” or under-souls – our body is, after all, only a society constructed out of many souls –. *L’effet c’est moi*:¹⁸ what happens here is what happens in every well-constructed and

¹⁸ The effect is I.

happy community: the ruling class identifies itself with the successes of the community. All willing is simply a matter of commanding and obeying, on the groundwork, as I have said, of a society constructed out of many “souls”: from which a philosopher should claim the right to understand willing itself within the framework of morality: morality understood as a doctrine of the power relations under which the phenomenon of “life” arises. —

20

That individual philosophical concepts are not arbitrary and do not grow up on their own, but rather grow in reference and relation to each other; that however suddenly and randomly they seem to emerge in the history of thought, they still belong to a system just as much as all the members of the fauna of a continent do: this is ultimately revealed by the certainty with which the most diverse philosophers will always fill out a definite basic scheme of *possible* philosophies. Under an invisible spell, they will each start out anew, only to end up revolving in the same orbit once again. However independent of each other they might feel themselves to be, with their critical or systematic wills, something inside of them drives them on, something leads them into a particular order, one after the other, and this something is precisely the innate systematicity and relationship of concepts. In fact, their thinking is not nearly as much a discovery as it is a recognition, remembrance, a returning and homecoming into a distant, primordial, total economy of the soul, from which each concept once grew: — to this extent, philosophizing is a type of atavism of the highest order. The strange family resemblance of all Indian, Greek, and German philosophizing speaks for itself clearly enough. Where there are linguistic affinities, then because of the common philosophy of grammar (I mean: due to the unconscious domination and direction through similar grammatical functions), it is obvious that everything lies ready from the very start for a similar development and sequence of philosophical systems; on the other hand, the way seems as good as blocked for certain other possibilities of interpreting the world. Philosophers of the Ural-Altai language group (where the concept of the subject is the most poorly developed) are more likely to “see the world” differently, and to be found on paths different from those taken by the Indo-Germans or Muslims: the spell of particular grammatical functions is in the last analysis the spell of

physiological value judgments and racial conditioning. – So much towards a rejection of Locke’s superficiality with regard to the origin of ideas.

21

The *causa sui*¹⁹ is the best self-contradiction that has ever been conceived, a type of logical rape and abomination. But humanity’s excessive pride has got itself profoundly and horribly entangled with precisely this piece of nonsense. The longing for “freedom of the will” in the superlative metaphysical sense (which, unfortunately, still rules in the heads of the half-educated), the longing to bear the entire and ultimate responsibility for your actions yourself and to relieve God, world, ancestors, chance, and society of the burden – all this means nothing less than being that very *causa sui* and, with a courage greater than Münchhausen’s, pulling yourself by the hair from the swamp of nothingness up into existence. Suppose someone sees through the boorish naiveté of this famous concept of “free will” and manages to get it out of his mind; I would then ask him to carry his “enlightenment” a step further and to rid his mind of the reversal of this misconceived concept of “free will”: I mean the “un-free will,” which is basically an abuse of cause and effect. We should not erroneously *objectify* “cause” and “effect” like the natural scientists do (and whoever else thinks naturalistically these days –) in accordance with the dominant mechanistic stupidity which would have the cause push and shove until it “effects” something; we should use “cause” and “effect” only as pure *concepts*, which is to say as conventional fictions for the purpose of description and communication, *not* explanation. In the “in-itself” there is nothing like “causal association,” “necessity,” or “psychological un-freedom.” There, the “effect” does *not* follow “from the cause,” there is no rule of “law.” *We* are the ones who invented causation, succession, for-each-other, relativity, compulsion, numbers, law, freedom, grounds, purpose; and if we project and inscribe this symbol world onto things as an “in-itself,” then this is the way we have always done things, namely *mythologically*. The “un-free will” is mythology; in real life it is only a matter of *strong* and *weak* wills. It is almost always a symptom of what is lacking in a thinker when he senses some compulsion, need, having-to-follow, pressure, un-freedom in every “causal connection” and “psychological necessity.” It is

¹⁹ Cause of itself.

very telling to feel this way – the person tells on himself. And in general, if I have observed correctly, “un-freedom of the will” is regarded as a problem by two completely opposed parties, but always in a profoundly *personal* manner. The one party would never dream of relinquishing their “responsibility,” a belief in *themselves*, a personal right to *their own* merit (the vain races belong to this group –). Those in the other party, on the contrary, do not want to be responsible for anything or to be guilty of anything; driven by an inner self-contempt, they long to be able to *shift the blame* for themselves to something else. When they write books these days, this latter group tends to side with the criminal; a type of socialist pity is their most attractive disguise. And, in fact, the fatalism of the weak of will starts to look surprisingly attractive when it can present itself as “*la religion de la souffrance humaine*”:²⁰ this is *its* “good taste.”

22

You must forgive an old philologist like me who cannot help maliciously putting his finger on bad tricks of interpretation: but this “conformity of nature to law,” which you physicists are so proud of, just as if – – exists only because of your interpretation and bad “philology.” It is not a matter of fact, not a “text,” but instead only a naive humanitarian correction and a distortion of meaning that you use in order to comfortably accommodate the democratic instincts of the modern soul! “Everywhere, equality before the law, – in this respect, nature is no different and no better off than we are”: a lovely case of ulterior motivation; and it serves once more to disguise the plebeian antagonism against all privilege and autocracy together with a second and more refined atheism. “*Ni dieu, ni maître*”²¹ – you want this too: and therefore “hurray for the laws of nature!” – right? But, as I have said, this is interpretation, not text; and somebody with an opposite intention and mode of interpretation could come along and be able to read from the same nature, and with reference to the same set of appearances, a tyrannically ruthless and pitiless execution of power claims. This sort of interpreter would show the unequivocal and unconditional nature of all “will to power” so vividly and graphically that almost every word, and even the word “tyranny,” would ultimately seem useless or like weakening and mollifying metaphors – and too humanizing. Yet this

²⁰ The religion of human suffering.

²¹ Neither God nor master.

interpreter might nevertheless end up claiming the same thing about this world as you, namely that it follows a “necessary” and “calculable” course, although *not* because laws are dominant in it, but rather because laws are totally *absent*, and every power draws its final consequences at every moment. Granted, this is only an interpretation too – and you will be eager enough to make this objection? – well then, so much the better.

23

All psychology so far has been stuck in moral prejudices and fears: it has not ventured into the depths. To grasp psychology as morphology and the *doctrine of the development of the will to power*, which is what I have done – nobody has ever come close to this, not even in thought: this, of course, to the extent that we are permitted to regard what has been written so far as a symptom of what has not been said until now. The power of moral prejudice has deeply affected the most spiritual world, which seems like the coldest world, the one most likely to be devoid of any presuppositions – and the effect has been manifestly harmful, hindering, dazzling, and distorting. A genuine physio-psychology has to contend with unconscious resistances in the heart of the researcher, it has “the heart” against it. Even a doctrine of the reciprocal dependence of the “good” and the “bad” drives will (as a refined immorality) cause distress and aversion in a strong and sturdy conscience – as will, to an even greater extent, a doctrine of the derivation of all the good drives from the bad. But suppose somebody considers even the affects of hatred, envy, greed, and power-lust as the conditioning affects of life, as elements that fundamentally and essentially need to be present in the total economy of life, and consequently need to be enhanced where life is enhanced, – this person will suffer from such a train of thought as if from sea-sickness. And yet even this hypothesis is far from being the most uncomfortable and unfamiliar in this enormous, practically untouched realm of dangerous knowledge: – and there are hundreds of good reasons for people to keep out of it, if they – *can!* On the other hand, if you are ever cast loose here with your ship, well now! come on! clench your teeth! open your eyes! and grab hold of the helm! – we are sailing straight over and *away from* morality; we are crushing and perhaps destroying the remnants of our own morality by daring to travel there – but what do *me* matter! Never before have intrepid voyagers and adventurers opened up a *more*

Beyond Good and Evil

profound world of insight: and the psychologist who “makes sacrifices” (they are *not* the *sacrificio dell’intelletto*²² – to the contrary!) can at least demand in return that psychology again be recognized as queen of the sciences,²³ and that the rest of the sciences exist to serve and prepare for it. Because, from now on, psychology is again the path to the fundamental problems.

²² Sacrifice of the intellect.

²³ In German: *Wissenschaften*. *Wissenschaft* has generally been translated as “science” throughout the text, but the German term is broader than the English, and includes the humanities as well as the natural and social sciences.