

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.

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 to-day. 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.

I 5

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 –?

I 6

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-Altaic 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 *we* matter! Never before have intrepid voyagers and adventurers opened up a *more*

profound world of insight: and the psychologist who “makes sacrifices” (they are *not* the *sacrifizio 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.

Part 2 The free spirit¹

24

*O sancta simplicitas!*² What a strange simplification and falsification people live in! The wonders never cease, for those who devote their eyes to such wondering. How we have made everything around us so bright and easy and free and simple! How we have given our senses a *carte blanche* for everything superficial, given our thoughts a divine craving for high-spirited leaps and false inferences! – How we have known from the start to hold on to our ignorance in order to enjoy a barely comprehensible freedom, thoughtlessness, recklessness, bravery, and joy in life; to delight in life itself! And, until now, science could arise only on this solidified, granite foundation of ignorance, the will to know rising up on the foundation of a much more powerful will, the will to not know, to uncertainty, to untruth! Not as its opposite, but rather – as its refinement! Even when *language*, here as elsewhere, cannot get over its crassness and keeps talking about opposites where there are only degrees and multiple, subtle shades of gradation; even when the ingrained tartuffery of morals (which is now part of our “flesh and blood,” and cannot be overcome) twists the words in our mouths (we who should know better); now and then we still realize what is happening, and laugh about how it is precisely the best science that will best know how to keep us in this *simplified*, utterly artificial,

¹ In German: *der freie Geist*. I have generally rendered *Geist* and words using *Geist* (such as *geistig*, *Geistigkeit*) as “spirit” and words using spirit (so: spiritual and spirituality). However, *Geist* is a broader term than spirit, meaning mind or intellect as well.

² O holy simplicity.

well-invented, well-falsified world, how unwillingly willing science loves error because, being alive, – it loves life!

25

After such a joyful entrance, there is a serious word that I want heard; it is intended for those who are most serious. Stand tall, you philosophers and friends of knowledge, and beware of martyrdom! Of suffering “for the sake of truth”! Even of defending yourselves! You will ruin the innocence and fine objectivity of your conscience, you will be stubborn towards objections and red rags, you will become stupid, brutish, bullish if, while fighting against danger, viciousness, suspicion, ostracism, and even nastier consequences of animosity, you also have to pose as the world-wide defenders of truth. As if “the Truth” were such a harmless and bungling little thing that she needed defenders! And you of all people, her Knights of the Most Sorrowful Countenance,³ my Lord Slacker and Lord Webweaver of the Spirit! In the end, you know very well that it does not matter whether *you*, of all people, are proved right, and furthermore, that no philosopher so far has *ever* been proved right. You also know that every little question-mark you put after your special slogans and favorite doctrines (and occasionally after yourselves) might contain more truth than all the solemn gestures and trump cards laid before accusers and courts of law! So step aside instead! Run away and hide! And be sure to have your masks and your finesse so people will mistake you for something else, or be a bit scared of you! And do not forget the garden, the garden with golden trelliswork! And have people around you who are like a garden, – or like music over the waters when evening sets and the day is just a memory. Choose the *good* solitude, the free, high-spirited, light-hearted solitude that, in some sense, gives you the right to stay good yourself! How poisonous, how cunning, how bad you become in every long war that cannot be waged out in the open! How *personal* you become when you have been afraid for a long time, keeping your eye on enemies, on possible enemies! These outcasts of society (the long-persecuted, the badly harassed, as well as those forced to become hermits, the Spinozas or Giordano Brunos): they may work under a spiritual guise, and might not even know what they are doing, but they will always end up subtly seeking

³ A reference to Miguel de Cervantes’ *Don Quixote* (1615).

vengeance and mixing their poisons (just try digging up the foundation of Spinoza's ethics and theology!). Not to mention the absurd spectacle of moral indignation, which is an unmistakable sign that a philosopher has lost his philosophical sense of humor. The philosopher's martyrdom, his "self-sacrifice for the truth," brings to light the agitator and actor in him; and since we have only ever regarded him with artistic curiosity, it is easy to understand the dangerous wish to see many of these philosophers in their degeneration for once (degenerated into "martyrs" or loud-mouths on their stage or soap-box). It's just that, with this sort of wish we have to be clear about *what* we will be seeing: – only a satyr-play, only a satirical epilogue, only the continuing proof that the long, real tragedy *has come to an end* (assuming that every philosophy was originally a long tragedy –).

26

Every choice human being strives instinctively for a citadel and secrecy where he is *rescued* from the crowds, the many, the vast majority; where, as the exception, he can forget the human norm. The only exception is when he is driven straight towards this norm by an even stronger instinct, in search of knowledge in the great and exceptional sense. Anybody who, in dealing with people, does not occasionally glisten in all the shades of distress, green and gray with disgust, weariness, pity, gloominess, and loneliness – he is certainly not a person of higher taste. But if he does not freely take on all this effort and pain, if he keeps avoiding it and remains, as I said, placid and proud and hidden in his citadel, well then one thing is certain: he is not made for knowledge, not predestined for it. Because if he were, he would eventually have to say to himself: "To hell with good taste! The norm is more interesting than the exception – than me, the exception!" – and he would wend his way *downwards*, and, above all, "inwards." The long and serious study of the *average* man requires a great deal of disguise, self-overcoming, confidentiality, bad company (all company is bad company except with your equals); still, this is all a necessary part of the life story of every philosopher, perhaps the least pleasant, most foul-smelling part and the one richest in disappointments. But if he is lucky, as befits knowledge's child of fortune, the philosopher will find real shortcuts and aids to make his work easier. I mean he will find so-called cynics – people who easily recognize the animal, the commonplace, the "norm" within themselves, and yet still have a degree of spiritedness and

an urge to talk about themselves and their peers *in front of witnesses*: – sometimes they even wallow in books as if in their own filth. Cynicism is the only form in which base souls touch upon that thing which is genuine honesty. And the higher man needs to open his ears to all cynicism, crude or refined, and congratulate himself every time the buffoon speaks up without shame, or the scientific satyr is heard right in front of him. There are even cases where enchantment mixes with disgust: namely, where genius, by a whim of nature, is tied to some indiscreet billy-goat and ape, like the Abbé Galiani, the most profound, discerning, and perhaps also the filthiest man of his century. He was much more profound than Voltaire, and consequently a lot quieter. But, as I have already suggested, what happens more often is that the scientific head is placed on an ape's body, a more subtle and exceptional understanding is put in a base soul. This is not a rare phenomenon, particularly among physicians and physiologists of morals. And wherever even one person is speaking about man without any bitterness but instead quite innocuously, describing him as a stomach with dual needs and a head with one; wherever someone sees and seeks and *wants* to see only hunger, sex-drive and vanity, as if these were the sole and genuine motivating forces of human action; in short, wherever somebody is speaking “badly” of people – and not even *wickedly* – this is where the lover of knowledge should listen with subtle and studious attention. He should keep his ears open wherever people are speaking without anger. Because the angry man, and anyone who is constantly tearing and shredding himself with his own teeth (or, in place of himself, the world, or God, or society), may very well stand higher than the laughing and self-satisfied satyr, considered morally. But considered in any other way, he is the more ordinary, more indifferent, less instructive case. And nobody *lies* as much as the angry man. –

27

It is hard to be understood, particularly when you think and live *gangasrotogati*⁴ among people who think and live differently, namely *kurmagati*⁵ or at best “walking like frogs,” *mandeikagati* (am I doing everything I can to be hard to understand myself?), and you should give heartfelt thanks for

⁴ Sanskrit for “as the current of the [river] Ganges moves.”

⁵ Sanskrit for “as the tortoise moves.”

the goodwill apparent in any subtlety of interpretation. But as far as “good friends” are concerned, they are always too easy-going and think that they have a right to be easy-going, just because they are friends. So it is best to grant them some leeway from the very start, and leave some latitude for misunderstandings: – and then you can even laugh. Or, alternatively, get rid of them altogether, these good friends, – and then laugh some more!

28

The hardest thing to translate from one language into another is the tempo of its style, which is grounded in the character of the race, or – to be more physiological – in the average tempo of its “metabolism.” There are well-meaning interpretations that are practically falsifications; they involuntarily debase the original, simply because it has a tempo that cannot be translated – a tempo that is brave and cheerful and leaps over and out of every danger in things and in words. Germans are almost incapable of a *presto* in their language: and so it is easy to see that they are incapable of many of the most delightful and daring nuances of free, free-spirited thought. Since the *buffo* and the satyr are alien to the German in body and in conscience, Aristophanes and Petronius are as good as untranslatable. Everything ponderous, lumbering, solemnly awkward, every long-winded and boring type of style is developed by the Germans in over-abundant diversity. Forgive me for pointing out that even Goethe’s prose, with its mixture of the stiff and the delicate, is no exception; it is both a reflection of the “good old days” to which it belonged and an expression of the German taste back when there still was a “German taste”: it was a Rococo taste, in *moribus et artibus*.⁶ Lessing is an exception, thanks to his actor’s nature that understood and excelled at so much. He was not the translator of Bayle for nothing; he gladly took refuge in the company of Diderot and Voltaire, and still more gladly among the Roman writers of comedy. Even in tempo, Lessing loved free-thinking⁷ and the escape from Germany. But how could the German language – even in the prose of a Lessing – imitate Machiavelli’s tempo – Machiavelli who, in his *Principe*,⁸ lets us breathe the fine, dry air of Florence? He cannot help presenting the most serious concerns in a boisterous *allegrissimo*, and is, perhaps, not without

⁶ In customs and arts.

⁷ In German: *Freigeisterei*.

⁸ *Il Principe* (*The Prince*) (1532).

a malicious, artistic sense for the contrast he is risking: thoughts that are long, hard, tough, and dangerous, and a galloping tempo and the very best and most mischievous mood. Who, finally, would dare to translate Petronius into German, a man who, more than any great musician so far, was the master of the *presto* in inventions, ideas, and words. What do all the swamps of the sick and wicked world – even the “ancient world” – matter in the end for someone like him, with feet of wind, with the breath and the force and the liberating scorn of a wind that makes everything healthy by making everything *run*! And as for Aristophanes, that transfiguring, complementary spirit for whose sake we can *forgive* the whole Greek world for existing (as long as we have realized in full depth and profundity *what* needs to be forgiven and transfigured here): – nothing I know has given me a better vision of *Plato*’s secrecy and Sphinx nature than that happily preserved *petit fait*:⁹ under the pillow of his deathbed they did not find a “Bible” or anything Egyptian, Pythagorean, or Platonic – but instead, Aristophanes. How would even a Plato have endured life – a Greek life that he said No to – without an Aristophanes! –

29

Independence is an issue that concerns very few people: – it is a prerogative of the strong. And even when somebody has every right to be independent, if he attempts such a thing without *having* to do so, he proves that he is probably not only strong, but brave to the point of madness. He enters a labyrinth, he multiplies by a thousand the dangers already inherent in the very act of living, not the least of which is the fact that no one with eyes will see how and where he gets lost and lonely and is torn limb from limb by some cave-Minotaur of conscience. And assuming a man like this is destroyed, it is an event so far from human comprehension that people do not feel it or feel for him: – and he cannot go back again! He cannot go back to their pity again! – –

30

Our highest insights must – and should! – sound like stupidities, or possibly crimes, when they come without permission to people whose ears have

⁹ Little fact.

no affinity¹⁰ for them and were not predestined for them. The distinction between the exoteric and the esoteric, once made by philosophers, was found among the Indians as well as among Greeks, Persians, and Muslims. Basically, it was found everywhere that people believed in an order of rank and *not* in equality and equal rights. The difference between these terms is not that the exoteric stands outside and sees, values, measures, and judges from this external position rather than from some internal one. What is more essential is that the exoteric sees things up from below – while the esoteric sees them *down from above!* There are heights of the soul from whose vantage point even tragedy stops having tragic effects; and who would dare to decide whether the collective sight of the world's many woes would *necessarily* compel and seduce us into a feeling of pity, a feeling that would only serve to double these woes? . . . What helps feed or nourish the higher type of man must be almost poisonous to a very different and lesser type. The virtues of a base man could indicate vices and weaknesses in a philosopher. If a higher type of man were to degenerate¹¹ and be destroyed, this very destruction could give him the qualities needed to make people honor him as a saint down in the lower realm where he has sunk. There are books that have inverse values for soul and for health, depending on whether they are used by the lower souls and lowlier life-forces, or by the higher and more powerful ones. In the first case, these books are dangerous and cause deterioration and dissolution; in the second case, they are the heralds' calls that summon the most courageous to *their* courage. Books for the general public always smell foul: the stench of petty people clings to them. It usually stinks in places where the people eat and drink, even where they worship. You should not go to church if you want to breath *clean* air. – –

31

When people are young, they admire and despise without any of that art of nuance which is life's greatest reward; so it is only fair that they will come to pay dearly for having assaulted people and things like this, with a Yes and a No. Everything is set up so that the worst possible taste, the

¹⁰ In German: *nicht dafür geartet*. The term *geartet* is related to the German word *Art* (type), which appears frequently in this section as well as throughout the text.

¹¹ In German: *dass er entartete*.

taste for the unconditional, gets cruelly and foolishly abused until people learn to put some art into their feelings, and prefer the risk they run with artifice, just like real artists of life do. It seems as if the wrath and reverence that characterize youth will not rest easy until they have falsified people and things thoroughly enough to be able to vent themselves on these targets. Youth is itself intrinsically falsifying and deceitful. Later, after the young soul has been tortured by constant disappointments, it ends up turning suspiciously on itself, still raging and wild, even in the force of its suspicion and the pangs of its conscience. How furious it is with itself now, how impatiently it tears itself apart, what revenge it exacts for having blinded itself for so long, as if its blindness had been voluntary! In this transitional state, we punish ourselves by distrusting our feelings, we torture our enthusiasm with doubts, we experience even a good conscience as a danger, as if it were a veil wrapped around us, something marking the depletion of a more subtle, genuine honesty. And, above all, we become partisan, partisan on principle *against* “youth.” – A decade later, we realize that all this – was youthfulness too!

32

During the longest epoch of human history (which is called the prehistoric age) an action’s value or lack of value was derived from its consequences; the action itself was taken as little into account as its origin. Instead, the situation was something like that of present-day China, where the honor or dishonor of a child reflects back on the parents. In the same way, it was the retroactive force of success or failure that showed people whether to think of an action as good or bad. We can call this period the *pre-moral* period of humanity. At that point, the imperative “know thyself!” was still unknown. By contrast, over the course of the last ten millennia, people across a large part of the earth have gradually come far enough to see the origin, not the consequence, as decisive for the value of an action. By and large, this was a great event, a considerable refinement of outlook and criterion, an unconscious after-effect of the dominance of aristocratic values and the belief in “origin,” and the sign of a period that we can signify as *moral* in a narrow sense. This marks the first attempt at self-knowledge. Origin rather than consequence: what a reversal of perspective! And, certainly, this reversal was only accomplished after long struggles and fluctuations! Granted: this meant that a disastrous

new superstition, a distinctive narrowness of interpretation gained dominance. The origin of the action was interpreted in the most determinate sense possible, as origin out of an *intention*. People were united in the belief that the value of an action was exhausted by the value of its intention. Intention as the entire origin and prehistory of an action: under this prejudice people have issued moral praise, censure, judgment, and philosophy almost to this day. – But today, thanks to a renewed self-contemplation and deepening of humanity, shouldn't we be facing a renewed necessity to effect a reversal and fundamental displacement of values? Shouldn't we be standing on the threshold of a period that would be designated, negatively at first, as *extra-moral*? Today, when we immoralists, at least, suspect that the decisive value is conferred by what is specifically *unintentional* about an action, and that all its intentionality, everything about it that can be seen, known, or raised to "conscious awareness," only belongs to its surface and skin – which, like every skin, reveals something but *conceals* even more? In short, we believe that the intention is only a sign and symptom that first needs to be interpreted, and that, moreover, it is a sign that means too many things and consequently means almost nothing by itself. We believe that morality in the sense it has had up to now (the morality of intentions) was a prejudice, a precipitousness, perhaps a preliminary, a thing on about the same level as astrology and alchemy, but in any case something that must be overcome. The overcoming of morality – even the self-overcoming of morality, in a certain sense: let this be the name for that long and secret labor which is reserved for the most subtle, genuinely honest, and also the most malicious consciences of the day, who are living touchstones of the soul. –

33

There is nothing else to be done: the feelings of utter devotion, of sacrifice for your neighbor, and the entire morality of self-abnegation have to be mercilessly taken to court and made to account for themselves. And the same holds for the aesthetic of "disinterested contemplation," the seductive guise under which the castration of art is presently trying to create a good conscience for itself. These feelings of "for others," of "*not* for myself," contain far too much sugar and sorcery for us not to need to become doubly suspicious here and ask: "Aren't these perhaps – *seductions*?" To say that these feelings are *pleasing* (for the one who has

them, for the one who enjoys their fruits, and even for the mere onlooker) is not yet an argument in their *favor*, but rather constitutes a demand for caution. So let us be cautious!

34

It does not matter what philosophical standpoint you might take these days: any way you look at it, the *erroneousness* of the world we think we live in is the most certain and solid fact that our eyes can still grab hold of. We find reason after reason for it, reasons that might lure us into speculations about a deceptive principle in “the essence of things.” But anyone who makes thinking itself (and therefore “the spirit”) responsible for the falseness of the world (an honorable way out, taken by every conscious or unconscious *advocatus dei*¹²), anyone who considers this world, together with space, time, form, and motion, to be falsely *inferred* – such a person would at the very least have ample cause to grow suspicious of thinking altogether. Hasn’t it played the biggest joke on us to date? And what guarantee would there be that it wouldn’t keep doing what it has always done? In all seriousness, there is something touching and awe-inspiring about the innocence that, to this day, lets a thinker place himself in front of consciousness with the request that it please give him *honest* answers: for example, whether or not it is “real,” and why it so resolutely keeps the external world at arm’s length, and other questions like that. The belief in “immediate certainties” is a moral naiveté that does credit to us philosophers: but – we should stop being “merely moral,” for once! Aside from morality, the belief in immediate certainties is a stupidity that does us little credit! In bourgeois life, a suspicious disposition might be a sign of “bad character” and consequently considered unwise. But here with us, beyond the bourgeois sphere with its Yeses and Noes, – what is to stop us from being unwise and saying: “As the creature who has been the biggest dupe the earth has ever seen, the philosopher pretty much has a *right* to a ‘bad character.’ It is his *duty* to be suspicious these days, to squint as maliciously as possible out of every abyss of mistrust.” – Forgive me for playing jokes with this gloomy grimace and expression: because when it comes to betrayal and being betrayed, I myself learned a long time ago to think differently and evaluate differently; and my elbow is ready with at

¹² Advocate of God (as opposed to the devil’s advocate).

least a couple of nudges for the blind rage of philosophers as they struggle not to be betrayed. Why *not*? It is no more than a moral prejudice that the truth is worth more than appearance; in fact, it is the world's most poorly proven assumption. Let us admit this much: that life could not exist except on the basis of perspectival valuations and appearances; and if, with the virtuous enthusiasm and inanity of many philosophers, someone wanted to completely abolish the "world of appearances," – well, assuming *you* could do that, – at least there would not be any of your "truth" left either! Actually, why do we even assume that "true" and "false" are intrinsically opposed? Isn't it enough to assume that there are levels of appearance and, as it were, lighter and darker shades and tones of appearance – different *valeurs*,¹³ to use the language of painters? Why shouldn't the world *that is relevant to us* – be a fiction? And if someone asks: "But doesn't fiction belong with an author?" – couldn't we shoot back: "*Why?* Doesn't this 'belonging' belong, perhaps, to fiction as well? Aren't we allowed to be a bit ironic with the subject, as we are with the predicate and object? Shouldn't philosophers rise above the belief in grammar? With all due respect to governesses, isn't it about time philosophy renounced governess-beliefs?" –

35

O Voltaire! O humanity! O nonsense! There is something to "truth," to the *search* for truth; and when a human being is too humane about it – when "*il ne cherche le vrai que pour faire le bien*"¹⁴ – I bet he won't find anything!

36

Assuming that our world of desires and passions is the only thing "given" as real, that we cannot get down or up to any "reality" except the reality of our drives (since thinking is only a relation between these drives) – aren't we allowed to make the attempt and pose the question as to whether something like this "given" isn't *enough* to render the so-called mechanistic (and thus material) world comprehensible as well? I do not mean comprehensible as a deception, a "mere appearance," a "representation"

¹³ Values.

¹⁴ "He looks for truth only to do good."

(in the sense of Berkeley and Schopenhauer); I mean it might allow us to understand the mechanistic world as belonging to the same plane of reality as our affects themselves –, as a primitive form of the world of affect, where everything is contained in a powerful unity before branching off and organizing itself in the organic process (and, of course, being softened and weakened –). We would be able to understand the mechanistic world as a kind of life of the drives, where all the organic functions (self-regulation, assimilation, nutrition, excretion, and metabolism) are still synthetically bound together – as a *pre-form* of life? – In the end, we are not only allowed to make such an attempt: the conscience of *method* demands it. Multiple varieties of causation should not be postulated until the attempt to make do with a single one has been taken as far as it will go (– *ad absurdum*, if you will). This is a moral of method that cannot be escaped these days; – it follows “from the definition,” as a mathematician would say. The question is ultimately whether we recognize the will as, in effect, *efficacious*, whether we believe in the causality of the will. If we do (and *this* belief is really just our belief in causality itself –), then we *must* make the attempt to hypothetically posit the causality of the will as the only type of causality there is. “Will” can naturally have effects only on “will” – and not on “matter” (not on “nerves” for instance –). Enough: we must venture the hypothesis that everywhere “effects” are recognized, will is effecting will – and that every mechanistic event in which a force is active is really a force and effect of the will. – Assuming, finally, that we succeeded in explaining our entire life of drives as the organization and outgrowth of one basic form of will (namely, of the will to power, which is *my* claim); assuming we could trace all organic functions back to this will to power and find that it even solved the problem of procreation and nutrition (which is a single problem); then we will have earned the right to clearly designate *all* efficacious force as: *will to power*. The world seen from inside, the world determined and described with respect to its “intelligible character” – would be just this “will to power” and nothing else. –

“What? Doesn’t that mean, to use a popular idiom: God is refuted but the devil is not – ?” On the contrary! On the contrary, my friends! And who the devil is forcing you to use popular idioms! –

38

This is what has finally happened, in the bright light of more recent times, to the French Revolution, that gruesome and (on close consideration) pointless farce: noble and enthusiastic spectators across Europe have, from a distance, interpreted their own indignations and enthusiasms into it, and for so long and with such passion *that the text has finally disappeared under the interpretation*. In the same way, a noble posterity could again misunderstand the entire past, and in so doing, perhaps, begin to make it tolerable to look at. – Or rather: hasn't this happened already? weren't we ourselves this "noble posterity"? And right now, since we're realizing this to be the case – hasn't it stopped being so?

39

No one would consider a doctrine to be true just because it makes people happy or virtuous, with the possible exception of the darling "Idealists," who wax enthusiastic over the Good, the True, and the Beautiful, and let all sorts of colorful, clumsy, and good-natured *desiderata* swim through their pond in utter confusion. Happiness and virtue are not arguments. But we like to forget (even thoughtful spirits like to forget) that being made unhappy and evil are not counter-arguments either. Something could be true even if it is harmful and dangerous to the highest degree. It could even be part of the fundamental character of existence that people with complete knowledge get destroyed, – so that the strength of a spirit would be proportionate to how much of the "truth" he could withstand – or, to put it more clearly, to what extent he *needs* it to be thinned out, veiled over, sweetened up, dumbed down, and lied about. But there is no doubt that when it comes to discovering certain *aspects* of the truth, people who are evil and unhappy are more fortunate and have a greater probability of success (not to mention those who are both evil and happy – a species that the moralists don't discuss). Perhaps harshness and cunning provide more favorable conditions for the origin of the strong, independent spirit and philosopher than that gentle, fine, yielding good nature and art of taking things lightly that people value, and value rightly, in a scholar. Assuming first of all that we do not limit our notion of the "philosopher" to the philosophers who write books – or put *their own* philosophy into books! – One last feature for the picture of the free-spirited philosopher

is provided by Stendhal; and for the sake of the German taste, I will not overlook the chance to underscore this character – since it goes *against* the German taste. “*Pour être bon philosophe,*” says this last, great psychologist, “*il faut être sec, clair, sans illusion. Un banquier, qui a fait fortune, a une partie du caractère requis pour faire des découvertes en philosophie, c’est-à-dire pour voir clair dans ce qui est.*”¹⁵

40

Everything profound loves masks; the most profound things go so far as to hate images and likenesses. Wouldn’t just the *opposite* be a proper disguise for the shame of a god? A questionable question: it would be odd if some mystic hadn’t already risked something similar himself. There are events that are so delicate that it is best to cover them up with some coarseness and make them unrecognizable. There are acts of love and extravagant generosity in whose aftermath nothing is more advisable than to take a stick and give the eye-witnesses a good beating: this will obscure any memory traces. Many people are excellent at obscuring and abusing their own memory, so they can take revenge on at least this one accessory: – shame is highly resourceful. It is not the worst things that we are the most ashamed of. Malicious cunning is not the only thing behind a mask – there is so much goodness in cunning. I could imagine that a man with something precious and vulnerable to hide would roll through life, rough and round like an old, green, heavy-hooped wine cask; the subtlety of his shame will want it this way. A man with something profound in his shame encounters even his fate and delicate decisions along paths that few people have ever found, paths whose existence must be concealed from his closest and most trusted friends. His mortal danger is hidden from their eyes, and so is his regained sense of confidence in life. Somebody hidden in this way – who instinctively needs speech in order to be silent and concealed, and is tireless in evading communication – *wants* and encourages a mask of himself to wander around, in his place, through the hearts and heads of his friends. And even if this is not what he wants, he will eventually realize that a mask of him has been there all the same, – and that this is for the best.

¹⁵ “To be a good philosopher you have to be dry, clear, and without illusions. A banker who has made a fortune has to a certain degree the right sort of character for making philosophical discoveries, i.e. for seeing clearly into what is.” From Stendhal’s *Correspondance inédite* (*Unedited Correspondence*) (1855).

Every profound spirit needs a mask: what's more, a mask is constantly growing around every profound spirit, thanks to the consistently false (which is to say *shallow*) interpretation of every word, every step, every sign of life he displays. –

41

We have to test ourselves to see whether we are destined for independence and command, and we have to do it at the right time. We should not sidestep our tests, even though they may well be the most dangerous game we can play, and, in the last analysis, can be witnessed by no judge other than ourselves. Not to be stuck to any person, not even somebody we love best – every person is a prison and a corner. Not to be stuck in any homeland, even the neediest and most oppressed – it is not as hard to tear your heart away from a victorious homeland. Not to be stuck in some pity: even for higher men, whose rare torture and helplessness we ourselves have accidentally glimpsed. Not to be stuck in some field of study: however much it tempts us with priceless discoveries, reserved, it seems, for us alone. Not to be stuck in our own detachment, in the ecstasy of those foreign vistas where birds keep flying higher so that they can keep seeing more below them: – the danger of those who fly. Not to be stuck to our own virtues and let our whole self be sacrificed for some one of our details, our “hospitality,” for instance: this is the danger of dangers for rich souls of a higher type, who spend themselves extravagantly, almost indifferently, pushing the virtue of liberality to the point of vice. We must know *to conserve ourselves*: the greatest test of independence.

42

A new breed of philosophers is approaching. I will risk christening them with a name not lacking in dangers. From what I can guess about them, from what they allow to be guessed (since it is typical of them to *want* to remain riddles in some respect), these philosophers of the future might have the right (and perhaps also the wrong) to be described as *those who attempt*.¹⁶ Ultimately, this name is itself only an attempt, and, if you will, a temptation.

¹⁶ In German: *Versucher*. Nietzsche frequently uses the terms *Versuch* (attempt or experiment) and *Versuchung* (temptation), and plays on their similarity.

43

Are they new friends of “truth,” these upcoming philosophers? Probably, since all philosophers so far have loved their truths. But they certainly will not be dogmatists. It would offend their pride, as well as their taste, if their truth were a truth for everyone (which has been the secret wish and hidden meaning of all dogmatic aspirations so far). “My judgment is *my* judgment: other people don’t have an obvious right to it too” – perhaps this is what such a philosopher of the future will say. We must do away with the bad taste of wanting to be in agreement with the majority. “Good” is no longer good when it comes from your neighbor’s mouth. And how could there ever be a “common good”? The term is self-contradictory: whatever can be common will never have much value. In the end, it has to be as it is and has always been: great things are left for the great, abysses for the profound, delicacy and trembling for the subtle, and, all in all, everything rare for those who are rare themselves. –

44

After all this, do I really need to add that they will be free, *very* free spirits, these philosophers of the future – and that they certainly will not *just* be free spirits, but rather something more, higher, greater, and fundamentally different, something that does not want to be misunderstood or mistaken for anything else? But, in saying this, I feel – towards them almost as much as towards ourselves (who are their heralds and precursors, we free spirits!) – an *obligation* to sweep away a stupid old prejudice and misunderstanding about all of us that has hung like a fog around the concept of the “free spirit” for far too long, leaving it completely opaque. In all the countries of Europe, and in America as well, there is now something that abuses this name: a very narrow, restricted, chained-up type of spirit whose inclinations are pretty much the opposite of our own intentions and instincts (not to mention the fact that this restricted type will be a fully shut window and bolted door with respect to these approaching *new* philosophers). In a word (but a bad one): they belong to the *levelers*, these misnamed “free spirits” – as eloquent and prolifically scribbling slaves of the democratic taste and its “modern ideas.” They are all people without solitude, without their own solitude, clumsy, solid folks whose courage and honest decency cannot be denied – it’s just that they are un-free and ridiculously superficial, particularly given their basic

tendency to think that *all* human misery and wrongdoing is caused by traditional social structures: which lands truth happily on its head! What they want to strive for with all their might is the universal, green pasture happiness of the herd, with security, safety, contentment, and an easier life for all. Their two most well-sung songs and doctrines are called: “equal rights” and “sympathy for all that suffers” – and they view suffering itself as something that needs to be *abolished*. We, who are quite the reverse, have kept an *eye* and a conscience open to the question of where and how the plant “man” has grown the strongest, and we think that this has always happened under conditions that are quite the reverse. We think that the danger of the human condition has first had to grow to terrible heights, its power to invent and dissimulate (its “spirit” –) has had to develop under prolonged pressure and compulsion into something refined and daring, its life-will has had to be intensified to an unconditional power-will. We think that harshness, violence, slavery, danger in the streets and in the heart, concealment, Stoicism, the art of experiment,¹⁷ and devilry of every sort; that everything evil, terrible, tyrannical, predatory, and snakelike in humanity serves just as well as its opposite to enhance the species “humanity.” But to say this much is to not say enough, and, in any event, this is the point we have reached with our speaking and our silence, at the *other* end of all modern ideology and herd desires: perhaps as their antipodes? Is it any wonder that we “free spirits” are not exactly the most communicative spirits? That we do not want to fully reveal what a spirit might free himself *from* and what he will then perhaps be driven *towards*? And as to the dangerous formula “beyond good and evil,” it serves to protect us, at least from being mistaken for something else. We *are* something different from “*libres-penseurs*,” “*liberi pensatori*,” “*Freidenker*”¹⁸ and whatever else all these sturdy advocates of “modern ideas” like to call themselves. At home in many countries of the spirit, at least as guests; repeatedly slipping away from the musty, comfortable corners where preference and prejudice, youth, origin, accidents of people and books, and even the fatigue of traveling seem to have driven us; full of malice at the lures of dependency that lie hidden in honors, or money, or duties, or enthusiasms of the senses; grateful even for difficulties and inconstant health, because they have always freed us from some rule and

¹⁷ In German: *Versucherkunst* (see note 16 above).

¹⁸ These are terms meaning “free thinker” in French, Italian, and German.

its “prejudice,” grateful to the god, devil, sheep, and maggot in us, curious to a fault, researchers to the point of cruelty, with unmindful fingers for the incomprehensible, with teeth and stomachs for the indigestible, ready for any trade that requires a quick wit and sharp senses, ready for any risk, thanks to an excess of “free will,” with front and back souls whose ultimate aim is clear to nobody, with fore- and backgrounds that no foot can fully traverse, hidden under the cloak of light, conquerors, even if we look like heirs and prodigals, collectors and gatherers from morning until evening, miserly with our riches and our cabinets filled to the brim, economical with what we learn and forget, inventive in schemata, sometimes proud of tables of categories, sometimes pedants, sometimes night owls at work, even in bright daylight; yes, even scarecrows when the need arises – and today the need has arisen: inasmuch as we are born, sworn, jealous friends of *solitude*, our own deepest, most midnightly, noon-likely solitude. This is the type of people we are, we free spirits! and perhaps *you* are something of this yourselves, you who are approaching? you *new* philosophers? –