

The World as Will and Presentation

Arthur Schopenhauer

1818

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[Brackets] enclose editorial explanations. Small ·dots· enclose material that has been added, but can be read as though it were part of the original text. Occasional •bullets, and also indenting of passages that are not quotations, are meant as aids to grasping the structure of a sentence or a thought. Every four-point ellipsis indicates the omission of a brief passage that seems to present more difficulty than it is worth. Longer omissions are reported between brackets in normal-sized type. —Schopenhauer gives many quotations in Greek and/or Latin; they will be given in English, usually without mention of the other languages. —The division into Books, and their titles, are his; so (in the Books) is the division into numbered chapters, but not their titles, which are added in the present version, as are the occasional cross-headings in SMALL CAPITALS. Footnotes between [square brackets] are editorial; others are Schopenhauer's. In the 'Appendix' on Kant, the chapter-numbers as well as their titles are added in the present version.—The work consisted of two volumes, of which the second is a set of commentaries on the first. Most of the philosophical world's interest has been focussed on the first, which is all that is presented here. —The work's title has most often been given in English as *The World as Will and Representation*; the present version's 'Presentation' follows the 2008 translation by Richard E. Aquila (published by Longman). This has found favour with several writers on Schopenhauer, largely because 'Representation' inevitably carries the idea of a representation *of something*, which is flatly contrary to Schopenhauer's view. Aquila, whose generous help has contributed much to the present version, gives on his pages xii–xvi a different and subtler objection to 'Representation'. From now on, Schopenhauer will be referred to as AS.

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Glossary

accident: Translates *Accidenz*, a technical term meaning ‘non-essential quality’.

affection: Translates *Affektion*. Although German dictionaries don’t support this, it seems likely that sometimes when AS speaks of an *Affektion* of x, he means only a *state* of x.

disinterested: This text uses the word always in its actual, proper meaning, namely that of ‘not *self*-interested’.

exists: This usually translates *da ist*, literally ‘is there’.

GP: Used here as short-hand for ‘Grounding Principle’, which translates *Satz von Grunde*. In English this is usually called the ‘principle of sufficient reason’, following Leibniz’s *raison* and *ratio*. Kant and AS use the German *Grund* (Leibniz did not write philosophy in German). The principle says that everything must have a reason or a cause.

identical: Translates *identisch*. There’s no way to avoid this translation, but quite often AS doesn’t mean ‘identical’ but ‘closely alike’. Similarly with ‘identity’. For example, ‘identical things’ in chapter 14.

individuation-maker: See the explanation early in chapter 23.

Knowledge: This word, with its initial capital, translates *Wissen*, which for AS is abstract knowledge that is exclusively in the province of reason. (He isn’t rigorous about this, however. For example, in chapter 14 he says that history is a case of *Wissen*.) The uncapitalised ‘knowledge’ translates *Erkenntniss*, standing for knowledge generally, of which Knowledge is one species, the others relating to perception, intuition, experience etc.

liberum arbitrium indifferentiae: AS uses this Latin phrase in its meaning ‘freedom to go either way’.

occult qualities: Hidden qualities; by AS’s time the phrase had become a term of derision in the physical sciences, standing for mysterious ‘forces’ for which no explanation can be given.

peculiar: To say that property P is peculiar to individual x or species y is to say that only x or the members of y have P.

penetration: This means ‘*seeing* through’ (German *Durchschauung*), not ‘getting through’ or ‘piercing’.

per accidens: In AS’s use of this scholastic technical term, to say that something happens to x *per accidens* is to say that its cause lies in x’s circumstances, not its own essential nature.

petitio principii: The Latin name for the fallacy of *begging the question* = arguing for a conclusion which is one of the premises. The current use of the phrase to mean *raising the question* is a product of pandemic journalistic ignorance.

positive: Translates *positiv*, which enters into two very different contrasts: **(i)** the positive/negative contrast, and **(ii)** the contrast between institutions that are man-made (*positiv*) and ones that are somehow established by nature without human intervention. Where it is clear that **(ii)** alone is in play, *positiv* is translated by ‘man-made’. In a few places there are indications of **(ii)** but ‘man-made’ doesn’t work right.

Realität: When used as a concrete noun, this is left untranslated because the only tolerable translation for it is ‘reality’, and that is reserved for *Wirklichkeit*. For AS’s distinction between these, see page 13, especially the footnote. When

Realität occurs as an abstract noun, it is translated by 'realness'.

shape: translates *Gestalt*. A better translation would be 'form', but that is used for AS's *Form*; and there are places—e.g. on page 27—where the two have to be kept apart.

speculative: Theoretical, often with an emphasis on non-normative; 'speculative philosophy' on page 34 refers to the whole of philosophy other than ethics and aesthetics.

subject of: Throughout this work, the 'subject of a cognitive state is not •what the state (belief, knowledge etc.) is *about* but rather •the thing that *is in* the state, the thing that believes, knows etc.

Upanishads: The part of the Vedas (see next item) that discuss meditation, philosophy and spiritual knowledge.

Vedas: A body of religious texts originating in ancient India.

Prefaces

Preface to the first edition

I'll tell you here how this book must be read in order to be understood. What is to be presented in it is a single thought; but try as I would, I couldn't find a shorter way of imparting it than this whole book. I hold this thought to be the one that has long been sought under the name of 'philosophy', so that historically educated people thought its discovery to be quite as impossible as the discovery of the philosopher's stone,¹ although as Pliny said: 'How many things have been judged to be impossible to do before they were actually done?'

Looked at from different angles, this one thought shows itself as what is called metaphysics, as what is called ethics, and as what is called aesthetics; and it would indeed be all of these if it were what I have said I take it to be.

A **system of thought** must always have an architectonic structure, i.e. one in which one part supports another and is not supported by it, so that ultimately the foundation supports all the rest without being supported by it, and the apex is supported without supporting anything. On the other hand, a **single thought**, however comprehensive it may be, must preserve the most perfect unity. If it lets itself be broken into parts so as to make it easier to communicate, these parts must have an organic structure, i.e. one in which

- every part supports the whole just as much as it is supported by it,
- there is no first part and no last,
- the whole thought gains distinctness through every part, and
- even the smallest part can't be completely understood

until the whole has been grasped.

Any **book**, however, must have a first and a last line, which makes it very unlike an organism, however organism-like **its content** may be; so in this case form and matter are in contradiction.

This being so, it is self-evident that the only way to penetrate the presented thought is to *read the book twice*, and indeed the first time with much patience; for which you'll need my gift of the information •that the beginning presupposes the end almost as much as the end does the beginning, and •that every earlier part presupposes the later almost as much as vice versa. I say 'almost': for it is not altogether so, and I have done my best to begin with things that have the least need to be clarified by what comes later, and in general I have honestly and conscientiously done what I could make the work clear and easy to understand. [Then a tiresomely complex sentence of which the gist is: readers will be apt to misunderstand this or that passage, clear as it is, because they'll see it as contradicting their own opinions or 'the opinions of the day', a mistake they wouldn't make if they saw how the passage relates to the rest of the work.] That is why I said that the first reading requires patience, created by confidence that on a second reading much or all of the work will appear in an entirely different light. . . .

Another point: occasional repetitions are justified by the serious attempt to make a very difficult subject fully and even easily intelligible. And indeed the organic (not chain-like) structure of the whole does sometimes make it necessary

¹ [A mythical substance said to be capable of many wonders, notably turning base metals into gold.]

to touch on the same point twice. This same structure and the very tight interconnection of all the parts hasn't allowed me to use the division (which I otherwise prize greatly) into chapters and sections, forcing me to make do with four main divisions—four points of view on the one thought, so to speak. In each of these four Books it is especially important that the reader's necessary attention to details not distract him from the main thought to which they belong, so that he loses sight of the progress of the exposition as a whole.—This, then, is the **first** and (like those that follow) unavoidable demand on the unsympathetic reader (unsympathetic to the philosopher, precisely because the reader is himself a philosopher).

The **second** demand is this: that one read the introduction before the book, although it does not occur in the book but appeared five years earlier under the title *On the Fourfold Root of the Principle of Sufficient Ground*.¹ Without acquaintance with this introduction and preliminary run-through, true understanding of the present work is utterly impossible; the content of that treatise is presupposed throughout as if it were part of the book. [He goes on to say that if the *Fourfold Root* work hadn't appeared earlier, it ought to be a part of the first Book, which does in some ways show the lack of it. But AS didn't handle it that way, because that would be 'plagiarizing from myself', and also because it would perpetuate various defects in the earlier work arising from his having been 'too caught up in Kantian philosophy at the time, such as the concepts of categories, outer and inner sense, and the like', not that any of these are central to the present work.]. . . .

But only if it is fully recognised through that treatise •what the GP [see Glossary] is and means, •what the extent

and limits of its validity are, and •that this principle

- does not exist before all things, with the entire world existing only as a consequence and in accordance with it, as though a corollary of it, but rather that it
- is nothing more than the form within in which any object of whatever sort, always conditioned by the subject, is known everywhere insofar as the subject is a knowing individual

—only then will it be possible to enter into the method of philosophising that is being attempted here for the first time, utterly diverging from everything that has gone before.

My dislike for repeating my own words, or expressing the same content in other and worse words because the better ones have been taken, has led to a second gap in Book I of the present work, namely the omission of everything in the first chapter of my treatise *On Vision and Colours*, which would otherwise have occurred here verbatim. So an acquaintance with this earlier short work is also presupposed here.

Finally, the **third** demand to be made on the reader could be silently taken for granted. For it is nothing but acquaintance with the most important phenomenon to have occurred in philosophy in two thousand years—one that lies so near to us. I mean the chief works of Kant. Someone has said—and I agree—that their effect on a mind that they really speak to is like the operation for cataracts on a blind person. And continuing the comparison: my purpose is to put into the hands of those on whom that operation has been successful the spectacles that such people have to have.

Just because I take my point of departure from what the great Kant has accomplished, serious study of his works has enabled me to discover significant mistakes in them,

¹ [In that title the principle is called the *Satz vom zureichenden Grund*; but AS usually calls it the *Satz von Grunde*, the grounding principle, abbreviated in this version to GP, on which see the Glossary.]

which I have had to pick out and display as wrong, so that I could presuppose and apply what is true and excellent in his doctrine in a pure error-free form. I have done this in a separate Appendix, so as not to interrupt and confuse my own exposition with frequent polemics against Kant. Just as my work presupposes acquaintance with Kantian philosophy, so also it presupposes acquaintance with that Appendix. That makes it advisable to read that Appendix first, especially because its content has definite connections with Book I of the present work. [AS adds that the Appendix sometimes refers to the main work, from which he infers that the Appendix 'must also be read twice'.]

The philosophy of **Kant** is the only one of which a thorough acquaintance is directly presupposed by the present work. But a reader who has lingered in the school of the divine **Plato** will be better prepared and more receptive to hearing me. But if

a reader has also shared in the benefaction of the **Vedas** [see Glossary], access to which, opened up to us through the Upanishads [see Glossary], is in my view the greatest advance that this still young century [written in 1818] can boast of in comparison with earlier ones—so that I expect the influence of Sanskrit literature to be as deep in this century as the revival of Greek literature was in the 15th century,

he has already received and taken in inspiration from the ages-old Indian wisdom, and he is best of all prepared to hear what I have to say to him. For what I say will not come across to him—as to many others—as foreign and indeed hostile. If it didn't sound vainglorious, I would maintain that every one of the individual and out-of-context sayings that constitute the Upanishads can be derived as a consequence of the single thought I am going to communicate; but that single thought emphatically *cannot* be found in the Upanishads.

[This Preface ends with more than a page in which AS jokingly confronts the protest that his pre-requirements for understanding his book are too demanding. He imagines the protest as being enlivened by the fact that the shops are crammed with philosophy books and Germany crammed with philosophers. He insults the protestors, calling them the sort of folk who would get nothing out of his work even if they did do all the required preliminary reading, and likening them to his *bête noire* Hegel, whom he jeers at as a supposedly 'great philosopher', but does not name. He jestingly gives such people advice concerning what they might do with his book now that they have bought it: use it to decorate a library shelf or a coffee table, or (without having read it) write a review of it, or just set the book back down. He ends by saying that all this is merely joking, and that] I have no serious response to such objections. I hope that these protesting readers will give me some thanks for warning them in timely fashion, trying to save them from wasting a single hour with a book that •couldn't be useful to read without fulfilling the demands I have made, and that •should therefore be neglected entirely, especially since the odds are that it can't speak to them, and will always be intelligible to only the rare few, and must therefore calmly and modestly await those few whose uncommon mode of thinking finds it enjoyable. For even apart from the complications and exertion that the book imposes on the reader, what cultivated individual of today, whose knowledge approaches that splendid point where 'paradoxical'—or extremely surprising to me—and 'false' are entirely the same thing, could bear to encounter on almost every page thoughts that straightforwardly contradict what he has confirmed, once and for all, as true and settled? And then how unpleasantly deceived will many a reader feel if he meets here no discussion of what *he* believes ought to be pursued precisely here, because

his way of speculating coincides with that of a still living great philosopher, who has written truly touching books and has only the slight weakness that he takes everything he had learned of and approved prior to his fifteenth year to be fundamental thoughts innate to the human spirit. Who could bear all this? The reader who •has arrived at this Preface which dismisses him, •has paid cash for the book and •is asking: where is my compensation? I can only reply by reminding him that he knows how to use a book in many ways, even without reading it at all. It can fill a gap in his library just as well as many others, where, neatly bound, it is certain to make a good appearance. Or he can lay it on the dressing table of his learned lady friend, or on the tea table. Or indeed finally, which is certainly the best of all and as I especially advise, he can review it.

And so, after allowing myself the joke to which hardly a page in this altogether ambiguous life can be too serious to grant a place, I present the book with inner seriousness, •convinced that sooner or later it will reach those to whom it is (the only ones to whom it *can* be) directed, and •reconciled to the fact that it too will meet in full measure the fate that has always befallen the truth in every field of knowledge (and thus especially in the most important ones), namely being allotted only a short celebration of victory between the two long periods in which it is •first• condemned as paradoxical and •then• dismissed as trivial. The former fate tends to strike its author as well.—But life is short, and truth reaches far and lives long. Let us speak the truth.

Preface to the second edition

I consign my now completed work to *humanity*—not to those who live at my time or in my country—confident that humanity will find some value in it, even if that value is slow in being recognised, which is the fate of any sort of good thing. For what my mind has (almost against my will) been incessantly devoted to work on through a long life¹ can only have been •humanity, not •the fleeting generation occupied with the delusion of the moment. And the lack of interest in it during this time couldn't shake my belief in its value. For I constantly saw things that are false, bad, right down to absurd and crazy being generally admired and revered; and I had the thought that if those who are capable of **recognising** what is genuine and right can be seen occasionally during some twenty years, there might be others who are capable of **producing** it, so that their works then constitute an exception to the impermanence of earthly things. . . .

Anyone who seriously takes up and pursues a topic that doesn't lead to material benefits shouldn't count on the interest of his contemporaries. But he will surely see that under the world's surface his topic becomes current and enjoys its day. And this is as it should be.² For the topic can't succeed unless it is pursued for itself. Because every **a** plan is a threat to **b** insight.³ Accordingly, as the history of literature testifies, anything of value has needed a lot of time to gain acceptance, especially when it is of the instructive rather than entertaining variety; and meanwhile falsehood glittered •invitingly•. For uniting a topic with the •superficial•

¹ [AS was 30 when the first edition was published; the second edition appeared 26 years later.]

² [*in der Ordnung* = 'in the order' (of things).]

³ [As we'll see later, this strange statement involves the contrast between **b** thinking a problem through, going where it takes one, and **a** working on a problem with a pre-set plan for what result one wants to reach.]

appearance of it is hard, where it isn't impossible. It is indeed the curse of this world of hardship and need that everything has to serve and be enslaved by *them*; which is why the world is not so made that any noble and sublime effort—like the search for light and truth—can thrive unobstructed within it and exist for its own sake. Rather, even when such a project achieves recognition by introducing the concept of it to the public, material interests and personal purposes will at once take it over as their instrument—or their mask. Accordingly, after Kant had brought philosophy back into repute, it too inevitably became the instrument of purposes—political ones from above, personal ones from below—although what this happened to was not philosophy (strictly so-called) but its double, which is mistaken for it. This should not disconcert us; for the vast majority of men are by nature quite unable to follow—indeed even to *conceive*—any but material aims. So the pure pursuit of truth is far too lofty and eccentric an endeavour to be sincerely engaged in by all, or many, or even a few. [AS develops this theme, railing against the charlatans who busily write and talk on philosophical topics but, having no interest in the truth, are motivated by concerns that are 'personal, official, ecclesiastical, political—in short, material'. He mocks the idea that through all this hubbub the truth will emerge without having been sought.] Truth is not a whore who throws herself on the neck of those who don't desire her. Rather, she is such a shy beauty that even one who sacrifices everything to her can't be certain of her favour.

Whereas governments make philosophy a means for their political purposes, scholars see in philosophy professorships a trade that feeds its man like any other; so they press after them with assurances of their good disposition,

i.e. their intention to serve those political purposes. And they keep their word: not truth, not clarity, not Plato, not Aristotle, but the goals they have been appointed to serve, are their guiding star and become the criterion of truth, of value, of what is worth attending to, and of the opposites of these. So anything that doesn't square with those goals—and it may be the most important and extraordinary thing in their discipline—is either condemned or (where that seems hazardous) suffocated by unanimous silence. Look at their united zeal against pantheism! Will any simpleton believe that this comes from conviction?

And how could philosophy degraded into a way of earning a living *not* degenerate into sophistry? Because this is inevitable, and the rule 'Whose bread I eat, his song I sing' has always applied, the ancients regarded *earning money through philosophy* as the mark of the sophist. But now there's the added fact that since in this modern world nothing but mediocrity is to be expected—or can be asked for and had for money—we have to make do with it as well as sophistry. From this we then see, in all the German universities, beloved mediocrity trying to establish a still quite non-existent philosophy by its own means, and indeed in accordance with a pre-set measure and goal—a spectacle that it would be almost cruel to mock.

While philosophy has to this extent long had to serve solely as a means for public and for private purposes, I have (undisturbed by it) pursued the train of my thoughts for more than thirty years; simply because I *had* to—could not do otherwise—driven by an instinct that was also supported by the belief that when one man has had a true thought and cleared up some obscurity, this will eventually be grasped

¹ [At this point, AS puzzlingly switches from the first-person singular to (in a few cases) the first-person plural and (in many more cases) to the impersonal *man* = 'one'. The only way to make the passage read well is to stay with 'I' and 'me' throughout, which is what the present version does.]

by another thinking mind, will speak to it, gladden it, and console it.¹ I am addressing myself to such a mind, just as others like me have spoken to me, bring me consolation in this dreary life. In the meantime, I pursue my subject for its own sake and on its own terms. But the strange thing about philosophical meditations is that what brings benefit to others is **a** something that one person has thought through and examined for himself, not **b** something that he initially *intended* for the benefit of others. The **a** former is marked above all by its thoroughgoing honesty. For no-one tries to deceive *himself* or pass off rubbish on *himself*; so all sophistry and mere verbiage drop out, so that every sentence immediately repays the trouble of reading it. Accordingly, my works so clearly bear the stamp of honesty and openness on their brow that they contrast glaringly with the works of the three famous sophists of the post-Kantian period. I am always to be found engaging in *reflection*, i.e. rational deliberation and honest communication, never in *inspiration*, otherwise known as ‘intellectual intuition’ or ‘absolute thought’—its rightful name being ‘windbaggery’² or ‘charlatanism’.³

Working in this spirit, while continuing to see the false and the bad being generally recognised—indeed, windbaggery and charlatanism highly revered—I have long since willingly done without the approval of my contemporaries. A body of contemporaries that has for twenty years raved about a Hegel (that intellectual Caliban!) as the greatest of philosophers—so loudly that it reverberated through all Europe—couldn’t possibly cause someone who has seen this happen to hanker after its approval! It has no more laurels to bestow; its approval has been prostituted, and its reproach can mean nothing. That I am serious about this

can be seen from this: if I had ever sought the approval of my contemporaries, I’d have had to delete twenty passages that flatly contradict all their views—indeed are bound in part to offend them. But I would count it as dereliction on my part to sacrifice even a syllable to that approval. My guiding star has been quite seriously the truth. Following it, I can initially seek only my own approval, entirely turned away from **•**an age sunk deep with respect to all higher intellectual efforts and from **•**a demoralised. . . .national literature in which the art of combining high words with low thoughts has reached its pinnacle. Of course I can never escape from the mistakes and weaknesses necessarily attaching to my nature, but I shan’t augment them with unworthy compromises.

As for this second edition, I’m glad to find that after 25 years there is nothing I want to retract, meaning that my basic convictions have maintained themselves—at least in myself! The alterations in the first volume, which contains the whole text of the first edition, never affect the essentials. Rather, some concern a few secondary matters, and more consist in usually brief explanations scattered here and there. Only the ‘Critique of Kantian Philosophy’ has received significant corrections and extensive additions. [He embarks now on a very long explanation of his decision to add a second whole volume: Its content couldn’t be melded with the first volume, because the writing styles are different; but the two are complementary halves of a single whole:] If the first volume has the advantage over the second that only the fire of youth and the energy of initial conception can bestow, the second will surpass the first through its maturity and completeness in working out thoughts. [And much more along the same lines. He advises the newcomer to his philos-

² Fichte and Schelling

³ Hegel

ophy to read the first volume all through once, before turning to the second; and explains that the chapter-numbers in the first volume were introduced in this second edition, so as to facilitate cross-references from the second volume.]

In the preface to the first edition I declared that my philosophy starts from the Kantian philosophy and thus presupposes a thorough knowledge of that; and I repeat that here. For Kant's doctrine produces in every a mind that has grasped it a fundamental change so great that it amounts to an intellectual rebirth. It alone eliminates the *realism* that is innate to the mind, stemming from the basic character of the intellect. Neither Berkeley nor Malebranche suffices for this, for they stay too much in generalities, whereas Kant goes into particulars, doing this in a manner that •has no parallel either before Kant or after him, and •has a quite unique—one might say *immediate*—effect on the mind, which undergoes a complete clean-out, after which it views all things in a different light. Only through this does it become receptive to the more positive insights that I offer. ♪ Someone who hasn't mastered Kantian philosophy, whatever else he may have studied, has remained in a kind of state of innocence—caught up in the natural and childish realism that we are all born into and that equips us for everything *except philosophy*. So ♪ this person relates to a the other as a child to an adult. This truth sounds paradoxical nowadays, which it wouldn't have done in the first thirty years following the appearance of the *Critique of Pure Reason*; that is because

•a generation has since grown up that doesn't really know Kant, for that requires more than a fleeting, impatient reading, or a second-hand report; and this in turn comes from the fact that

•bad education has led this generation to waste its time on the 'philosophical' output of •ordinary minds that have no calling for philosophy, or indeed of •windbagging sophists who have been irresponsibly boosted as philosophers.

•Hence the confusion in initial concepts, and in general the indescribable crudeness and plodding, that can be seen emerging from the affectation and pretentiousness in the philosophical efforts of the generation thus educated.

Anyone who thinks he can get to know Kant's philosophy from other people's accounts of it is utterly mistaken. I must indeed seriously warn against reports of this kind, especially recent ones: in the last few years I have encountered, in the writings of Hegelians, accounts of the Kantian philosophy that are downright fantastic. How could minds already twisted and spoiled in their early youth by Hegelry be capable of following Kant's profound investigations? They are early accustomed to taking the shallowest verbiage for philosophical thoughts, the most pathetic sophisms for mental acuity, and the most stupid foolishness for dialectics. . . . What they need is not a *critique of reason*. nor *any* philosophy; what they need is a *medicine for the mind*, starting with—as a purgative—something like a *a short course in common-sensery*¹; and then we'll see whether for them there can ever be talk of philosophy.

So it will be useless to look for the Kantian doctrine anywhere but in Kant's own works; but these are throughout instructive, even where he goes astray, even where he is mistaken. All real philosophers can be known only from their own writings, not from the reports of others; and Kant's originality makes this especially true of him. For the thoughts of those extraordinary minds can't survive being filtered through commonplace heads. [He launches into

¹ [He says this in joke French: *un petit cours de senscommunologie*.]

jeering contrasts between the two kinds of minds, expresses amazement that 'the public' prefers the reports of intellectual inferiors to the splendours of the originals, and mockingly invokes the educational theory that children learn best from children.]

Now a word for the philosophy professors. I have long had to admire

- the sagacity, the accurate and delicate tact, with which they have recognised my philosophy, right from its first appearance, as something entirely at odds with their own endeavours, indeed as truly dangerous to them. . . .
- the sure and acute politics through which they quickly found the only correct way to deal with it,
- how unanimously they followed that procedure, and
- the persistence with which they stayed true to it.

This procedure—which, incidentally, has the further advantage of being very easy to follow—consists in keeping something hidden by completely ignoring it. . . . The effectiveness of this silent treatment is heightened by the rapturous clamour with which these people celebrate the births of one another's intellectual offspring; the public have to see and take note of the air of importance with which they congratulate themselves on the event. Who could fail to recognise the effectiveness of this procedure? Yet there is no objection to the principle 'first live, then philosophise' [he cites this in Latin]. These gentlemen want to live, and indeed to live on philosophy: they have been directed to it, along with wife and child. . . , and they have staked everything on it. Now, my philosophy is utterly unfit for anyone to live on it. **(i)** For one thing, it lacks the first essential requirement of a well-paid chair of philosophy, namely a speculative [see Glos-

sary] theology, which is supposed—despite that bothersome Kant with his critique of reason—to be the main theme of all philosophy, even if that gives philosophy the task of speaking of things it can know absolutely nothing about. **(ii)** Again, my philosophy doesn't affirm the fable, so shrewdly devised by philosophy professors and now indispensable to them, of a *reason* that knows, perceives, or apprehends immediately and absolutely. Someone has only to foist this on his readers at the outset and then in the most comfortable manner in the world to ride off, as if in a four-horse carriage, into the realm beyond all possible experience, entirely and forever shut off by Kant from our knowledge. What one finds there, immediately revealed and elegantly prepared, are the basic dogmas of modern, Judaicising, optimistic Christianity. So we have

- my meditative philosophy, lacking in those essential prerequisites, with no aim and no sustenance, which has for its North Star the truth alone—the naked, unpaid, unbefriended, often persecuted truth—and steers straight towards it without looking to the right or the left, and
- the good, nourishing university philosophy which, laden with a hundred intentions and a thousand aims¹, cautiously tacks its way along its route, always before its eyes the fear of the Lord, the will of the government ministers, the ordinances of the state church, the desires of the publisher, the favour of students, the friendship of colleagues, the course of daily politics, the current orientation of the public, and so on.

•What do these have to do with one another? What does my quiet, serious inquiry into the truth have in common with heated scholastic wrangling from lecterns and student benches, the deepest incentives for which are always

¹ [mit hundert Absichten und tausend Rücksichten]

personal goals? Nothing! Rather, the two types of philosophy are different from the ground up. For this reason there is no compromise on my part and no camaraderie, and nobody profits from me except perhaps someone who seeks only the truth, and so none of today's philosophical parties. For they all proceed according to their aims [*Absichten*], while I have mere insights [*Einsichten*] to offer, which don't square with any of the aims because they are not modeled after any of them. My philosophy won't be suitable for a professorial chair until times have utterly changed.

What a fine thing it would be (he imagines his opponents thinking sarcastically) if such a philosophy—that cannot provide one with a living—were allowed into the open and attracted general attention! So this had to be prevented, and everyone had to unite in opposition to this philosophy (by joining the conspiracy of silence about it). One doesn't have such an easy game of it with challenges and refutations. [AS goes on to say that it wouldn't have been prudent to *answer back* against his philosophy, because that would make it widely known and might interfere with the public's taste for the 'lucubrations' [look it up] of the philosophy professors. So he advises his opponents to stick with the 'system of silence' for as long as it works, until (he says puzzlingly) 'ignoring it turns into ignorance, when it will be time to give it up'. He thinks it will last for the rest of his lifetime at least, especially if the professors are strict in their supervision of young people. About the very long haul he expresses

optimism:] Even if it seems impossible that the voice of the individual could ever penetrate the chorus of the deceivers and the deceived, the genuine works of every age have a special, silent, slow, and powerful influence; and eventually, as if by a miracle, they are seen to rise out of the turmoil like a balloon that soars from the thick atmosphere of this earthly space into purer regions, and stays there, with no-one able to pull it back down.

Preface to the third edition

That which is true and genuine would more easily win a place in the world if those who couldn't produce such a thing weren't sworn to preventing its emergence. Through this circumstance, much that should have benefited the world has been impeded and delayed, if not downright strangled. For me the result has been that, although I was only 30 years old when the first edition of this work appeared, I have not seen this third edition until my 72nd year. [AS died less than a year later.] I find consolation for this in Petrarch's words: *Si quis, toto die currens, pervenit ad vesperam, satis est.*¹ I have at last arrived, and have the satisfaction of seeing, at the end of my career,² the beginning of my effectiveness, in the hope that, in accord with an old rule, it will last long because it was late in beginning.

The reader will find in this third edition nothing missing of what the second contains; and it includes 136 pages of additions. . . .

¹ ['He who runs the whole day and arrives at the evening has done enough.']

² [The German could also mean 'at the end of my race'; the word is *Laufbahn*.]

Book I. The world as presentation. First consideration
Presentation as subject to the GP
The object of experience and science

*Sors de l'enfance, ami, réveille-toi!*¹ —Jean-Jacques Rousseau

1. Getting started on one side

The world is my presentation—this is a truth that applies to everything that lives and knows, though only the human being can bring it into reflective abstract consciousness; and when he really does this, philosophical thoughtfulness has come to him. It is then clear and certain to him that he knows no sun and no earth, but always only an eye that sees a sun, a hand that feels an earth; that the world around him exists [see Glossary] only as presentation, i.e. only in relation to something else, the presenter, which is himself.

If any truth can be announced *a priori*, it is this. For it is the expression of the most general form of all possible and conceivable experience, a form that is more general than all the others—more general than time, space and causality—for they all presuppose it; and whereas

- each of these forms—all of which we have recognised as so many particular applications of the GP [see Glossary]—applies to only one particular class of presentations,
- the object/subject division is the form common to all those classes; it is the only form under which any presentation, of whatever kind it may be—abstract or intuitive, pure or empirical—is possible and conceivable.

Thus no truth is more certain, more independent of all others, and less in need of proof than this, that everything that

exists to be known—and so this entire world—is only object in relation to the subject, perception for the perceiver, in a word, *presentation*. Of course this applies not only to

- every past and every future, as it does to the present, and to
- what is furthest away, as it does to what is near;

because it applies even to time and space, in which alone this is all distinguished [he means: which are presupposed in the past-present-future and near-far distinctions]. Whatever can and does belong to the world is inexorably permeated by this fact of being conditioned by the subject, and exists only for the subject. The world is presentation.

This truth is in no way new. It was already present in the sceptical reflections that Descartes started from. Berkeley was the first to assert it decisively; which won him undying merit in philosophy, even if the rest of his doctrines cannot stand. Kant's first mistake was his neglect of this proposition, as I explain in the Appendix below.

[AS adds a few remarks on how the proposition in question was 'the fundamental principle of the Vedanta philosophy', citing an English work that reported this and summed it up in words which he says 'adequately express the conjunction of empirical realness [see Glossary] and transcendental ideality.]

Thus in this first Book we'll consider the world only from

¹ [Meaning: 'Leave your infancy, my friend, *awake!*']

that one side, only so far as it is presentation. . . . But the one-sidedness of this consideration will be made up for in Book II, •through a truth that is not as immediately certain as the one that we are starting with here, and that we can be led to only by deeper research, more difficult abstraction, separating where there is difference and uniting where there is identity; •through a truth that is bound to be very serious and impressive to everyone, namely that the very same person ·who says ‘The world is my presentation’· can and must also say: ‘The world is my will.’

Before coming to that, we have to •attend unswervingly to the side of the world from which I started, the side of knowability, and thus without reluctance to •consider all available objects—indeed even one’s own body—only as presentation, calling them all mere presentation. What I am setting aside here is only *will*, which alone constitutes the other side of the world. For just as the world is on one side through and through presentation, so it is on the other side through and through will. But a *Realität* [see Glossary] that is neither of these, but an object in itself (to which even Kant’s ‘thing in itself’ regrettably degenerated in his hands), is a fanciful non-thing and the assumption of it is a will-o’-the-wisp in philosophy.

2. Subject/object; one/many. The GP

That which knows everything and is known by nothing is the *subject*. It is thus the bearer of the world, the pervasive, constantly presupposed condition of everything that appears, of every object; for whatever exists, exists only for the subject. Everyone finds himself as this subject, but only as something

that knows, not as an object of knowledge. His body is indeed an object, and so from this standpoint we call it *presentation*. For the body is an object among objects and falls under the laws of objects, although it is an immediate object.¹ Like all objects of perception, it lies in the form of knowledge, in time and space, through which plurality exists. But the subject—knowing, never known—does not also lie in this form; rather, it is always presupposed by the form. So it does not involve plurality or its opposite, unity. We never know it; wherever anything is known it is the subject that knows.

The world as presentation, then, . . . has two fundamental, necessary, and inseparable halves. One is the object: its form is space and time, and through these plurality. But the other half, the subject, is not in space and time, for it is whole and undivided in every *presenting* being. Therefore a single subject combines with its object to make up the world as presentation. . . .; and if it vanished, the world as presentation would be no more. So the halves are inseparable, even in thought. For each of the two has meaning and existence only through and for the other, exists with it and vanishes with it. Their boundaries are in immediate contact: where the object begins, the subject ends. The common status of the boundary can be seen in the fact that the essential and therefore general forms of every object—time, space, and causality—can be found and fully known from the subject ·without any knowledge of the objects·, i.e. in Kant’s language, they lie *a priori* in our consciousness. Discovering this is one of Kant’s main achievements, and a very great one.

I now go further and maintain that the GP is the common expression for all of the object’s forms that we are aware of

¹ [The idea behind this clause is that my sense-perception of anything x comes through—is mediated by—x’s effect on my body, whereas my perception of my body is not mediated in that way.]

a priori, and that therefore whatever we know in a purely *a priori* way is nothing but the content of the GP and what follows from it; so that it expresses the entirety of our *a priori* certain knowledge. In my treatise on the GP, I have shown in detail how every possible object falls under this principle, i.e. stands in a necessary relation to other objects, on one side as determined, on the other as determining. This goes so far that the entire existence of all objects—so far as they are objects, presentations and nothing else—comes down to their necessary relation to one another; that's all it is, so it is entirely relational. More about this soon. . . . I am assuming here that everything I said in that treatise is known by the reader and familiar to him; if it hadn't been said there, it would have to have been included here.

3. The ground of being

The main distinction among all our presentations is between intuitive and abstract ones. The latter constitute only *one* class of presentations, concepts; and the only possessors of these on earth are human beings, whose capacity for them—distinguishing them from all animals—has for ages been called *reason*. I will consider these abstract presentations later on, but first I shall speak exclusively of *intuitive presentation*. This encompasses the whole visible world, or the sum total of experience, together with the conditions of its possibility. It is, I repeat, a very important discovery by Kant that

these very conditions, these forms themselves. . . . can not only be •thought abstractly, apart from their content, but also •immediately perceived; and that this perception is nothing like a mental image borrowed from experience by copying it, but is so far from depending on experience that the dependence goes the

other way: the properties of space and time, as objects of *a priori* knowledge, apply to all possible experience as laws to which it must everywhere conform.

For this reason, in my treatise on the GP I treated time and space—viewed *purely*, without contents—as a special and self-subsistent class of presentations.

Equally important is something else Kant discovered about those general forms of all perception, namely that they can be known on their own and independently of experience, as can their status as laws; which is the source of mathematics, with its infallibility. And it is a no less remarkable property of time and space that the GP, which

- determines experience as the law of causality and motivation, and
- determines thought as the law of grounding for judgments,

appears here in an entirely unique shape in which it

- has a role in the succession of time's moments and in the mutual interrelations of the parts of space,

to which I have given the name *ground of being*.

Anyone who clearly understands (from my introductory work on it) that the GP has exactly the same content through all the various forms it takes, will also be convinced of the importance—for insight into his own innermost nature—of the simplest of its forms, which we have seen to be *time*. Just as

- in time every moment exists only by annihilating the preceding moment, only in turn to be as quickly annihilated itself, and just as
- past and future (apart from what follows from their content) are as null as any dream, while the present is only the unextended and insubstantial boundary between the two, in just the same way

•we will also recognise the same nullity in all the other forms of the GP, and we will see that

- like time, so also space, and
- like space, so everything that is in both space and time, and thus everything that proceeds from causes or motives

has only a relational existence, and exists only through and for something else that is just like it, i.e. something that exists in the same ·relational· way.

In its essentials this view is old: Heraclitus lamented the eternal **flow** of things in it, ·i.e. in the empirically given world·; Plato denigrated that world as something that is always **becoming** but never *is*; called it mere **properties** of the one and only enduring substance; Kant, calling it mere **phenomenon**, contrasted what is known in this way with ‘the thing in itself’. Finally, the ancient wisdom of the Indians says: ‘It is the Maya, the veil of deception, that envelops the eyes of mortals and lets them see a world of which one cannot say that it exists and cannot say that it doesn’t, for it is like a dream, like the reflection of sun on the sand that the wanderer takes from afar to be water, or a rope thrown down that is seen as a snake.’ But what they all intended, what they all speak of, is nothing but my present topic of the world as presentation, subject to the GP.

4. Time and space in relation to matter

Anyone who has recognised the mode of the GP that makes its appearance in pure time as such, and that underlies all counting and calculating, has thereby also recognised the

entire nature of time. It is nothing beyond just that mode of the GP, and has no other character. Succession is the form of the GP in time; succession is the entire nature of time.

And anyone who has recognised the GP as it holds sway in mere, purely perceived space has thereby taken in the entire nature of space. For space is nothing but the possibility of the mutual determination of its parts, which is called *location*. The detailed treatment of this, and the formulation of its results in abstract concepts (for convenience of use) is the sole content of geometry.

In just the same way, anyone who has recognised the mode of the GP that holds sway

- over the content of time and space,
- i.e. over what is perceptible in them,
- i.e. over matter,

has thereby recognised the law of causality, thus recognising the entire nature of matter as such. For matter is through and through nothing but causality, as everyone sees as soon as he reflects on it. Its *being* is its *action*; no other being is even thinkable for it. . . . The effect of one material object x on another y is recognisable only so far as y affects the immediate object differently from before; that is all there is to it. Cause and effect is thus the entire nature of matter: its being is its action. (It is therefore most fitting that in German the totality of what is material is called *Wirklichkeit*, a word that signifies much more than *Realität*.¹) *What* it affects is always, again, matter. Thus its entire being and nature consists in the law-governed alteration that one of its parts brings about in another; so that it is entirely relational, by way of a relation that applies only within its boundaries—as

¹ [AS’s point here is that *Wirklichkeit*, which is standardly (and will be here) translated as ‘reality’ starts with *Wirk*, which is also an ingredient in *wirken* = ‘to have an effect’, in *wirkend* = ‘effective’, and in *Wirkung* and *Wirken*, both = ‘action’. To respect the line he is drawing (though it’s not clear that it does much work in his thought), the present version—as explained in the Glossary—will translate *Realität* when used as an abstract noun by ‘realness’, and will leave it untranslated when it is used as a concrete noun.]

with time, so with space.

Time and space can be perceptually presented on their own and apart from matter; but not matter apart from them. Its essential form presupposes space, and the action in which its entire being consists always involves an alteration, and thus takes place in time. But it's not merely that time and space are each separately *presupposed* by matter; the union of the two constitutes its nature, because that (I repeat) consists in causality. [AS now offers a complex and difficult passage, the gist of which is that there is some interplay between space and time, and that if this didn't exist] there would be no causality and, since this constitutes the true nature of matter, also no matter.

The law of causality obtains its meaning and necessity from the fact that the nature of alteration consists not in

- mere change in the state of affairs, period, but rather in
- there being at one spatial position now one state of affairs and then another, and there being at one time different states of affairs in different locations.

Only this mutual limitation of time and space gives both meaning and necessity to a rule by which alteration must proceed.

What is determined by the law of causality is thus not •the succession of states of affairs in mere time, but •this succession with respect to a particular space; and not •the existence of a state of affairs in a particular place, but •its existence in this place at a particular time. Thus alteration—i.e. change that occurs in accordance with causal law—always concerns a particular part of space and a particular part of time *together* and in union. So causality unites space and time. But we have found that the entire nature of matter

consists in action, and thus in causality. Consequently, space and time have also to be united in matter, which must harbour the properties of time and of space together, however opposed those properties are. It is matter that unites •the insubstantial flow of time with •the rigid, unchangeable persistence of space, getting its infinite divisibility from both. Accordingly, we find that matter first introduces *simultaneity*, which can't be found

- in time alone, which knows no juxtaposition, or
- in space alone, which knows no before, after, or now.

The simultaneity of a number of states of affairs is really what constitutes the nature of reality, for only through it can there be *duration*,¹ which can be recognised only in a change of something that endures through the change. But also change takes on the character of alteration only if something endures through it, because alteration is change of quality and form in an enduring substance, i.e. matter. If there were only space, the world would be rigid and immovable: no succession, no alteration, no action; and in the absence of action, no presentation of matter. If there were only time, everything would be fleeting: no persistence, no juxtaposition, and thus no simultaneity, consequently no duration; so again no matter. Matter first emerges with the uniting of time and space, i.e. with the possibility of simultaneity and thereby duration, and by this in turn of the persistence of substance through alteration of states of affairs. Having its nature in the union of time and space, matter bears the stamp of both throughout.

- It bears witness to its origin in space partly through its essential form, but especially through its persistence (substance). . . . (Time provides for change, but not for something enduring through change.)

¹ [*Dauer*; it could be translated as 'permanence'.]

- It reveals its origin in time by way of quality (property), without which matter never makes an appearance. The properties of a bit of matter are always causality, action on other bits of matter, which involve *alteration* (a temporal concept).

The lawful character of this effectiveness is always with reference to space and time together, and is meaningful only through that. The lawlike status of causality extends only so far as the determination of what the state of affairs has been *at this time in this place*. Our *a priori* recognition of matter as having certain properties—the filling of space, i.e. impenetrability, i.e. reality, followed by extension, infinite divisibility, persistence, i.e. indestructibility, and finally movability—comes from the fact that its fundamental characteristics derive from the forms of our knowledge, of which we are aware *a priori*. In contrast with this, although *weight* is exceptionless, our knowledge of it counts as *a posteriori*—because it doesn't rest on any form of our knowledge. . . .

But just as any object exists for the subject only as its presentation, so every particular class of presentations exists only for a correspondingly particular characteristic of the subject, known as a *knowledge faculty*. Kant called the subjective correlate of time and space, as empty forms on their own, 'pure sensibility', a label that we may retain because Kant opened up this path, though it isn't quite right, because sensibility presupposes matter. The subjective correlate of matter (or of causality, for they are one and the same) is the *understanding*, and that's all that the understanding is. Its single function, its sole power, is knowledge of causality; and it is a great power—with enormous scope and great variety of applications, yet unmistakably *one* power throughout them all. Conversely, all causality, thus all matter, hence the whole of reality, exists only for the understanding, through the understanding, in the understanding. The first, simplest,

always-working activity of the understanding is perception of the real world: this is wholly knowledge of causes on the basis of effects; so all perception is intellectual. For this to be achieved, there has to be some effect that is *immediately* recognised, to serve as a starting-point. This is the effect on the animal body. Such effects are the subject's *immediate objects*; perception of all other objects is mediated by them. Getting from the immediate object to the rest of the world does not involve inference, reflection, or choice, but happens immediately, necessarily, and surely. The understanding—with a single stroke, and through its one simple function—transforms dull, mute sensation into perception. What the eye, the ear, the hand senses is not perception; it is mere data. Once the understanding passes from effect to cause, the world is there as a perception spread out through space, changing its form but persisting through all time with respect to its matter; for the understanding unites space and time in the presentation of matter, i.e. efficacy. This world as presentation only exists for the understanding, just as it only exists through the understanding. [Now a passage citing empirical examples of 'how the understanding creates perception out of data', saying that the topic is treated more fully in 'the second edition of the treatise on the GP', a treatment that is not given here because 'I have almost as much reluctance to copy myself as to copy others'. Despite that disclaimer, AS does go on to give further 'irrefutable proofs that all perception is not merely sensual but intellectual'. He says that all experience *presupposes* the law of causality, so that there's no question of basing acceptance of that law on experience, a view that led to Humean scepticism which AS says he is now refuting for the first time.]

5. Disputes about the realness of the external world

But beware of the great misunderstanding of thinking that, because perception is mediated by knowledge of causality, the cause-effect relation holds between object and subject; in fact, that relation holds only between the immediate and the mediated object, and thus always between objects. The foolish dispute about the realness of the external world—in which dogmatism and scepticism stand opposed—rests on just that mistaken presupposition. Dogmatism shows up sometimes as realism, sometimes as idealism. Realism posits the object as cause, and its effect as something in the subject. Fichtean idealism makes the object an effect of the subject. But—something that cannot be emphasised enough—between subject and object there is no relation at all in accordance with the GP, so neither realism nor idealism could ever be proved, and scepticism has made successful attacks against both.

Just as the law of causality *precedes* perception and experience as their condition, and therefore cannot (as Hume supposed) be learned *from* them, so object and subject altogether precede all knowledge, and thus the GP as well, as their prior condition. [He goes on to say, in a complicated way, that allowing the GP to get *between* subject and object (so to speak) has led to ‘the dispute about the realness of the external world’. He explains:] On the one hand, dogmatic **realism**, taking the presentation to be an effect of the object—thus separating two things that are really one—assumes a cause entirely distinct from presentation, an ‘object in itself’ that is independent of the subject. Something utterly unthinkable; because as an object it always presupposes the subject and thus always remains only a presentation

to it. Labouring under the same mistaken presupposition, **scepticism** counters with the claim that in the presentation one has always only the effect, never the cause, so that one never knows the *a being* of objects but only *b* ·the effects of their *action*. But *a* the former might have no resemblance to *b* the latter; and anyway ·(the sceptic argues)· it would be a mistake to infer anything about the object from its effects, because the law of causality is drawn from experience, the realness of which is now being taken to rest on it.

Both sides in this dispute need to be told **(i)** that object and presentation are the same thing; **(ii)** that the *being* of a perceptible object is just its *action* [*Wirken*]; **(iii)** that it is just in the latter that any thing’s reality [*Wirklichkeit*] consists, and the demand for an existence of the object outside the subject’s presentation, and for an essence of the real thing different from its action, has absolutely no meaning and is a contradiction; **(iv)** and that therefore our knowledge of how a perceptible object *acts* is our entire knowledge of *it*, because there is nothing else in it for us to know. [AS develops this at considerable length, mainly repeating things already said. He attributes the common failure to get these things right to a mis-handling of the GP. What the GP says is that all presentations = objects are connected *with one another*, but says nothing about connecting objects with subjects or with any other (fictitious) kind of non-objects.]

If we look more closely into the source of this question about the realness of the external world, we find that—in addition to the mistaken application of the GP to what lies beyond its domain—there is at work also a particular confusion¹ with regard to the forms of that principle: the form of it that applies only to concepts = *abstract* presentations gets carried over to *perceptual* presentations = real objects; and

¹ [Verwechselung = wrongly switching]

a ground of knowledge is demanded with respect to objects that can have no other ground than one of becoming.

- The GP governs abstract presentations—the concepts that get connected in judgments—in such a way that every judgment has its value, its validity, and entire existence (here called truth) simply and solely through its reference to something beyond it, its ground of knowledge, to which recourse has always to be made.

- By contrast, the GP governs real objects, perceptual presentations, as a principle of the ground not of *knowing* but rather of *becoming*, as the law of causality. Every object has paid its dues to the GP just by coming into being as the effect of a cause; the demand for a ground of knowing has no validity or sense here, but pertains to an entirely different class of objects.

So the perceptual world arouses neither scruple nor doubt in the observer, so long as he stays with it; there is neither error nor truth here; these are confined to the domain of the abstract, of reflection. . . .

[AS now embarks on a few pages on the topic of dreaming. He maintains, not very originally, that we distinguish what we call dreams from what we call waking life on the basis that the former don't fit smoothly into the latter, and concludes that so-called waking life might, for all we can prove to the contrary, be a long dream. He quotes literary sources saying the same thing. Then he returns from this 'empirical' topic to the 'theoretical' one he was busy with before this interlude:] As we have so far considered the question of the realness of the external world, it has issued from an aberration on the part of reason that goes so far as to amount to self-misunderstanding, and to that extent we could only answer the question by clarifying its content. Upon examination of the entire essence of the GP, the relation between object

and subject, and the real character of sense perception, the question was bound to become self-nullifying, because it no longer had any meaning at all. But the question also has another origin, entirely distinct from the purely speculative one so far stated, a properly empirical origin, although it is also repeatedly put with speculative intent, and it has in its empirical meaning a much more intelligible sense than it had in the former case. This second origin starts from the fact that we have dreams, which generates the question is all life perhaps a dream?—or more specifically, is there a sure criterion for distinguishing dreams from reality? mental images from real objects? The proposal that dreams have less vivacity and clarity than does actual perception deserves no consideration at all. For as yet nobody has held the two together for comparison; one could only compare the *recollection* of dreams with *present* reality.—Kant resolves the question thus: 'What distinguishes life from dreams is the interconnection of presentations in accordance with the law of causality.' But all the details in dreams likewise cohere in accordance with the GP in all its modes, and the connection is broken only between life and dreams, and between individual dreams. Kant's answer could therefore only amount to this:

The long dream (life) maintains a pervasive internal connection in accordance with the GP, but no such connection with the short dreams; however, every one of the latter maintains the same internal connection. Thus the bridge is broken between the long and short, and that is how we distinguish them.

But it would be very difficult—often *impossible*—to employ this criterion to settle whether something was dreamt or actually happened. For we aren't in a position to follow, link by link, the causal interconnection between all experienced events and the present moment, although we don't on that

account declare them to be dreams. . . . The only sure criterion for distinguishing dreams from reality is nothing other than the entirely empirical one of *awakening*, by which the causal connection between dreamed events and those of waking life is of course expressly and perceptibly broken. Superb confirmation of this is provided by a comment made by Hobbes in *Leviathan*, chapter 2, namely, that even after awakening we easily take dreams for reality when we have unintentionally gone to sleep while clothed, or even more easily when—in addition to that—some plan or undertaking has taken possession of all our thoughts, occupying us in a dream just as if we were awake. For in such cases, awakening is almost as little noticed as was the state of falling asleep; dream and *Realität* coalesce and intermingle. Then we of course have no choice but to apply the Kantian criterion. But if, as is often the case, the presence or absence of causal interconnection with the present can simply not be determined, then it has to remain forever undecided whether some incident was dreamt or actually happened. [AS says that the close affinity between life and dreams ‘has already been acknowledged by many great minds’, and he quotes examples from the Vedas and Puranas, Plato, Shakespeare, and Calderon. He continues:] Following these passages from poets, perhaps you won’t begrudge me my own use of metaphor:

Life and dreams are pages from one and the same book. Reading in context is what we call actual life. But when the current hour for reading (the day) has ended, and the time for recuperation has arrived, we still often leaf idly through the book, turning this or that page without order: often it is a page already read, often one still unfamiliar, but always from the same book. A single page read in this way is, of course, removed from the context of continuous reading. Yet

it will not seem for that reason so very deficient with respect to the latter, when we consider that the whole of a continuous reading itself begins and ends with as much spontaneity, and is accordingly to be viewed as only a longer single page.

Thus while individual dreams are distinguished from actual life by the fact that they do not fit into the interconnected experience that runs constantly through the latter, and awakening marks this difference, precisely that interconnected experience belongs to actual life as its form, and dreams have equally their own interconnection to display as well. Adopting a standpoint for assessment outside of both, no particular difference is found in their nature, and one is forced to concede to the poets that life is a long dream.

The question of the realness of the external world could hardly have so persistently occupied philosophers if it didn’t have some element of truth, and if some true thought and meaning didn’t lie at its heart as its real source. And in that case we must assume that those perverse and unintelligible forms and questions—all the misunderstandings of the GP and so on—arose from the attempt to think about and express ·in words· the element of truth that lies at the bottom of the question. This at least is my opinion; and I think that the true expression of that deepest meaning of the question, which the question itself failed to capture, is this:

What is this perceptual world besides being my presentation? Although I am conscious of it in only one way, namely as presentation, is it really like my own body, of which I am conscious in a double way, on the one hand *presentation*, on the other hand *will*?

Book II of this work will be devoted to clarifying this question and answering it in the affirmative. The consequences of that will occupy the remaining portions of the work.

6. Understanding

In the meantime, in this first Book we are considering everything only as presentation, as object for the subject. And like all other real objects, we are viewing our own body, the starting-point of everyone's perception of the world, merely from the side of its knowability, where it is only a presentation. To be sure, everyone's consciousness, which already balked at describing other objects as mere presentations, is even more resistant to the claim that their own body is a mere presentation. [He gives a somewhat obscure reason for this, then brushes it aside:] In the meantime this resistance must be put to rest in the expectation that the considerations to follow will complement the present one-sidedness and lead to complete knowledge of the world's nature.

Here, then, the body is an immediate object for us, i.e. the presentation that constitutes the starting-point for the subject's knowledge: with immediate recognition of its alterations, it precedes the application of the law of causality, and so provides that law with its initial data. The whole nature of matter consists, as I have shown, in its action [*Wirken*]. But effect [*Wirkung*] and cause exist only for the understanding, which is nothing more than their subjective correlate. But the understanding could never find application if there were not something else from which it starts. That is the role of merely sensory sensation, the immediate awareness of alterations in the body by virtue of which the body is an immediate object. So the possibility of the perceptual world's knowability lies in two conditions.

(i) The first, if we are to express it **objectively**, is the capacity of bodies to affect one another, to produce alterations in one another. Without this general property of all bodies, perception would not even be possible by means of an animal body's sensibility. To express this first condition

subjectively, we would say that the understanding makes perception possible in the first place. This is because the law of causality, the possibility of effect and cause, originates from the understanding and is valid only for it, so that the perceptual world exists only for it and through it.

(ii) The second condition is the sensibility of animal bodies, or the role of certain bodies as the subject's immediate objects. [AS expands on this, distinguishing a the 'mere sensory sensation' we get from our bodies from b our awareness of our bodies as objects in space with shape and structure. What makes b possible is the interplay between our bodies and other bodies in space; and our grasp of that is *not* immediate, but comes from the understanding's application of the law of causality. He concludes:] This qualification thus needs to be understood when we call the body an immediate object.

In any case, (I repeat), all animal bodies are immediate objects, i.e. starting-points for perception of the world by the subject that does all the knowing and is therefore never known. Thus

- the distinctive characteristic of **animal** life is knowledge, with movement spurred by motives that are determined by knowledge; and
- the distinctive characteristic of **plant** life is movement spurred by stimuli.

Inorganic matter's only movement is produced by causes properly so called, using the term in its narrowest sense. . . .

So all animals, even the most lowly, have understanding; for they all recognise objects, and this recognition acts as a motive to determine their movements. The understanding is the same in all animals and in all humans, having everywhere the same simple form:

knowledge of causality, passage from effect to cause and from cause to effect, and nothing beyond that.

But there are enormous differences in the understanding's degree of acuteness and the extent of its sphere of knowledge, with many levels ranging from the lowest,

- which recognises only causal relations between the immediate object and mediated ones, and so, by moving from effects undergone by bodies to their causes, sees those causes as objects in space; up to
- the higher levels of knowledge of the causal interconnections of merely mediated objects, leading to
- an understanding of the most complex concatenations of causes and effects in nature.

For even that last still belongs to understanding and not to reason, whose abstract concepts can serve only for **taking up** what is immediately understood, fixing it and tying it together, never for **producing** actual understanding. Every natural force and law of nature, and every example of these, must first be immediately recognised by the understanding, intuitively grasped, before it can enter *in abstracto* into reflective consciousness for reason. Intuitive, immediate grasp by the understanding brought

- Hooke's discovery of the law of gravitation and the tracing of so many and such major phenomena to this one law, as was then confirmed by Newton's calculations;
- Lavoisier's discovery of oxygen and its important role in nature; and
- Goethe's discovery of the origin of physical colours.

All these discoveries are nothing but a correct immediate passage from the effect to the cause, at once followed by a recognition of the identity of the force of nature that expresses itself in all causes of the same kind. And this whole insight differs only in degree from that single function of the understanding, by which an animal perceives the

cause affecting its body as an object in space. Every one of those great discoveries is. . . .the work of an instant, an *apperçu*, a flash of insight, not the result of a process of abstract reasoning, which would only serve to make the immediate knowledge of the understanding permanent for thought by bringing it under abstract concepts,

The acuteness of the understanding in apprehending causal relations among among objects that we know only mediately is at work not only in **a** natural science (all of whose discoveries are due to it), but also in **b** practical life. [He comments on the labels that are suitable for it in the two contexts, but says that there's no sharp line to be drawn here, because:] it is all one and the same function of the same understanding that is already active in all animal perception of objects in space and that

- a** sometimes, at the point of its greatest acuteness, assiduously investigates unknown causes for given effects in natural phenomena, and so provides reason with material for conceiving of general rules as natural laws, and sometimes—by applying known causes to get intended effects—devises complicated ingenious machines; and
- b** sometimes, applied to motivations, either sees through and frustrates subtle intrigues and machinations, or even manipulates the persons who are caught up in them and sets them in motion, directing them to its purposes just as it pleases, like directing machines with levers and gears.

Lack of understanding is in the true sense *stupidity*. It is just dullness in applying the law of causality, incompetence in immediately grasping the interconnections of cause and effect, motive and action. . . . A stupid person has no insight into the connection of natural phenomena, when they follow their own course or when they are intentionally combined to

generate machinery. Such a man readily believes in magic and miracles.

A stupid person doesn't notice that various persons, seemingly independently of one another, are in fact acting in prearranged concert, so that he is easily mystified and outwitted. He doesn't detect the motives concealed behind advice he is given, the things he is told, etc. In all this he lacks just one thing—keenness, speed and ease in applying the law of causality; that is, he is lacking in his power of understanding. . . .

Human beings differ greatly in how sharp their understanding is, but between the various species of animals the differences are even greater. With all of them, however, even the ones nearest to plants, there is enough understanding for •the passage from the effects in the immediate object to mediated objects as their causes, and thus for •perception, for apprehension of an object. For this is what makes them *animals*, giving them the possibility for movement in accordance with motives, and through that the possibility of seeking or at least seizing nourishment; whereas plants have only the capacity for movement in response to stimuli, whose immediate effects they need to *await*, or else wither away, unable to pursue or seize them.

We admire the great sagacity of the most perfect animals, as in the case of dogs, elephants, or apes. . . . We can estimate rather exactly, in the case of these clever animals, how much is in the power of understanding unaided by reason, i.e. abstract conceptual knowledge; but we can't so easily know this in ourselves, because understanding and reason are always mutually supportive. We sometimes find expressions of animal understanding **a** above our expectation, sometimes **b** below it. **a** We are surprised by the sagacity of the elephant that, having crossed many bridges on its journey to Europe, now hesitates to set foot on one over which it sees the usual

train of people and horses crossing, because it seems to it too flimsily built for its weight. On the other hand, **b** we marvel at the fact that clever orangutans, having found a fire at which they are warming themselves, don't keep it going by replenishing the wood: proof that this requires deliberation, which can't happen without abstract concepts. The fact that knowledge of causes and effects, as the understanding's general form, is *a priori* present even in animals is already utterly certain from the fact that this knowledge is—for them as for us—the antecedent condition of all perceptual knowledge of the external world. . . . But in assessing the understanding of animals we need to watch out for instances of *instinct*, a property as entirely distinct from understanding as it is from reason, though it is often similar in effect to the combined activity of the two. Discussion of instinct does not belong here, but will find its place in our consideration of the harmony or so-called teleology of nature in chapter 28 in Book II.

Lack of understanding is *stupidity*. I will later recognise failure to apply reason to practical matters as *foolishness*, lack of judgment as *naivety*, and finally partial or complete lack of memory as *madness*. But of each of these in its place.

What is accurately grasped through reason is truth, that is, an abstract judgment on sufficient grounds. What the understanding accurately recognises is *Realität*, i.e. accurate inference from the effect in the immediate object to its cause. Standing opposed to truth is error, as a deception of reason; opposed to *Realität* is illusion, as a deception of the understanding. (More detailed discussion of all this can be found in the first chapter of my treatise on vision and colours.)

Illusion occurs when a single effect can be produced by two different causes, one of which is often involved, the other rarely. Having no data to show which cause is at work

in a given case, the understanding always assumes that it is the usual cause, which it sometimes isn't; And in that case, because the understanding's activity is not reflective or wordy but direct and immediate, the false cause confronts us as an object of perception; this is just false semblance. [He cites examples, including 'the stick submerged in water that appears to be broken' and 'the seemingly greater size of the moon on the horizon than at the zenith'. The moon phenomenon, he says, is demonstrably 'not a matter of optics' but rather] a matter of the understanding, which assumes greater distance to be the cause of the weaker glow of the moon and all the stars on the horizon, and thus takes the moon to be larger on the horizon than at the zenith. . . .

And all such deceptive illusions confront us in immediate perception, which no thinking-through by reason can remove. All that *that* can do is to prevent error (i.e. a judgment without sufficient ground) by coming up with a contrary true judgment, such as the judgment that the weaker glow of the moon and stars on the horizon comes not from their greater distance but from the denser atmosphere. But even when one knows this, the illusion remains irremovable—in this and all the other cases. . . .

7. Two wrong starting-points

With reference to my exposition up to here, it must be noted that I started not from the object or the subject, but from the presentation, which contains and presupposes them both; for its primary, universal and essential form is the separation of subject and object. So I have first considered this form as such; and then the subordinate forms of time, space and causality. The latter belong exclusively to the

object, and yet—as they are essential to the object as such, and as the object is essential to the subject as such—they can be discovered from the subject, i.e. they can be known *a priori*. . . . All these forms can be traced back to one general expression, GP, as I have explained in the introductory essay.¹

This procedure makes my philosophical method utterly different from that of all previous systems. For they all start either from the object or from the subject, and therefore try to explain the one from the other, and this according to the GP, whereas I deny the validity of this principle with reference to the relation of subject and object, and confine it to the object.

·A DERISIVE ASIDE·

It may be thought that the *philosophy of identity* which has appeared and become generally known in our own day doesn't come under either of the alternatives I have named; for it starts not from the subject or the object, but from *the absolute*, known through 'intellectual intuition,' which is neither object nor subject, but the identity of the two! Finding myself entirely devoid of all 'intellectual intuition', I shan't venture to speak of this revered identity, and this absolute. But going by the proclamations of the 'intellectual intuiter' that are open to everyone—even to profane persons like myself—I must yet observe that this philosophy is not exempt from the errors I have mentioned. For it does not escape these two opposite errors in spite of its identity of subject and object, which is not thinkable but only 'intellectually intuitable' or to be experienced by losing oneself in it. On the contrary, it combines both errors in itself; for it is divided into two parts: (i) transcendental presentationalism, which is just Fichte's doctrine of the ego, teaching that the object is

¹ [This refers to AS's previous work on the GP mentioned on page 2.]

produced by or evolved out of the subject, in accordance with the GP; and **(ii)** the philosophy of nature, which teaches that the subject is produced gradually by the object, by a method called ‘construction’, about which I understand very little but enough to know that it is a process according to various forms of the GP. I renounce the deep wisdom contained in that ‘construction’; since I entirely lack ‘intellectual intuition’, all the expositions that presuppose it must for me remain as a book sealed with seven seals. This is so truly the case that I have never been able to find in this doctrine of profound wisdom anything but atrocious and wearisome bombast.

·STARTING FROM THE OBJECT·

The systems starting from the object always had the entire world of perception and its constitution as their topic. Yet the object they take as their point of departure is not always that world or its basic element, matter; rather, they can be classified on the basis of the four classes of possible objects set forth in the introductory treatise [see footnote on this page]. Thus one can say that

- (i)** the real world was the starting-point for Thales and the Ionians, Democritus, Epicurus, Giordano Bruno, and the French materialists;
- (ii)** abstract concepts were the starting-point for Spinoza (on account of his conception of substance, which is purely abstract, and exists only in his definition) and before him the Eleatics;
- (iii)** time, and consequently numbers, were the starting-point of the Pythagoreans and the Chinese philosophy of the I Ching; and finally
- (iv)** acts of will motivated by knowledge have been the starting-point of the scholastics, who teach a creation out of nothing through an act of will by an otherworldly personal being.

The objective procedure is most consistently and fully developed when it appears as materialism proper. This takes matter, and with it time and space, as existing completely independently, and ignores the relation to the subject in which alone all this exists. It also takes up the law of causality as the directing principle for its procedures, regarding it as a self-existent rule for things, an eternal truth, consequently ignoring the understanding, though causality exists only in it and for it. It then tries to find the initial simplest state of matter, so as to develop all other states of matter out of it, rising from the merely mechanical to the chemical, and then to polarity, vegetation, and animality. And the last link in its chain would be animal sensibility, knowledge that would consequently appear as a mere state of matter, a state it is brought into by causality. If we follow materialism this far, arriving at perceptual presentations, [we find that we have been making fools of ourselves, AS says. The supposed ‘last link’ was preupposed by the starting-point, matter, so that the laboriously constructed chain was really a circle. He makes fun of this procedure, and then more soberly repeats his doctrine’s implication that moving from matter to knowledge is going backwards.]

The claim that knowledge is a state of matter can be opposed with equal right by the claim that all matter is only a state of the subject’s knowledge, as a presentation to it. Yet the basic goal and ideal of all natural science is a fully developed materialism. That this is obviously impossible (as we now recognise) is confirmed by another truth that will emerge much later on in this work, namely that all science in the strict sense of the word—by which I understand systematic knowledge under the guidance of the GP—can never reach a final goal or give a completely satisfactory explanation; because it •never gets to the innermost nature of the world, •can never get beyond presentation, and fundamentally •only

teaches us to recognise how one presentation relates to the others.

Every science starts from •the GP in some one of its forms as an organising principle, and •the particular object that is its topic of inquiry. Thus, for example,

- geometry has space as its topic, the ground of being¹ in space as its organising principle;
- arithmetic has time as its topic, and the ground of being in time as its organising principle;
- logic has as its topic combinations of concepts as such, and the ground of knowledge [see page 17] as its organising principle;
- history has the past deeds of human beings, in the large and en masse, as its topic, the law of motivation as its organising principle; and now
- natural science has matter as its topic, and the law of causality as its organising principle.

Thus, its goal and purpose is—under the guidance of the principle of causality—to **reduce** all possible states of matter to others, and in the end to a single one; and then in turn to **derive** them all from others, and in the end from a single one. Two states therefore stand at the opposite extremes of natural science: **a** the state of matter where it is furthest from being the subject's immediate object, and **b** the state where it is the subject's immediate object. That is, **a** the deadest, crudest matter, the most basic stuff, and **b** the human organism. Natural science pursues **a** the first as chemistry, **b** the second as physiology. But so far neither extreme has been reached; the only successes have been in the territory between them. And the prospect of reaching either extreme is indeed rather hopeless. [He explains that the project of **a** the chemists is to reduce the number of basic

substances ('now around sixty'), the final aim—which he says is pointed to by 'the law of homogeneity', a phrase he does not explain—being to get it down to *one*:] an initial chemical state of matter that underlies all the others and belongs to matter as such, all the other states of matter being not essential to it but merely contingent qualities of some portions of matter. But it is impossible to see how this one could ever have undergone chemical alteration before there was any second state to affect it. . . . This contradiction—arising of itself, and neither avoidable nor resolvable—can properly be regarded as a chemical *antinomy*. Found as it is at the first of the two extremes pursued by natural science, a counterpart to it will appear soon at the second extreme.

There is just as little hope for reaching **b** the other extreme of natural science, since it is becoming ever more evident that something chemical can never be reduced to something mechanical, nor something organic to something chemical or electrical. . . . This will be discussed in more detail in Book II.

The difficulties that I here mention only in passing confront natural science in its own domain. Taken as a philosophy, it would be materialism; but we have seen that this is born with death in its heart, because it ignores the subject and the forms of knowledge, which are just as much presupposed by the crudest matter that materialism might start with as by the organism it wants to arrive at. . . . We can *talk* about 'suns and planets without an eye that sees them or an understanding that recognises them'; but with respect to presentation, these words are a blatant contradiction. On the other hand, the law of causality and the investigation of nature based on it lead us to the sure conclusion that every more highly organised state of matter was temporally preceded by a cruder one:

¹ [For more on 'ground of being' see chapter 3.]

- animals preceded human beings,
- fish preceded terrestrial animals,
- plants preceded those, and
- inorganic matter came before anything organic.

So the original mass had to pass through a long series of alterations before the first eye could open. And yet the existence of this whole world depends on the first eye that opened, even if it were that of an insect. For such an eye is a necessary condition of the possibility of knowledge, and the whole world exists only in and for knowledge, and without it is not even thinkable. The world is entirely presentation, and as such demands the knowing subject as the supporter of its existence. Indeed that long temporal series—filled with countless changes through which matter rose from form to form, until there finally arose the first knowing animal—this entire time itself is indeed only thinkable within the identity of a consciousness whose succession of presentations and whose form of knowledge it is, and apart from which it altogether loses all meaning and is nothing at all.

So we see on the one hand

necessarily, the existence of the entire world as dependent on the first sentient being, however imperfect it may be;

and on the other hand

equally necessarily, this first sentient animal as utterly dependent on a long chain of preceding causes and effects into which it enters as one tiny link.

One might indeed call these two contradictory views, to each of which we are led with equal necessity, an *antinomy* in our faculty of knowledge, a counterpart to the one that we have just seen at the first extreme of natural science; whereas Kant's fourfold 'antinomy' will be shown, in the critique of his philosophy in the appendix to the present work [chapter 96], to be a groundless game of mirrors.

The contradiction that has now necessarily arisen finds its resolution in the fact that—to put it in Kant's terms—time, space, and causality apply not to the *thing in itself* but only to its phenomenon, of which they are the form. This is to say—putting it in my terms—that the objective world, the world as presentation, is only the **external** side of a world that also has a quite different side that is its **innermost** nature, its core, the thing in itself. I will consider this in Book II, naming it after its most immediate objectification, *will*. But the world as presentation, which is our only topic here, does indeed arise with the opening of the first eye, without which medium of knowledge it cannot exist and thus cannot have previously existed. But without that eye, i.e. apart from knowledge, there was no *previously*, no time. This doesn't mean that time began with that first eye; all beginnings are *within* time.

But since •time is the most general form of knowability to which all appearances conform through the bond of causality, the first case of knowledge does indeed involve •it with its entire infinitude in both directions, and the appearance filling this initial present must be recognised as causally connected with and dependent on a series of appearances stretching infinitely into the past. But that past is as much conditioned by this first present as the latter is by it; so that, like the first present, so also the past from which it originates depends on the knowing subject and is nothing without it; although necessity dictates that this first present is displayed not as *first*—i.e. as having no past for its parent, and as the beginning of time—but as following from the past in accordance with the ground of being in time; just as the appearance filling it is displayed as an effect, in accordance with the law of causality, with earlier states of affairs filling that past. . . .

The depiction we have arrived at, pursuing materialism

as the most consistent of the philosophical systems starting from the object, shows •the inseparable interdependence of subject and object and at the same time •their ineliminable opposition. Recognition of this leads us to stop seeking the innermost nature of the world, the thing in itself, in either of those two elements of presentation—i.e. in either the subject or the object—but rather in something entirely distinct from presentation, not burdened with that kind of original, essential, and thus indissoluble opposition.

·STARTING FROM THE SUBJECT·

The procedure just discussed of **a** starting from the object so as to have the subject arise from it stands in contrast to the procedure of **b** starting from the subject from which the object is to sprout. Whereas **a** the former was frequent and widespread throughout all previous philosophy, there is only a single example to be found of **b** the latter, and a very recent one at that, namely the pseudo-philosophy of J. G. Fichte. I have to take note of it in this respect [he means: because of its status as the polar opposite of materialism], however little real value and content this doctrine had in itself. It was really nothing but shadow-boxing, but—delivered with an air of deepest seriousness, measured tone, and lively enthusiasm, and defended with polemical eloquence against weak opponents—it was able to shine, and seemed to be something. But the genuine seriousness that keeps truth steadily before its eyes as its goal, unaffected by external influences, was lacking in Fichte as in all philosophers who, like him, adapt to circumstances.¹ Of course it could not be otherwise for them. A ·real· philosopher seeks to escape from a kind of perplexity that Plato called ‘wonderment’ and ‘a most philosophical emotion’. But what distinguishes **a** fake

philosophers from **b** genuine ones is that for **b** the latter the perplexity grows out of how the world looks, whereas for **a** the former it comes only from a book, a system that he finds ready to hand. That was the case with Fichte, who became a philosopher only by way of Kant’s ‘thing in itself’, without which he would most probably have pursued entirely different matters—with far better success, because he did have significant rhetorical skill. If he had penetrated somewhat into the sense of the book that made him a philosopher, the *Critique of Pure Reason*, he would have understood that its main doctrine was, in spirit, that the GP is not what scholastic philosophy calls an ‘eternal truth’; that is, it does not have unconditioned validity before, beyond, and above the whole world, but only a relative and conditioned validity with respect to appearances alone. [AS enlarges on this, repeating things he has already said more than once, and then returns to his scolding;] But Fichte hadn’t an inkling of any of this. His only interest was in *proceeding from the subject*, which Kant had opted for ·only· so as to show the error of the previous way of *proceeding from the object* and turning the object into a thing in itself. But Fichte took proceeding from the subject to be the point of Kant’s book, and supposed that if he were to *outbid* Kant in this respect he would also *improve on* him. So he duplicated the mistake that earlier dogmatism made in the opposite direction, the very one that led Kant to write his critique. So nothing was changed with respect to the main point, and the old fundamental mistake of assuming a relation of ground and consequence between object and subject remained as before. . . . Just as if Kant never existed, the GP is for Fichte still what it was for all the scholastics, an

¹ [*sich in die Umstände schickenden Philosophen*; one translator has rendered this as ‘philosophers who concern themselves with the questions of the day’, which has something to be said for it.]

eternal truth. That is, just as eternal fate held sway over the gods of the ancients, 'eternal truths' still held sway over the God of the scholastics: metaphysical, mathematical, and metalogical¹ truths, including for some even the validity of the moral law. These 'eternal truths' didn't depend on anything; but God as well as the world existed by their necessity. Thus according to the GP (which is supposedly one of these eternal truths) the **I** is for Fichte the ground of the world—of the **not-I**—of the object, which is just its consequence and botched-up product. So he took care to avoid further testing or examining of the GP. What form of the GP did Fichte follow in deriving the **not-I** from the **I** (as a spider spins its web out of itself)? It has to be the GP with respect to being in space; for it is only with reference to space that some kind of sense and significance is retained by those laboured 'proofs' of how the **I** produces and fabricates the **not-I** from out of itself, this being the content of the most senseless—and just for that reason the most boring—book ever written.

So this Fichtean philosophy—otherwise not worth a mention—is interesting to us only as a recent converse of the ages-old materialism that was the most consistent way of proceeding from the object, as Fichte's was of proceeding from the subject. As materialism overlooked the fact that the subject was already immediately assumed with the simplest of objects, so Fichte overlooked the fact that with the subject (whatever he might want to call it) he had already assumed the object, because no subject is thinkable without one; and he also overlooked the fact that any *a priori* derivation, indeed any deduction at all, rests on a necessity, but all necessity rests solely on the GP. [AS develops this thought briefly but obscurely, then returns to his point about the two

errors that are 'converses' of each other.]

My procedure differs totally from both of these contrary blunders, because I proceed neither from the object nor from the subject but from *presentation* as the first fact of consciousness, for which the first and most essential fundamental form is division into object and subject, with the form of objects being the GP in its various shapes [see Glossary], each of which dominates its own class of presentations so completely that knowledge of that shape gives one knowledge of the nature of the entire class as well. . . . Before coming in Book II to aspects of this that concern every living being, we have first to consider the class of presentations that belongs to human beings alone, the matter of which is *concepts* and the subjective correlate of which is *reason*, just as the subjective correlate of the presentations so far considered was understanding and sensibility, which—unlike reason—are also attributable to all animals.

8. Reason

As if going from the direct light of the sun into the borrowed light of the moon, we now move from **a** the perceptual, immediate *presentation* which stands by itself and is its own warrant over to **b** *reflection*, to abstract discursive concepts of reason, all of whose *content* comes from and has reference to that perceptual kind of knowledge. As long as we confine ourselves to **a** the purely perceptual, all is clear, firm, and certain. There are no questions, doubts, or errors; we don't want anything more, can't have anything more; we find rest in perception, and satisfaction in the present. Perception is self-sufficient: whatever arose purely from it and stayed true to it can—like genuine works of art—never be wrong

¹ [used here as a technical term from the writings of one Catholic theologian.]

or with any passage of time refuted; because what it offers is not an opinion but the thing itself. But with **abstract knowledge**—with reason—doubt and error appear at the theoretical level, and concern and regret at the practical level. Whereas with perceptual presentation **illusion** momentarily distorts reality, with abstract presentations **error** can

- hold sway for millennia,
- throw its iron yoke over entire peoples,
- stifle the most noble stirrings of humanity, and
- allow even those whom it can't deceive to be fettered by its slaves and dupes.

Error is the enemy against which •the wisest minds of all times have conducted an unequal struggle, and mankind's only possessions are what •they have won from it. So it is good that we call attention to it, because we are already walking on the ground that is its domain. It is often said that one should track down the truth, even where no use can be seen for it, because some indirect use may show up where it is not expected;

and I want to add to this that

one should be just as diligent in uncovering and rooting out every error, even where no harm can be seen in it, since some indirect harm may show up where it is not expected;

for every error carries a poison within itself. What makes human beings lords of the earth is mind, knowledge, so there are no harmless errors. . . . And as a consolation to those who put their strength and life into the noble and difficult struggle against error, I can't help adding that—although while the truth is not established, error can pursue its game, like bats in the night—no truth that has been recognised and clearly and fully pronounced will again be suppressed,

leaving old errors to re-take their old territory; expecting them to do so is like expecting bats to drive the sun back to the east! That is the power of truth, whose victory is hard and laborious, but for that reason can't be snatched from it once it has been won.

In addition to the presentations that have been so far considered. . . .another cognitive power has arisen in human beings, alone among all inhabitants of the earth; an entirely new consciousness has dawned, called *reflection*. That name for it is apt, because it is in fact a re-appearance¹ of, and a derivative from, perceptual knowledge, though it has taken on a fundamentally different nature and character from perceptual knowledge, knows nothing of its forms, and even the GP—which holds sway over all objects—has in this case an utterly different shape [see Glossary]. This new and more powerful consciousness—this abstract reflection of whatever is intuitive in the non-perceptual concept of *reason*—is what gives human beings that character of *thoughtfulness* that so thoroughly distinguishes their consciousness from that of animals, and through which their entire earthly way of life turns out so differently from that of their *unreasoning* brothers. They surpass them by far in power and in suffering. Animals live only in the present; human beings live at the same time in the future and the past. Animals satisfy their momentary needs; human beings make elaborate arrangements for their future, indeed even for times they won't themselves experience. Animals are wholly captives to the impression of the moment, to the effect of the strongly felt motive; human beings are determined by abstract concepts, independently of the present; so they carry out projects that have been thought out in advance, or act in accordance with maxims, without regard for the environment or the chance

¹ [*Widerschein*, which might be translated as 'reflection', but obviously not here.]

impressions of the moment. For example, they

- can serenely make elaborate arrangements for their own death,
- can dissemble beyond any chance of being caught out, and carry their secret to the grave, and lastly
- have a real choice among several motives.

•Elaborating that last point: it is only *in abstracto* that motives, sitting side by side in present consciousness, can afford the knowledge that they are mutually exclusive, and so measure themselves against one another with respect to their power over the will. The one that wins this contest and produces a result is the *reflectively considered* decision of the will, and is a sure indication of that will's character. By contrast, present impressions control the animal: only the fear of present compulsion can curb its desire, until eventually this fear has become custom, and as such continues to determine it; this is called training. Animals sense and perceive; human beings also *think* and *know*. Both perform acts of the *will*. Animals communicate their sensations and attitudes through bearing and sounds; human beings communicate their thoughts—or conceal their thoughts—through language. Language is the first offspring and the necessary instrument of their reason, which is why *speech* and *reason* are signified by the same word in the Greek and Italian languages. . . .

[In this next sentence, *Vernunft* is the standard word for 'reason'; *Vernehmen* can be translated as 'hear', but can mean more than that, as AS will explain; and *Hören* simply means 'hear'.] The term *Vernunft* comes from *Vernehmen*, which is not synonymous with *Hören*, but refers to the internal awareness of thoughts communicated by words. Solely through the help of language, reason brings off its most important achievements, namely

- the concerted action of several individuals,
- the goal-directed collaboration of many thousands,

- civilization,
- the state;

and in addition to those,

- science,
- the storing up of earlier experiences,
- the uniting of common properties in one concept,
- the sharing of truth,
- the spread of error,
- thought and poetry,
- dogmas and superstitions.

Animals first learn of death when they die. A human being is aware of getting nearer to his death every hour, and this sometimes makes life a troublesome affair, even for someone who has not yet recognised constant destruction as a feature of all life. This is the main reason why human beings have a philosophies and b religions. But it is uncertain which of these has given rise to what we rightly esteem above all else in human action—freely willed rectitude and a generous disposition. What we find on this path as sure and legitimate offspring of just these two, and as products of reason, are on the contrary a the most fantastic opinions of the philosophers of various schools, and b the strangest and sometimes cruel practices of the priests of various religions.

It is the universal opinion of all times and of all nations that these manifold and far-reaching achievements spring from a common source, from the unique intellectual power that belongs distinctively to man and puts him ahead of the animals, which has been called reason, *ratio* [and he gives some Greek names for it]. And all human beings can very well •recognise expressions of this capacity, •tell what is rational, what irrational, •tell where reason enters the scene as opposed to other human capacities and properties, and, finally, •tell what is never to be expected of even the most clever animals, given their lack of it. Philosophers of all

ages pretty much agree about this general knowledge of reason, and emphasise some of its particularly important manifestations, such as

- mastery of the emotions and passions,
- the ability to conduct inferences,
- the ability to formulate general principles, including ones that are certain in advance of all experience,

and so on. But their accounts of what reason essentially is are all vacillating, imprecise, long-winded, without unity and focus. . . . This leads many of them to start from the opposition between reason and revelation, which has nothing to do with philosophy and only increases the confusion. It is very remarkable that no philosopher yet has rigorously traced all the uses of reason to one simple function that

- can be recognised in all of them,
- is the basis for explaining them all, and
- therefore constitutes the real inner nature of reason.

To be sure, the superb Locke in his *Essay Concerning Human Understanding* (II.xi.10-11) rightly presents **abstract general concepts** as the characteristic distinction between the animal and the human, and Leibniz wholly agrees with this in his *Nouveaux essais sur l'entendement humain*. But when Locke gets to his real account of reason in IV.xvii.2-3, he entirely loses sight of **that simple main characteristic** and slides into a vacillating, indefinite, incomplete specification of bits of it and derivatives of it. Leibniz follows suit at the corresponding point in his work, with greater confusion and unclarity. As for how badly Kant confused and falsified the concept of the nature of reason: I deal with this in detail in the Appendix of the present work. A survey of the mass of philosophical works appearing since Kant shows

that—just as entire peoples have to pay for the mistakes of their princes—the errors of great minds spread their harmful influence over entire generations and even centuries, growing and propagating, eventually into monstrosities. Just as

- the understanding has only *one* function, immediate grasp of the relation between cause and effect; and the perception of the real world, and all shrewdness, sagacity, and inventiveness, however multifarious their manifestations may be, are obviously nothing other than applications of that simple function; so also

- reason has *one* function, the formation of concepts; on the basis of which it is very easy—altogether self-evident—to explain all the phenomena that have been cited as distinguishing human from animal life.

The common distinction between ‘rational’ and ‘irrational’ is based entirely on the difference between employing and failing to employ that function.

9. Abstract concepts

Concepts form a unique class of presentations—utterly different from the perceptual presentations so far considered—that exist only in the human mind. So any knowledge we can get of their nature can never be perceptual or truly evident, but only abstract and discursive. . . . They can only be *thought*, not *perceived*, and only the effects that people produce by their means are objects of experience proper. Such are language, preconceived and planned action, and science, together with whatever results from all these. As an object of outer experience, speech is obviously nothing other than a highly perfected telegraphy,¹ communicating chosen

¹ [Telegraphy is the long-distance transmission of textual messages by some means other than sending a physical object bearing the message; e.g. flag semaphore.]

signs with the greatest speed and subtlety of nuance. But what do those signs mean? How does their interpretation happen? Do we perhaps, while the other person is speaking, at once translate his speech into imaginative pictures that instantaneously flash upon us, arrange and link themselves together (and acquire shape and colour) according to the words that are poured forth and according to their grammatical inflections? What a tumult would then be in our heads while we were listening to speech or reading a book! That is not at all how it happens. Here is how it does happen:

The sense of the speech is immediately registered, precisely and determinately grasped, usually with no mental images coming into it.

Here reason speaks to reason and keeps to its own domain; and what it communicates and receives are abstract concepts, **non-perceptual presentations**, which are formed once and for all and in relatively small number, yet concern, contain, and represent all the countless objects of the real world. This is the only way to explain why an animal can never speak or understand even if it shares with us the instruments for speech as well as perceptual presentations. Just because words signify the wholly unique class of **presentations whose subjective correlate is reason**, they are without sense and significance for animals. So language—just like •everything else that we ascribe to reason, and •everything that distinguishes human beings from animals—is to be explained in terms of this one simple source, namely concepts—abstract, non-perceptual, general presentations, not existing as individuals in time and space.

It is only in individual cases that we pass from concepts to perception, form mental images as perceptual *representatives of concepts*, though they are never adequate to them. They are specifically discussed in my treatise on the GP, and I shan't repeat that discussion here. . . .

Although concepts are wholly unlike perceptual presentations, they stand in a necessary relation to them; without this relation they would be nothing, so the relation constitutes their entire essence and existence. Reflection is necessarily a copying or replication of the perceptual world, but it is a special kind of copy in an entirely different material. Thus concepts may aptly be called presentations of presentations. The GP has likewise a shape of its own here. Just as

- the shape in which that principle holds sway within a class of presentations always constitutes and exhausts the entire nature of that class, considered as a class of presentations; so that time is through and through succession and nothing further, space through and through location and nothing further, matter through and through causality and nothing further; so also

- the entire nature of concepts, or of the class of abstract presentations, consists only in

the next phrase: *der Relation, welche in ihnen der Satz vom Grunde ausdrückt*

rendered by one translator as: the relation which the principle of sufficient reason expresses in them

and by another as: the relation within them that the principle of sufficient reason expresses

and meaning: ??

and as this is the relation to the ground of knowledge, the whole nature of the abstract presentation is simply and solely its relation to another presentation, which is its ground of knowledge. The latter can of course also be a concept or abstract presentation, and *its* ground of knowledge may be yet another concept, and so on. But this can't go on for ever: the series of grounds of knowledge has to terminate in a concept that is grounded in perceptual knowledge. For the entire world of reflection rests on the perceptual world

as its ground of knowledge. Whereas with any other kind of presentation the GP always demands a reference to another presentation of the same class, with abstract presentations it demands in the end a reference to a presentation from another class. . . .

It is generally held to be an essential property of a concept that it comprehends a number of things under itself, i.e. that a number of presentations stand in the relation of ground of knowledge to it; but this is wrong. It must always be possible for a concept to have this property, but when a concept does have it it's a derivative and secondary property, not an essential one. It comes from the fact that the concept is a presentation of a presentation, usually of a perceptual presentation, which can have temporal, spatial, and other determinations that are not at all thought in the concept; so that a number of presentations that differ in inessential respects can be thought through the same concept, i.e. subsumed under it. . . . There can be concepts through which only a single real object is thought, but they are still abstract and general presentations, in no way individual or perceptual ones. Such, for example, is someone's concept of a particular city, which he knows about only from its geography. While only this one city is thought through his concept, there *could be* several different cities that all fit it. Thus, it is not the case that

- a concept has generality because it is abstracted from a number of objects;

on the contrary,

- a number of things can be thought through the same concept because •the concept has generality, i.e. because• it is essential to the concept, as an abstract presentation of reason, that it does not determine anything individual.

From all this it results that every concept, just because it

is an abstract and non-perceptual and therefore somewhat indeterminate presentation, has what is called an extension or sphere, even when only one real object corresponds to it. We always find that the sphere of any concept has something in common with the spheres of others, i.e. that the same thing is partially thought in it as is thought in the others. •I emphasise 'partially'. If two concepts really are *two*, at least one of them contains something that is lacking in the other: every subject stands in this relation to its predicate. Recognising this relation is called *judging*. [AS now talks approvingly about the use of Euler circles to portray different relations among concepts' spheres, lists those relations and draws circles illustrating them, and says that they are a sufficient source for 'the entire doctrine of judgment' and for the rules governing syllogisms. They are also relevant, he adds, to 'the properties of judgments on which Kant based his supposed *categories* of the understanding', though he notes two exceptions (the hypothetical form, which 'involves a combination not of concepts but of judgments', and modality); and he promises to deal with these Kantian topics in the Appendix. He remarks that although this way of presenting the rules of concept-relations makes it easy to expound and explain various branches of logic,. . .]

•WHAT LOGIC IS (NOT) GOOD FOR•

. . . there is no need to burden our memory with them, since logic can never be of practical use but only of theoretical interest for philosophy. For although it can be said that

- logic relates to rational thinking as •the basso continuo relates to music, and also—a little less strictly—as •ethics relates to virtue or as •aesthetics relates to art,

it should be borne in mind

that •no artist has yet come into being through a study

of aesthetics, nor any noble character through a study of ethics, that •well-constructed and beautiful works were composed long before Rameau, and that •one does not need to be aware of the basso continuo in order to notice dissonances.

No more does one need to know logic to avoid being deceived by fallacious inferences. It must be conceded that

•the basso continuo is quite useful if not for the appreciation of music at least for the practice of musical composition; and that •aesthetics and even ethics are also of some practical use, ·though· to a far lesser degree and mainly in a negative way.

But not even that much can be claimed for logic, because it is merely abstract knowledge of what everyone already knows in concrete cases. One doesn't need it to avoid accepting fallacious lines of reasoning, any more than one needs to appeal to its rules to produce correct ones; and in actual thinking even the most learned logician sets them entirely aside. The explanation for this is as follows. Every science consists of a system of general (and thus abstract) truths, laws, and rules relating to objects of some kind. Individual cases that fall under them are determined in accordance with this always-valid general knowledge. For such an application of generalities is infinitely easier than starting from scratch to investigate the individual cases, because general abstract knowledge, once attained, is always more within our reach than the empirical investigation of individuals. But with logic the situation is exactly the reverse of this. Logic is general knowledge of reason's way of proceeding, learned through •reason's self-observation and •abstraction from all content, and expressed in the form of rules. But this way of proceeding is necessary and essential to reason; so reason when left to itself will never deviate from it. It is thus **easier** and **surer** in any particular case to •let

reason proceed according to its essence than to •confront it with knowledge—in the form of an externally provided law—abstracted from that procedure in the first place. It is **easier** because with the use of reason (this being the reverse of the situation in all other sciences) the procedure needed in a given case is always more within our reach than the general rule abstracted from it, because what does the thinking in us is reason itself. It is **surer** because it is easier •for an error to occur in the management of such abstract knowledge than it is •for a procedure of reason to occur that runs contrary to reason's essence, its nature. That's the source of the strange fact that whereas in other sciences the truth about an individual case is tested against the rule, in logic the rule has always to be tested against the individual cases. And when even the most practised logician notices that a single-case inference he has made disobeys some rule, he will look for something wrong in the rule rather than in the inference he has actually made. Laboriously applying general rules to test individual moves of whose soundness we are immediately and confidently conscious would be like consulting ·the science of· mechanics before moving, or physiology before digesting. . . .

Although it has no *practical* use, logic must be retained because it has *philosophical* interest as specialised knowledge of the organisation and activity of reason. As a closed, self-subsistent, internally complete, perfected, and perfectly sure discipline, it is entitled to be •treated on its own, independently of all other sciences, and to be •taught in universities. But it gets its true value, in the context of philosophy as a whole, in the consideration of knowledge and in particular of rational or abstract knowledge. [He **a** goes into some detail regarding *how* this topic should be handled as a matter of theory, **b** refers slightly to logic's 'only practical use', namely supplying *names* for the fallacies one

convicts one's disputation-opponent of making, and *c* says that downplaying logic's practical usefulness shouldn't lead to any reduction in the amount of study devoted to it. His reason for *c* is given in an intense display of contemptuous sarcasm:] These days, anyone who doesn't want to remain uncultivated in things that matter most, and be counted among the multitude of the ignorant mired in obtuseness, must study speculative [see Glossary] philosophy. That is because this 19th century is a philosophical one—which is not to say that it *has* philosophy or that philosophy is dominant in it, but rather that it is ripe for philosophy and just for that reason in need of it. This is a sign of high degree of civilisation, a fixed point on the cultural scale of the times. . . .

Little practical utility as logic can have, it was invented for a practical purpose. I understand its origination to be as follows. [He traces it to a need by disputatious ancient Greeks to bring some discipline into their proceedings; they took to stating the agreed starting-point for each individual dispute and then moved to propositions that were to be respected in all disputes. They handled this clumsily, and made only slow progress—evidenced by 'the clumsy and sprawling way logical truths were brought to light in many Platonic dialogues'—until Aristotle gathered it all together and put it in order.] As pleasure in disputation developed ever more among the Eleatics, Megarians, and Sophists, gradually growing almost to a mania, the confusion into which almost every dispute slid must have quickly made them sensitive to the need for a *methodical* procedure, as a guide to which a science of dialectic had to be sought. The first thing that must have been noticed is that, in disputation, both parties to the conflict had always to be in agreement on some proposition to which the points at issue were to be traced back. The beginning of methodical procedure con-

sisted in formally pronouncing these mutually acknowledged propositions and setting them at the head of an inquiry. But in the beginning, these propositions concerned only the matter in question in the inquiry. One soon became aware that, in the mode and manner of tracing things back to commonly acknowledged truth, and of deriving one's claims from it, one also adhered to certain forms and laws on which, although without antecedent agreement, one nonetheless also never disagreed; from this one saw that the latter had to be the procedure peculiar to reason itself, lying in its very essence, the formal element in an inquiry. While this was not exposed to doubt or disagreement, some pedantically systematic individual then slid into thinking that it would look truly fine, as the culmination of methodical dialectic, if the formal element in every disputation—this ever-lawful procedure of reason itself—were also pronounced in abstract propositions that were set at the head of an inquiry as the fixed canon for disputation as such. . . . Consciously desiring in this manner to acknowledge as law and formally pronounce what they had previously followed as if by tacit agreement or practised as if by instinct, they gradually found more or less perfect expressions for such logical principles as those of contradiction, sufficient ground, excluded middle, *de omni et nullo*. . . . They advanced only slowly and laboriously, and before Aristotle everything remained most incomplete; we can see this •in part from the clumsy and wide-ranging way in which logical truths were brought to light in many of the Platonic dialogues, but •even better from what Sextus Empiricus reports of the Megarians' disputes regarding the easiest and simplest logical laws and their laborious way of making them clear [reference given]. But Aristotle collected, organised, corrected what he found at hand, and brought it to an incomparably higher state of completion. When one considers how in this manner the course of Greek culture

had prepared the way and ushered in the work of Aristotle, one will be little inclined to believe the claim of Persian authors. . . .that Callisthenes discovered a complete logic among the Indians and passed it on to his uncle Aristotle!

It is easy to understand that in the dreary, gloomy Middle Ages the disputatious scholastic mind—lacking real knowledge and feeding only on formulas and words—found Aristotelian logic to be most welcome. . . ., quickly elevating it to the position of a centrepiece for all knowledge. Its prestige has lessened since then, admittedly, but down to our own time *that* logic has preserved the reputation of a self-subsistent, practical, and most necessary science. Even in our days the Kantian philosophy, the foundation-stone of which is logic, has again aroused new interest in it, which in this respect—i.e. as a means toward knowledge of the nature of reason—it certainly deserves.

While **truly strict inferences** arise from attending exactly to relations among the spheres of concepts, and only when sphere x is wholly contained in sphere y, and that in turn entirely wholly in sphere z, is x recognised as entirely contained in z, the **art of persuasion** involves casting a merely superficial glance at the relations among spheres of concepts and then one-sidedly defining them in accordance with one's intentions, usually in this way:

When the sphere of a concept x lies only partly in the sphere of y and partly in the entirely different sphere of z, the person passes x off as lying either entirely in y or entirely in z, depending on his purposes.

For example, when speaking of *passion*, he can choose to subsume this concept under that of •the greatest force, of the most powerful agency in the world, or under the concept of •the irrational, and the latter under that of impotence,

of weakness. The same procedure can be continued, and re-applied with every concept the discourse arrives at. The sphere of almost every a concept overlaps several others, each containing a part of the domain of the first within its own, but including b more as well; and the persuader allows only one of b the latter spheres of concepts to be highlighted, wanting to subsume a the first under it and neglecting or concealing the others. This stratagem is the basis for all the arts of persuasion, all the more subtle sophisms. [AS remarks that the officially listed sophisms are 'too heavy-handed for actual employment', and goes on to illustrate the procedure he has described. We can excuse ourselves from following this, because AS himself minimizes it: 'I hope that no-one is misled by this diagram into giving this minor casual discussion more importance than its nature allows'. His generalisation of it, however, is remarkable:] Fundamentally, most scientific, especially philosophical, deductions are not very different from this. How else could it be possible that so many things have been at various times not only erroneously accepted (for error as such has a different origin), but demonstrated and proved, and yet later found to be completely wrong: e.g. the philosophy of Leibniz and Wolff, Ptolemaic astronomy, the chemistry of Stahl, Newton's theory of colours, etc. etc.?

10. What knowledge is

Through all of this the question keeps arising: how then is *certainty* to be attained, how are *judgments* to be grounded, what is the nature of that *knowledge* and science?¹ These are valued as one of the three great advantages provided by reason, the other two being language and deliberate action.

¹ [certainty = *Gewissheit*, knowledge = *Wissen*, science = *Wissenschaft*]

Reason is feminine in nature: it can give only after it has received. On its own it has nothing but the empty forms of its operation. The only perfectly pure rational knowledge is that of the four principles to which I have attributed metalogical truth¹, namely the principles of identity, of contradiction, of excluded middle, and of sufficient ground for knowledge. For the rest of logic is not perfectly pure rational knowledge, because it presupposes the relations and combinations of the spheres of concepts; and concepts exist only because of perceptual presentations, reference to which constitutes concepts' entire nature. But this relationship doesn't involve concepts' particular content but only their existence in general; so logic as a whole can count as a pure rational science. In all the other sciences, reason gets its content from perceptual presentations:

- in mathematics from spatial and temporal relations that we are perceptually conscious of prior to all experience;
- in *pure* natural science—i.e. in what we know about the course of nature prior to all experience—from *a priori* knowledge of the law of causality and of its connection with those pure perceptions of space and time; and
- in all other sciences, content that isn't derived from the above-mentioned sources comes from experience.

What *Knowledge* [see Glossary] in general means is having under one's command, available for production at will, judgments that have beyond themselves a sufficient ground of knowledge, i.e. are true. Thus, abstract knowledge is the only Knowledge. So Knowledge is conditioned by reason, and we cannot strictly speaking say of animals that they *know* [*wissen*] anything, even though they have perceptual

knowledge, memory and just on that account imagination (which the fact of their dreaming additionally proves). We attribute consciousness to them, the concept of which—

although the word [Bewusstsein] is taken from Knowledge [*Wissen*]

—coincides with that of presentation generally, of whatever kind, so that we attribute life to plants but not consciousness. Thus Knowledge is abstract consciousness, fixing in concepts of reason things we have come to know in a different way.

11. *Feeling* as a negative concept

In this respect, then, the real opposite of *Knowledge* is *feeling*, which I therefore have to say something about here. The concept signified by the word 'feeling' has a totally negative content, namely, that something present in consciousness is *not* a concept, *not* an abstract bit of thinking by reason. This means that the inordinately broad sphere of the concept of feeling contains the most heterogeneous things, and to understand how they can be in the domain of one concept, you have to grasp that all they have in common is the **negative** respect of *not* being abstract concepts. For the most diverse—indeed, the most incompatible—elements lie peacefully side by side within that concept, for example:

- religious feeling,
- feeling of sexual desire,
- moral feeling,
- bodily feeling such as of touch, of pain, sense of colours, of sounds and their harmonies and dissonances,
- feeling of hatred, abhorrence, of self-satisfaction, of honour, of shame, of right, of wrong,

¹ [This refers to an earlier mention of 'fundamental laws of thought, or judgments of metalogical truth', not included in this version.]

•feeling for truth, aesthetic feeling, feeling of strength, weakness, health, friendship, love etc. etc. [AS adds as a 'most striking' example of the breadth of the concept of feeling the fact that it includes the *a priori* knowledge of space that is gained through understanding (not reason), and quotes confirmatory uses of 'feel' from some textbooks of geometry.]

So long as people don't have a proper view of the concept of feeling—don't recognise the single negative feature that is its entire essence—the concept is bound to generate constant misunderstandings and disputes, because of the breadth of its sphere and the corresponding thinness of its content.

Since we have in German the almost synonymous word *Empfindung* [= 'sensation'], it would be useful to appropriate that for bodily feelings as a sub-species.

What gave rise to this spread of the concept of feeling, so much greater than that of any other concept? No doubt the answer is as follows. All concepts. . . exist only for reason, have their origin in it. With concepts, therefore, we are already at a one-sided point of view; but from such a point of view what is near seems clear and is set down as positive, what is further off becomes confused and is soon regarded as merely negative. Thus

- each nation calls all others 'foreign',
- to the Greek all others are 'barbarians',
- to the Englishman all that is not England or English is 'continent' or 'continental',
- to the believer all others are 'heretics' or 'heathens',
- to the noble all others are 'commoners',
- to the student all others are 'philistines',

and so forth. Now, reason itself, strange as this may seem, is guilty of the same one-sidedness, indeed one might say of the same crude ignorance arising from vanity, for it classes under the single concept *feeling* every state of consciousness

that doesn't immediately belong to *its* manner of presentation, i.e. that is not an abstract concept. Since this didn't arise from thorough self-knowledge, reason has had to pay a price for it in the form of misunderstandings and aberrations within its own domain: a special *faculty of feeling* has been postulated, and theories of it are now being constructed!

12. Reason's advantages and disadvantages

. . . Since reason only brings back for Knowledge what it has gathered from elsewhere, it doesn't really enlarge our knowledge but merely gives it a different form: it enables us to know in abstract and general terms what we first took in intuitively, *in concreto*. But this is incomparably more important than it seems at first glance. For all secure preservation, all communicability, and all secure and far-reaching practical applications of knowledge depend on its having become Knowledge [see Glossary], abstract knowledge. Intuitive knowledge always concerns individual cases, applies only to what is nearest to hand, because sensibility and understanding can really only grasp one object at a time. So any continuing, complex, planned activity has to start from and be guided by principles, thus by abstract Knowledge. ·Consider this contrast·:

•On one hand, the understanding's knowledge of the relation of cause and effect is in itself much more complete, deeper, and more exhaustive than what can be thought about cause-effect *in abstracto*. The unaided understanding knows perceptually, immediately and completely what is going on in the workings of a lever, pulley, cog-wheel, and in the stability of an arch, etc.

•On the other hand, because of intuitive knowledge's confinement to the immediately present, mere understanding does not suffice for the construction of machines and buildings.

For this, reason has to enter the picture, setting abstract concepts in the place of perceptions, adopting them as its guide for operation, and meeting with success when this is done properly.

[AS repeats the point in term of further examples, saying that the full knowledge perception gives us of the nature of the parabola, hyperbola, spiral, and curves can't be applied to anything practical without the help of reason, e.g. what the differential calculus does with our knowledge of curves.]

Another peculiarity of our knowledge faculty can be mentioned here; it couldn't be brought in earlier, when the difference between perceptual and abstract knowledge hadn't yet been made perfectly clear. It is that spatial relations can't be directly carried over into abstract knowledge; but only temporal magnitudes, i.e. numbers, are suited for this.¹ Only numbers can be expressed in exactly corresponding abstract concepts; spatial magnitudes can't. The difference between the concept 1000 and the concept 10 is exactly the same as that between the two temporal magnitudes in perception: with 1000 we are thinking of a particular multiple of tens, into which we can resolve it as we please for temporal perception, i.e. count it. But between the abstract concept of a mile and that of a foot—without any perceptual presentation of the two and without the aid of numbers—there is no exact difference that corresponds to the magnitudes themselves. In each case some kind of spatial magnitude is thought, and if we want to distinguish them adequately we must either •get help from spatial perception (thereby leaving the domain of abstract knowledge) or •think the difference in numbers. If there is to be abstract knowledge of spatial relations, they must first to be translated into temporal relations, i.e. into numbers. That is why only arithmetic, not geometry, is the

general doctrine of magnitudes, and why geometry has to be translated into arithmetic if it is to be communicable, exactly determinate, and applicable to practical matters. A spatial relation can indeed be thought *in abstracto*, for example 'The sine increases as the angle does'; but numbers are needed for stating the magnitude of the relation between one increase and the other. [AS elaborates this point, saying that what 'makes mathematics [he means: other than arithmetic] so difficult' is the need to handle three-dimensional space with numbers and thus with one-dimensional time. He adds:] It is worth noting that

- whereas space is so very well suited to perception and, by way of its three dimensions, allows an easy survey even of its complex relations, but eludes abstract knowledge,

- time enters easily indeed into abstract concepts, but has very little to offer perception. Our perception of numbers in their element of mere time, without bringing space into it, barely reaches to 10; to get beyond that we have only abstract concepts, not further perceptual knowledge. By contrast, we connect exactly determined abstract concepts with every numeral and with all the algebraic symbols.

It may be noted in passing that **a** many minds find full satisfaction only in what they know perceptually. They are looking for a perceptual display of the grounds and consequences of existence in space; they aren't satisfied by a Euclidean proof or an arithmetical solution of a spatial problem. Whereas **b** other minds demand the abstract concepts that are alone useful for application and communication: they have patience and a memory for abstract propositions, formulas, long chains of inferences, and calculations whose symbols represent complicated abstractions. The **b** latter are looking for precision, the **a** former for perceptibility. This

¹ [The view that numbers are temporal is introduced abruptly here. But it was adumbrated at the start of chapter 4, and will be expounded shortly.]

difference lies in ·personal· character.

What gives Knowledge, abstract knowledge, its greatest value is its ability to be **a** communicated and **b** permanently preserved. Someone may have immediate perceptual knowledge, involving mere understanding, of the causal relations among changes and movements of natural bodies, and be entirely satisfied with this; but he can't communicate what he knows until he has fixed it in concepts. Perceptual knowledge is even sufficient for practical matters so long as the person puts his knowledge into practice

a entirely on his own, and

b while his perceptual knowledge is still alive,

but not when he requires **a** outside help or even **b** action of his own at different times— **b** is ruled out because it involves a pre-conceived plan. Thus for example a competent billiards player can have—merely in his understanding, merely through immediate perception—complete knowledge of the laws governing the impact of elastic bodies, and get along perfectly well with that. Whereas only a specialist in the science of mechanics has real Knowledge of those laws, i.e. a knowledge of them *in abstracto*. A purely intuitive knowledge by the understanding suffices for the construction of a machine if its inventor does the work **a** on his own, as is often seen in the case of talented craftsmen ignorant of all science. By contrast, as soon as **a** several persons and some complex activity on their part, **b** occurring at various points in time, are needed for the completion of a mechanical work—a machine, or a building—whoever is directing the activity needs to have designed the plan *in abstracto*, and it is only with the aid of reason that such collaborative activity is possible. It is noteworthy, however, that with that first kind of activity, where a single person is to do the

job without interruption, he can often be downright *hindered* by Knowledge, the application of reason. In billiards, in fencing, in tuning an instrument, in singing: here perceptual knowledge must *directly* guide the activity; passing the guidance through reflection makes it unsure by dividing the person's attention and confusing him. That is why savages and crude persons, who are very little accustomed to thinking, engage in many physical activities—such as bull-fights, marksmanship with arrows etc.—with an assurance and swiftness that the thoughtful European never achieves because his reflective consideration makes him waver and hesitate: he tries, for example, to discover the right spot or the right moment on the basis of their equidistance from the extremes of two wrong ones; whereas the man of nature hits on it immediately, without reflecting on alternate routes. And it is no help to me to be able to state *in abstracto*, in degrees and minutes, the angle at which I need to set the razorblade if I don't know it intuitively, i.e. don't have it in my grasp. The application of reason is similarly disturbing to an understanding of physiognomy, which also has to occur immediately by way of the understanding. It is said that the expression, the meaning of the features, can only be *felt*, i.e. can't be put into abstract concepts. Every man has his direct intuitive method of physiognomy and pathognomy,¹ yet one man understands more clearly than another these *signatura rerum* [Latin for 'signs of how thing are']. But it is not possible for an abstract science of physiognomy to be taught and learned; for the distinctions of difference here are so fine that concepts cannot reach them; therefore abstract Knowledge is related to them as a mosaic is to a painting by an old master; however fine-grained the mosaic is, the boundaries of its stones are still there, preventing a *continuous* passage

¹ [The practice of inferring things about someone's character and emotions from the look of his face.]

from one colour to another. So also concepts, with their rigidity and sharp boundaries, however finely they might be split up through chains of definitions, can never reach the subtle modifications of the perceptual that are involved in my chosen example of physiognomy.

This characteristic of concepts—by which they resemble the stones of a mosaic, and by virtue of which they can only asymptotically approach perception—is also the reason why good art is never accomplished by their means. If a singer or instrumental performer tries to use reflection to guide his performance, it remains dead. The same applies to composers, to painters, even to poets. Concepts always remain unfruitful for art: they can direct only the technical side of it; their domain is science. Why all genuine art comes from perceptual knowledge, never from concepts, is something I'll investigate in more detail in Book III.

Even with respect to conduct, to pleasantness in interpersonal dealings, concepts are useful only in the negative respect of preventing gross outbursts of egoism and brutality. Thus good manners are their commendable outcome. But that which is attractive, gracious, captivating in one's conduct, one's tender and amicable aspect, should not come from concepts; if it does, 'they feel the intention and are put out of tune' [quoted from Goethe].

... Given the press of life, with its call for quick decisions, bold action, prompt and firm engagement, there is indeed need for reason; but when it gets the upper hand, and creates indecisiveness by hindering and confusing the pure understanding's intuitive, immediate discovery and simultaneous adoption of the right course of action, it easily ruins everything.

Finally, virtue and saintliness come not from reflection but from the inner depth of the will and its relation to knowledge. This topic belongs to an entirely different place

in the present work, but I'll allow myself here to make one point. A whole nation's reason can retain the same ethical dogmas, while the individuals in it act differently from one another; and action comes from feelings, i.e. not from concepts but from the person's ethical character. Dogmas are the concern of idle reason, and action goes its way independently of them, usually guided not by abstract maxims but by unspoken ones whose expression is the whole person himself. . . . This is not meant to deny that the application of reason is needed for maintaining a virtuous way of life, but only to deny that it is the *source* of such a life. Its function is a subordinate one:

- sticking by decisions that have been made,
- holding up maxims for defence against momentary weakness and for consistency in action.

The same thing applies in art, where reason contributes nothing to the main thing, but supports its execution, because genius is not always on call, and the work still needs to be completed in all its details and rounded out as a whole.

13. A theory of humour

All this. . . shows clearly that although abstract Knowledge is a reflection of perceptual presentation and is grounded in it, it doesn't fit it so snugly that it could everywhere take its place; indeed, it never exactly corresponds to it. Thus as we have seen, many human accomplishments are possible only with the aid of reason and reflective procedures, but some succeed better when reason is kept out of them.

This lack of fit between **a** perceptual knowledge and **b** abstract knowledge, by virtue of which **b** one only approximates to **a** the other as mosaic does to painting, is the cause of a most remarkable phenomenon which pertains exclusively to human nature (as reason does); there have

been repeated attempts to explain it, none of them adequate. I am talking about **laughter**. Because of the facts about the source of it, I have to discuss this here, although it yet again slows our course.¹

Laughter always arises solely from a suddenly perceived lack of fit [*Kongruenz*] between a concept and the real objects that have been thought through it in some respect or other; and laughter itself is merely the expression of this lack of fit.

This often occurs when two or more real objects are thought through *one* concept and its identity—its *oneness*—is carried over to them, but where they are otherwise so entirely different that it becomes strikingly apparent that the concept fits them in only a partial respect. But it just as often occurs when someone suddenly becomes aware of how a single real object fails to fit in one respect a concept that it is rightly subsumed under in another. The more correct the subsumption of such actual realities under a concept in one respect, and the greater and more glaring their lack of fit with it in another, the more laughable the contrast is. All laughter is thus occasioned by paradoxical and therefore unexpected subsumption, whether this is expressed in words or in actions. This is in brief the correct explanation of what causes laughter.

I shan't pause here to relate any anecdotes, as examples to **a** illustrate my explanation. For it is so simple and graspable that it doesn't need them; and everything laughable that the reader recalls is equally suitable as **b** evidence for it. But my explanation is both **b** confirmed and **a** illustrated by an account of two types of things that cause laughter, the difference between the two coming straight out of that explanation. They are these.

•**Wit**: The person knows about two or more very different real objects, perceptual presentations, that fall under one concept, and he uses the oneness of this concept to identify them with one another, doing this deliberately.

•**Folly**: The person has the concept in his knowledge, and goes from it to *Realität* and to operation on that, to action: he treats in the same manner objects that are all thought in that concept but are otherwise fundamentally different, and he is surprised, astonished, when it becomes obvious how different they are.

Accordingly, anything laughable is either **a** a witty idea or **b** a foolish action, depending on whether the person goes **a** from discrepancies between objects to conceptual identities or **b** the reverse of that; in **a** one case always deliberately, in **b** the other never deliberately but from forces outside ·his consciousness· . . .

Pedantry is a kind of folly. It arises from the person's having so little trust in his own understanding that he won't rely on it for immediate knowledge of what is right in particular cases, and accordingly puts it altogether under the control of reason and avails himself of that everywhere, i.e. always tries—in life, in art, even for ethically good behaviour—to adhere strictly to general concepts, rules, maxims. And so we get pedantry's characteristic attachment to form, to style, to expressions and words, which for the pedant take the place of the heart of things. Here then the lack of fit between concepts and *Realität* is soon shown, how concepts never come down to the level of the individual, and how their generality and rigid definiteness can never exactly fit the subtle nuances and manifold modifications of reality. With his general maxims, the pedant thus almost always comes up

¹ [yet again? AS regarded chapter 11 also as an interruption; see the first paragraph of chapter 14..]

short in life, shows himself to be dull-witted, insipid, useless: in art, for which concepts are unfruitful, what he produces is lifeless, stiff, and mannered. [This paragraph attacks pedantry with no further mention of its being folly, or being laughable; similarly for what comes next. AS gets back on track in the final paragraph of this chapter.]

Even in an ethical respect, the intention to act rightly or nobly cannot always be carried out in accordance with abstract maxims, because in many cases the infinitely fine-grained nature of the circumstances requires the right choice to issue immediately from the person's character. Applying merely abstract maxims ·won't help, because it·

- yields wrong results, because of only halfway fitting the circumstances, and
- cannot be carried out, because the maxims don't precisely fit the person's stubbornly retained individual character.

Inconsistencies then result.

We cannot entirely clear Kant of the charge of encouraging moral pedantry, because he makes it a condition of the moral worth of an action that it must come from purely reason-based abstract maxims, with no ·input from· inclination or a passing emotion.

When, especially in political affairs, there is talk of 'doctrinaires', 'theoreticians', 'scholars' etc., what is meant are *pedants*, i.e. people who know things very well *in abstracto* but not *in concreto*. Abstraction consists in thinking away the more fine-grained features ·of a situation·; but in practical matters a great deal rests precisely on them.

To complete this theory, I need to mention a degenerate species wit, namely wordplay, pun,¹ with which we can bracket ambiguity, *l'équivoque*, the main use of which is for

obscenity (smut). Just as

- wit forces two very different real objects under a single concept, so
- a pun brings different concepts under a single word that just *happens* to express them both.

The pun involves the same ·one-against-two· contrast, but in a fainter and more superficial way, because it has originated not from the essence of things but from a mere accident of nomenclature. . . .

14. The form of science. Perception vs. proof

From all of these manifold considerations, through which I hope to have made entirely clear the difference between

- reason's** way of knowing, Knowledge, concepts and
- immediate knowledge in purely sensory mathematical perception, and the **understanding's** grasp of things

and the relation between these, and from the discussions in passing of *feeling* and *laughter* [chapters 11 and 13] that I was almost inescapably led into by consideration of that remarkable relation between our ways of knowing, I now return to further discussion of science, as the third benefit that reason brings to humanity (the other two being speech and deliberate action). I shall consider science in connection with its form, the foundation of its judgments, and its content.

·THE FORM OF SCIENCE·

We have seen that no Knowledge [see Glossary]—with the sole exception of the foundation of pure logic—has its origin in reason itself; rather, it is obtained from elsewhere as perceptual knowledge and is then deposited in reason, where it becomes an entirely different kind of knowledge, the

¹ [AS expresses this without any German word, using only the French *calembour* and the English *pun*.]

abstract kind. All *Knowledge*, i.e. all knowledge that has been raised to the level of consciousness *in abstracto*, relates to genuine science as a fragment to the whole. Every person has acquired through experience—through the individual matters that are made available to him—some Knowledge concerning many kinds of things. But only someone who tries to get complete knowledge *in abstracto* concerning some species of objects is aiming at *science*.¹ He needs a concept to mark out that species. So at the head of every branch of science there stands a concept. . . ., such as the concept of

- spatial relations,
- the workings of inorganic bodies,
- the character of plants or animals,
- the successive changes on the surface of the earth,
- changes in the human race as a whole,
- the structure of a language,

and so on. If science tried to get knowledge of its subject-matter by examining *one at a time* all the things that fall under its top concept, wanting to get knowledge of them all in that way, then **(i)** no human memory would suffice for this and **(ii)** there would be no way to be certain of completeness. So science makes use of the property of conceptual spheres discussed above, namely that some of them enclose others; it proceeds mainly to the broader spheres that lie within the concept of its topic in general. When the relations of these spheres to each other have been determined, all that is thought in them is also generally determined, and can now be more and more precisely determined by the marking out of smaller and smaller concept-spheres. In this way a science can take in its subject-matter completely. This path that it takes toward knowledge, namely, from the general to the particular, distinguishes it from ordinary Knowledge;

so an essential and characteristic mark of science is its systematic form. An inescapable condition of learning any science is knowing how its most general conceptual spheres are inter-related, i.e. knowing its highest principles. How far to go from these to more particular principles is a matter of choice, and does not affect how grounded one's learning is but only its scope.

The number of higher principles to which all the others are subordinated differs greatly in the different sciences, so that in some there is more a subordination, in others more b coordination. In this respect, the a former make more demands on the judgment, the b latter more on the memory. The scholastics knew that because inference requires two premises, no science can proceed from a single higher principle that isn't derived from others that are still higher; each must have several, or at least two. The strictly classificatory sciences—zoology, botany, and even physics and chemistry inasmuch as they reduce all inorganic operation to a few basic forces—have the greatest amount of a subordination. History, on the other hand, really has none; since what is general in it consists only in a survey of the major periods, from which no particular events can be *derived*; here the particular is a subordinated to the general only temporally; conceptually they are b coordinated. So strictly speaking, history is indeed Knowledge but not science. In mathematics in its Euclidean treatment, the axioms are the only indemonstrable higher principles, and all demonstrations are strictly subordinated to them step by step. However, this treatment is not essential to it [i.e. to mathematics, here meaning geometry], and in fact every theorem introduces its own new spatial construction that is independent of the preceding theorems and can be known in its own terms, within that

¹ [Reminder: 'science' translates *Wissenschaft*, and *Wissen* is translated by 'Knowledge' with a capital K (see glossary).]

pure perception of space in which even the most complicated construction is really as immediately evident as the axiom. I'll say more about this later. In the meantime: every mathematical proposition is a general truth that applies to countless individual cases, and it is essential to mathematics that there is a step-by-step path from simple propositions to the complex ones that are traced back to them. Thus mathematics is in every respect a science.

A science's formal perfection consists in its having as much **a** subordination and as little **b** coordination of propositions as possible. Accordingly, scientific talent in general is skill in **a** subordinating conceptual spheres in such a way that, as Plato repeatedly urged, a science does not consist merely in **•**one general item with a huge spread of others lying side by side under it, but in **•**a gradual descent of knowledge from the most general to the particular through intermediate concepts and divisions. In Kant's terms, this means doing equal justice to the laws of homogeneity and specification. However, just because this is what constitutes real *·*formal*·* perfection in a science, it follows that science's goal is not *greater certainty*—which can just as well be had with even the most fragmentary knowledge of particulars—but making Knowledge easier through its form, and making possible the perfection of Knowledge, also through its form. So it is a prevalent but perverse opinion that the scientific character of knowledge consists in greater certainty; and equally false is the claim—drawn from that one—that only mathematics and logic are sciences in the strict sense of the word, because only in them, on account of their completely *a priori* nature, is there incontrovertible certainty. This advantage is indeed not to be denied them; but it gives them no particular claim to a scientific character, which lies not in certainty but in the systematic *form* of knowledge, grounded in stepwise descent from the general to the particular.

*·*THE FACULTY OF JUDGMENT*·*

This specially scientific path of knowledge from the general to the particular has the consequence that much in the sciences is based on derivation from antecedent propositions, and thus on proofs; and this has given rise to the old error of supposing that only what has been proved is perfectly true, and every truth needs a proof. Whereas, on the contrary, every proof needs an unproved truth that ultimately supports it. . . . So **•**a truth that is grounded in an immediate way is as much preferable to **•**one grounded in proof as **•**water from a spring is preferable to **•**water from an aqueduct. Perception—whether pure *a priori* perception like that of mathematics, or empirical *a posteriori* perception such as is the basis for all the other sciences—is the spring from which all truth flows and the foundation of all science. (The only exception to this is logic, based on reason's non-perceptual but still immediate knowledge of its own laws.) Not proved judgments or their proofs, but judgments drawn immediately from perception and based on it without any proof: these are in science what the sun is in the solar system. For from them issues all light, which illuminates the others so that they in turn give light. Grounding the truth of such primary judgments directly in perception—raising such strongholds of science up out of the vast multitude of real things—is the work of *the faculty of judgment*, which is the capacity for taking what is known through **a** perception and translating it, accurately and exactly, into **b** abstract consciousness; so it is the mediator between **a** understanding and **b** reason. Only **extraordinary and exceptional strength of judgment** in an individual can really advance the sciences. **Merely sound reason** is all one needs to be able to infer some propositions from others, to conduct proofs and reach conclusions; but judgment *·*goes far beyond that:

It

sets down and consolidates **a** what is perceptually known in **b** concepts suited for reflection, so that on the one hand •what is common to many real objects is thought through one concept, and on the other hand •their differences are thought through just as many different concepts; so that different things are known and thought as different, despite partial agreement, and identical [see Glossary] things are known and thought as identical, despite partial difference; all according to the purpose and concern that is dominant at the moment.·

Lack of judgment is simple-mindedness. The simple-minded person fails sometimes to recognise the partial or relative difference in things that are in one respect identical, sometimes the identity in things that are relatively or partially different.

Incidentally, Kant's division into **c** 'reflecting judgment' and **a** 'subsuming judgment' can be understood in terms of this explanation of judgment. It's a division between **c** cases where the judgment passes from objects of perception to concepts and **a** cases where it goes in the opposite direction, in each case still mediating between understanding's perceptual and reason's reflective knowledge.

·PERCEPTION VS. PROOF·

No truth could be brought forth just by inferences alone; the need to ground truth through inferences is always only relative, indeed subjective [presumably meaning: 'always depends on the situation and the character of the person who has the need']. Since all proofs are inferences, what is first to be sought for a new truth is not proof but *immediate* evidentness, and only while this is lacking is a proof to be constructed as a temporary expedient. No science can be proved all the way through, any more than a building can stand on air; a science's proofs must all lead back to something perceptual and thus not provable. For the entire world of reflection

rests on and is rooted in the perceptual world. All ultimate (i.e. original) evidentness is perceptual evidentness. . . . So it is either empirical evidentness or grounded in perception *a priori* of the conditions of possible experience; so either way it provides only immanent and not transcendent knowledge [i.e. knowledge of what is *in*, not what is *above*, the experienced world]. Every concept has its value and its existence only in its relation—perhaps highly mediated—to a perceptual presentation. What holds for concepts holds also for the judgments composed from them and for entire sciences. So it must be possible somehow to know *directly*—without proofs or inferences—every truth that is arrived at through inferences and communicated through proofs. [Acknowledging that this is hard to do with 'complicated mathematical propositions', AS says that he stands by his position in relation to them too, and says he'll deal with mathematical proofs in detail, which he does in the next chapter.]

There is frequent lofty talk about sciences that rest completely on valid inferences from sure premises, and are therefore incontrovertibly true. But purely logical chains of inference, however true the premises, will never do more than clarify and elaborate what the premises already contain, making explicit what was already there implicitly. The celebrated sciences that people have in mind ·when they talk this way· are mainly the mathematical ones, especially astronomy.

(i) But astronomy's certainty stems from its being grounded in a perception of space that is given *a priori* and is thus infallible. . . . In addition to mathematically-defined spatial relations, astronomy involves

- only one natural force, gravity, which acts between two bodies exactly in proportion to their masses and the square of the distance between them, and
- the law of inertia, assured *a priori* since it follows from

the law of causality, and (lastly) along with that

- the empirically given fact of the movement impressed on each of these masses from the start.

That is the whole raw material of astronomy; and through its simplicity and certainty it leads to conclusions that are solid and—because of the size and importance of its objects—most interesting. For example, if I know the mass of a planet and the distance of its satellite from it, I can use Kepler's second law to calculate with assurance what the satellite's period of revolution is. The calculation involves working out what velocity is neither •so large that the satellite flies away from the planet nor •so small that it collapses into the planet.

Thus only on such a geometrical foundation, i.e. by means of a perception *a priori*, and only by application of a natural law besides, can inferences get anywhere; for they are mere bridges (so to speak) leading from one perceptual result to another. No progress can be made with bare and pure inferences, following the exclusively logical path.

(ii) The origin of the first basic truths in astronomy is really induction, i.e. gathering what is given in many perceptions into one valid and immediately grounded judgment. On the basis of this, hypotheses are subsequently formed, the empirical confirmation of which. . . yields a proof of the initial judgment. For example, the apparent movement of the planets is known empirically: after many false hypotheses about the spatial interconnection of these movements (planetary orbits), **the correct one** was finally found, and then the laws that it follows (Kepler's laws), and finally also its cause (universal gravitation); and the empirically established agreement of all the observed cases with the totality of those hypotheses and their consequences (that is, induction) made them completely certain. Discovery of **the correct hypothesis** was a matter of judgment, which accurately took in the given facts and expressed them accordingly. The truth of

the hypothesis could be confirmed by Induction, i.e. multiple perception; but it could also be grounded immediately, through a single empirical perception, if only we could travel freely through the realms of space and had telescopic eyes. Consequently, here too, inferences are not the essential and single source of knowledge, but always in actuality merely a crutch.

(iii) A third and last example—a quite different one—is the following. Even so-called 'metaphysical truths', like the ones Kant parades in his *Metaphysical Foundations of Natural Science*, don't owe their evidentness to proofs. If something is *a priori* certain, we know it *immediately*; as the form of all knowledge, it is known to us with the greatest necessity. For example, that matter persists—i.e. can neither come into nor go out of existence—we know immediately as a negative truth:

- our pure perception of space and time provides the possibility of **movement**; and
- our understanding provides, through the law of causality, the possibility of **change in form and quality**; but
- the forms of possible presentation don't provide for matter's **coming into or going out of existence**.

So the truth that *matter persists* has been evident always, everywhere, and to everyone, and has never been seriously doubted; and that couldn't be the case if it could be known only through a proof as difficult—and as like walking on the points of needles—as Kant's. And anyway (as I explain in the Appendix, chapter 88) I have found it to be mistaken, and I have shown above that the persistence of matter is to be derived not from time's contribution to the possibility of experience of time but from space's. The real grounding of all truths called 'metaphysical' in this sense—i.e. of abstract expressions of the necessary and general forms

of knowledge—cannot lie in further-back abstract propositions, but only in immediate awareness of the forms of presentations, announcing itself *a priori* through necessary statements that can't be refuted. If you want to give a proof of them, it would have to consist in demonstrating that the truth to be proved is already contained, either as a part or as a presupposition, in some truth that is not in doubt. So, for example, I have shown that all empirical perception already contains an application of the law of causality; so knowledge of that law is a pre-condition of all experience, and can't be first given and conditioned by experience, as Hume claimed.

Proofs are generally not so much for ·instructing· those who want to learn as for ·correcting· those who want to dispute. ·Some of· the latter stubbornly deny all immediately grounded insight; but truth is consistent with itself from every angle; so these ·disputatious· people need to be shown that what they are accepting under one aspect, mediately, is the very thing that they are denying under another aspect, immediately; ·using a proof· to show them the logically necessary connection between what they deny and what they accept.

Furthermore, scientific form—the subordination of everything particular under something general, and upward to ever higher levels of generality—has the consequence that the truth of many propositions is grounded only logically, i.e. through their dependence on other propositions, and thus through inferences that function as proofs. But let it not be forgotten that the role of this entire ·scientific· form is only to make it easier •to get knowledge, not •to achieve greater certainty. It is easier to recognise the nature of an animal on the basis of the species to which it belongs, and so on upwards through genus, family, order, class, than to investigate the particular animal on its own. But the truth of any proposition arrived at through inferences depends

ultimately on a proposition that rests not on inference but on perception. Perception would be altogether preferable to the inferential procedure if only it were always as easily available. For any derivation on the basis of concepts risks many errors, because of the manifold overlapping of their spheres (as shown above) and the fluctuating content of many of them. Many 'proofs' of false doctrines and sophisms of all kinds are examples of this. [He elaborates this a little, in terms of the theory of syllogisms.]

Consequently, **a** immediate evidentness is far preferable to **b** proved truth, and **b** the latter is acceptable only when **a** the former is too remote; and *not* where **a** the former is at least as easily available as **b** the latter. Thus, we saw that in the case of logic, where in each single case immediate knowledge lies nearer to hand than deduced scientific knowledge, our thinking is always led by immediate knowledge of the laws of thought, with ·the science of· logic left unused.

15. Mathematics. Explanation

If now with our conviction

- that perception is the first source of all evidentness, and absolute truth is an immediate or mediated reference to it alone, and
- that the shortest path to truth is always the most sure, because all interposition of concepts brings exposure to many deceptions,

we turn to *mathematics*, as it was presented by Euclid as a science and has remained such to the present day, we can't help finding the path it follows to be strange, even perverse. We require every case of logical grounding to be traced back to a perceptual grounding; whereas mathematics has taken a lot of trouble to throw out the unique •perceptual evidentness that is available everywhere and replace it with •logical

evidentness. We have to see this as being like someone who amputates his legs so as to walk with crutches, or like the prince in ·Goethe's· *The Triumph of Sensitivity* who flees from the real beauty of nature so as to enjoy theatrical scenery that imitates it!

I must here recall what I said in chapter 6 of my treatise on the GP, and assume that it is fresh and present in the reader's memory, so that I may pick up from there without again expounding the difference between

a the mere ground of *knowledge* of a mathematical truth, which can be provided logically, and

b the ground of *being*, which is the immediate interconnection of the parts of space and time, which we can know only perceptually, and insight into which alone guarantees true satisfaction and grounded knowledge,

and the fact that mere grounds of knowledge remain always on the surface, and can indeed provide Knowledge *that* something is the case, but none as to *why* it is.

·WHAT IS WRONG WITH EUCLID·

Euclid followed the **a** ground-of-knowledge path, to the obvious detriment of the science. Right at the beginning, for example,

where he was to show once and for all how the angles and sides of triangles determine one another, and stand to each other in the relation of ground and consequent, which they do in **b** accordance with the form belonging to the GP in pure space, which—here as everywhere—creates the necessity that something is as it is,

what he does is to argue **a** that something is as it is because something entirely different from it is as *it* is! Instead of providing a grounded insight into the essence of triangles, he presents some disparate, arbitrarily chosen propositions

about triangles and provides a logical **a** ground of knowledge for them, through laborious logical proofs following the principle of contradiction. Instead of exhaustive knowledge of these spatial relations, all we get are some of consequences that he has chosen to tell us about. Our situation is like that of someone who has been shown the various *effects* of a mechanical artifice but told nothing about its *inner structure and workings*.

Forced by the principle of contradiction, we have to grant that everything demonstrated by Euclid is the case, but we don't learn *why* it is the case. We get something like the uncomfortable feeling of having witnessed a sleight of hand, and in fact most of Euclid's proofs are remarkably like that. In nearly all of them the truth enters by the back door, following *per accidens* [see Glossary] from some secondary circumstance. It is often a *reductio ad absurdum*, which shuts all the doors one after the other, leaving only one open, through which we therefore have to enter. Often, as with the Pythagorean theorem, lines are drawn without our knowing why. It is afterwards revealed that they were traps to capture the assent of the student, who now has to grant in amazement something whose inner connection remains utterly incomprehensible to him—so much so that he can study the whole of Euclid without •gaining any real insight into the laws of spatial relations, merely •learning by heart some of their consequences. This strictly empirical and unscientific knowledge is like that of a doctor who knows about sicknesses and remedies for them but doesn't know how the two are connected. This is all the upshot of someone's capriciously rejecting the kind of grounding and evidentness that belong to a species of knowledge, forcibly replacing them with a kind that is essentially foreign to it.

In other respects, Euclid's procedure has earned all the admiration it has received over so many centuries, to the

extent that his way of treating mathematics was declared to be the pattern for all scientific exposition, so that all the other sciences tried to model themselves on it (though they have subsequently retreated from this, without much knowing why). Yet I can only see the Euclidean method in mathematics as a brilliant piece of perversity. But when a great error—in life or in science—is intentionally and methodically carried out with universal applause, it is always possible to track its source to the then-prevalent philosophy.

[AS proceeds to make good on that, with a lengthy account of the ancient Greeks' preoccupations with error and its sources, and with doubts about the reliability of sense-perception, leading them to 'jump' to the conclusion that only logical thinking can be trusted. Hence Euclid. He continues:] His method held sway through the centuries, and was bound to, so long as pure perception *a priori* was not distinguished from empirical perception. . . . It wasn't until 2000 years later that Kant's doctrine, which is destined to make such great changes in all the knowledge, thought, and efforts of the European nations, led to a similar change in mathematics as well. For after we have learned from this great mind that our perceptions of space and time are

- completely different from empirical perceptions,
- entirely independent of all sense-impressions,
- conditioning them, not conditioned by them,
- a priori* and thus not at all liable to sense-deception,

then, and only then, we can see that Euclid's logical treatment of mathematics is a useless precaution, a crutch for sound legs; that it is like a wanderer at night who mistakes a brightly lit and solid path for water, is careful not to walk on it, and steadily walks the rough ground beside it, always content to keep to the edge of the supposed water. [AS develops this a little, and concludes:] Keeping to the ground peculiar [see Glossary] to mathematics, we get the

great advantage that Knowledge *that* something is the case is henceforth one with Knowledge of *why* it is the case; whereas the Euclidean method completely separates the two and gives us knowledge only of the former, not the latter. [He applaudingly quotes Aristotle's insistence that *that* should always be accompanied by *why*; gives an example 'That the mercury stands at 28 inches in a Torricellian tube is a poor example of Knowledge if it is not accompanied by the fact that it is held there by the counterweight of the air'; and characterises some of Euclid's results as revealing 'occult qualities' [see Glossary] of circles and triangles.]

To improve the method of mathematics, the main need is to drop the prejudice that •proved truth has an advantage over •what is known perceptually, or that •logical truth based on the principle of contradiction has an advantage over •metaphysical truth, which is immediately evident and to which the pure perception of space belongs.

·THE STATUS OF THE GP·

What is most certain, yet always inexplicable, is the content of the GP. For that in its various shapes [see Glossary] signifies the universal form of all our presentations and items of knowledge. All explanation consists in tracing things back to it, showing in the single case the linking of presentations that is expressed in general terms by it. So it is the principle of all explanation, and therefore can't itself be explained; nor does it need to be, for every explanation presupposes it and has meaning only through it. But none of its shapes has primacy over the others; the GP is equally certain and unprovable as a statement about the ground of

- a being,
- becoming,
- acting, or
- b knowing.

The relation of ground to consequence, in any one of its shapes, is a necessary one; indeed it is the origin as well as the sole meaning of the concept of necessity. The only necessity is that of the consequence given the ground, and every ground leads necessarily to its consequence. Thus just as surely as the consequence expressed in the conclusion of an inference flows from the **b** ground of knowledge given in the premises, equally surely the **a** ground of being in space conditions its consequence in space; if I know through perception the relation between the latter two,¹ then that certainty is just as great as any logical certainty. But each geometrical *theorem* expresses such a relation just as well as any one of the twelve *axioms* of Euclid; it is a metaphysical truth and, as such, is as immediately certain as the principle of contradiction itself. [He develops this point along lines we have already seen, scolding Euclid for giving a privilege to his axioms, which] are no more immediately evident than any other geometrical proposition, but only simpler because of their narrower content.

When a criminal is interrogated, **b** his statements are put on record so as to judge their truth from their consistency. But this is a mere stop-gap, which the authorities don't use when they can **a** immediately examine the truth of each of his statements on its own, especially as he might consistently lie from the beginning. But the **b** former method is the one Euclid used to examine space. He was right in supposing that . . . no single spatial determination could be other than it is without contradicting all the others; but his procedure is a very burdensome and unsatisfying detour, preferring **b** mediated knowledge to equally certain **a** immediate knowledge. [He winds up with some remarks about the harm this does to students of geometry.]

·ARITHMETIC·

It is in any case noteworthy that this method of proof has been applied only to geometry and not to arithmetic. In arithmetic the truth is made evident only through *perception*, which here consists merely in counting. For the perception of numbers occurs in *time alone*, so it can't be represented by a sensory schema like a geometrical figure. So the suspicion that the perception might be only empirical and thus subject to illusion was removed from arithmetic; and this suspicion was solely responsible for introducing the logical style of proof into geometry. Because time has only one dimension, counting is the only arithmetical operation; all the others can be reduced to it; and this counting is nothing other than a perception *a priori*, which no-one hesitates to appeal to in this case, and through which alone all the rest—every calculation and every equation—is confirmed.

This. . . makes every single proposition an axiom. Instead of the proofs with which geometry is replete, the entire content of arithmetic and algebra is thus a mere method for the abbreviation of counting. Our immediate perception of numbers in time gets no further than about ten; beyond that, a verbally defined abstract concept of number has to take the place of perception, which is then no longer actually at work but only designated in a precisely determinate way. However, with the crucial aid of the system of numerical order, which always allows us to represent larger numbers by way of the same small ones, perceptual evidentness is indeed made possible for every calculation, even in cases where the reliance on abstraction is so great that not only numbers but also indeterminate magnitudes and entire operations are conceived *in abstracto* and designated accordingly. . . .

With the same right and same assurance as in arithmetic,

¹ [Presumably meaning the relation between the ground of being in space and its consequence in space.]

we could also let geometrical truths be grounded solely through pure perception *a priori*. It is in fact always this perceptually known necessity—according to the GP taken as concerning the ground of *being*—that bestows the greatest evidentness on geometry; it is the basis in everyone's consciousness of the certainty of its propositions. That doesn't come from the logical proof—striding on stilts!—which

- is always foreign to the matter at hand,
- is usually soon forgotten without detriment to conviction,
- could be dropped entirely without lessening the geometrical evidentness, which is independent of it, and
- only 'proves' something that one was already fully convinced of through a different kind of knowledge.

·Regarding that last point:· the logical proof is like a cowardly soldier who •inflicts a further wound on an enemy slain by someone else and then •boasts of having killed him.

I hope that all this removes any lingering doubt that the evidentness of mathematics, which has become a pattern and symbol of all evidentness, is essentially based not on proofs but on immediate perception, which is thus—here as everywhere—the ultimate ground and the source of all truth. However, the perception that grounds mathematics has a great advantage over any other perception, and thus over empirical perception. [What follows is extremely obscure, apparently because of clumsiness in the writing. The gist of it is that **(i)** in *a priori* perception 'one knows the consequence on the basis of the ground', and ground-to-consequence carries necessity with it; whereas **(ii)** much experience works in the opposite direction and thus doesn't have necessity, so that 'sense-deception is possible and often actual'. AS continues:] When several or all five of the senses receive impressions pointing to the same cause, the possibility of deception becomes extremely small; but it is still present,

for in certain cases—e.g. with counterfeit coins—one's whole sensibility is deceived. The case is the same for all empirical knowledge, and thus for the whole of natural science except for its pure part (what Kant calls its 'metaphysical' part). Here too causes are recognised through their effects. All natural science rests on hypotheses that are often false and then gradually give place to more correct ones. It is only with intentionally arranged experiments that knowledge goes on the secure path from causes to effects; but these experiments are undertaken only in consequence of hypotheses. That is why no branch of natural science—e.g. physics or astronomy or physiology—could be discovered all at once, as mathematics or logic could have been; rather, they have needed and still need the collected and compared experiences of many centuries. Multiple empirical confirmation brings •the induction on which hypotheses rest so near to completeness that •it replaces certainty for practical purposes, and the hypothesis is no more harmed by its origin ·in induction· than the application of geometry is harmed by the incommensurability of straight and curved lines or than arithmetic is harmed by the unattainability of completely accurate logarithms. For just as the squaring of a circle and logarithms are brought infinitely close to accuracy by way of infinitely many fractions, so also induction—i.e. knowledge of grounds on the basis of consequences—is brought close to mathematical evidentness, i.e. to knowledge of consequences on the basis of grounds; not *infinitely* close but enough for the possibility of error to be small enough to be negligible. Yet it is still present. For example, an inference from countless cases to all, or really to the unknown ground on which they all depend, is still an inductive inference. What inference of this kind seems surer than that all human beings have their heart on the left side? But there are rare cases of human beings whose heart sits on the right side.

a Sensory perception and empirical science thus have the same kind of evidentness. The advantage over a them that is possessed by b mathematics, pure natural science, and logic as cases of knowledge *a priori*, rests only on the fact that the formal element in knowledge on which all apriority is grounded is given in b the latter in its entirety and all at once, so that *there* one can always proceed from grounds to consequences, whereas in a the former the movement is usually from consequences to grounds. In any case, the law of causality—i.e. the GP considered as a statement about the ground of becoming—which directs a empirical knowledge is just as sure as any of the other shapes of the GP that are followed *a priori* by b the above named sciences.

Logical proofs on the basis of concepts share with knowledge by way of perception *a priori* the advantage of proceeding from grounds to consequences, so that they are in themselves (i.e. with respect to their form) infallible. This has done much to give **proofs in general** their great reputation. But the infallibility of the latter is relative: they merely involve bringing things under higher scientific propositions. These contain the entire stock of truth in science, and they can't simply be proved in turn, but must be grounded in perception. In the few *a priori* sciences that I have cited, it is a •pure perception; but everywhere else it is •empirical perception, which is raised to level of generality only by induction. Thus even if in empirical sciences individual cases are proved through what is general, what is general has still obtained its truth from individuals. It is only a warehouse for gathered provisions, not a productive farm.

So much for the grounding of **truth**.

•ERROR•

Regarding the origin and the possibility of **error**, many explanations have been attempted since Plato's metaphorical

answers in terms of the dove-cote from which one grabs the wrong dove, and so on. Kant's vague, indefinite explanation of the origin of error—using an image of the diagonal between two motions—can be found in the *Critique of Pure Reason* B351.

Since truth is the relation of a judgment to its ground of knowledge, it is a problem how someone making a judgment can think he has such a ground when he actually doesn't, i.e. how **error**, a deception of **reason**, is possible. I find this possibility to be analogous to that of **illusion**, or deception of the **understanding**, which I explained above [late in chapter 6.] My opinion (and this is what gives this explanation its proper place here) is that *every error is an inference from a consequence to a ground*; which is valid when one knows that the consequence can't have any other ground, but otherwise isn't. There are two ways for error to arise. **(i)** In one, the person who errs assigns to a consequence a ground that it *cannot* have, thereby showing a deficiency in his understanding, i.e. in his capacity for immediate knowledge of the connection between cause and effect. This is not as common as the second way error arises, **(ii)** in which the person who is in error assigns for the consequence a ground that is indeed a *possible* ground for it, but is only one among many possible candidates. To be justified in picking on this one, he would have to have performed a complete induction, which he has not done. If the results of the induction were stated in the language not of 'always' but rather of 'sometimes' or 'usually', the conclusion our person has reached would be problematic but not erroneous. So someone who errs in the manner of **(ii)** either •is rash or •doesn't know enough about possibility to realise the necessity for a complete induction. Error is thus entirely analogous to *illusion*. Both are inferences from the consequence to the ground: illusion is always produced in accordance with the law of causality and by

the *understanding* alone, thus immediately in perception itself; error is produced by *reason*, thus in thought proper. It can involve any of the forms the GP can have, but most often it's the law of causality. [AS gives three examples, in one of which he joins Goethe in mocking Newton's theory of the colour of light. He adds a point about 'mistakes in calculation', which are 'not really errors'.]

·SCIENTIFIC EXPLANATION·

As for the *content* of the sciences in general, this is really always the relation of the world's phenomena to one another •according to the GP and •under the guidance of the *Why?* that gets its applicability and meaning solely from the GP. Showing that relation is called *explaining*. So an explanation can only show that two presentations have to one another the relation required by the shape of the GP that governs the class they belong to. Having gone that far, there is no more *Why?* to be asked. For the displayed relation is one that absolutely cannot be presented in any other way, i.e. it is the form of all knowledge. Therefore, one does not ask

- why $2 + 2 = 4$, or
- why equality of the angles in a triangle determines equality of the sides, or
- why any given cause is followed by its effect, or
- why the truth of a conclusion is made evident by that of the premises.

Every explanation that doesn't trace back to a relation of which no further *Why?* can be asked ends up with the assumption of an occult quality [see Glossary], but every basic natural force is also of this kind. Every explanation in the natural sciences has to end up with something of that sort, thus in complete obscurity. It must leave the inner nature of a stone as unexplained as that of a human being; it can no more account for the gravity, cohesion, chemical

properties etc. of the former than it can for the knowledge and behaviour of the latter. Gravity, for example, is an occult quality because it can be removed in thought—i.e. we can conceive of a world without it—so it does not arise as a necessity from the form of knowledge. Unlike the law of inertia: tracing things back to *that* is a perfectly satisfactory mode of explanation, because it follows from the law of causality.

Two things are absolutely inexplicable, i.e. cannot be traced back to the relation expressed in the GP: **(i)** the GP itself in all four of its shapes can't be explained because it is the principle of all explanation, the sole source of any explanation's meaning; **(ii)** the *thing in itself*, knowledge of which is in no way subject to the GP; the GP does not extend to it, but it is the source of all phenomena. I won't be able to make the latter intelligible until Book II [chapter 24], where I'll return to this topic of what the sciences can achieve.

·HOW PHILOSOPHY PROCEEDS·

At the point where natural science (indeed any science) leaves things standing, unable to get any further through its own explanations or even through the GP (the principle of them), philosophy steps in and deals with things in its own manner, which is entirely different from that of the sciences.

In section 51 of my treatise on the GP, I have shown how the GP in one or another of its shapes is the main directing principle in ·each of· the various sciences; indeed the best way of classifying the sciences may be in terms of which shape of the GP each is directed by. But (to repeat myself) every explanation given according to that directing principle is only relative: it explains things with reference to one another but always leaves Something unexplained, which is just what they presuppose.

- In mathematics this is space and time;

- in mechanics, physics, and chemistry it is matter, qualities, original forces, natural laws;
- in botany and zoology it is the diversity of species and life itself;
- in history it is the human race with all its peculiarities of thinking and willing.

In each case it is the relevant shape of the GP.

It is a peculiarity of *Philosophy* that it presupposes absolutely nothing as already known, treating everything as equally foreign and a problem: not only •the relations among phenomena but also •the phenomena themselves, and even •the GP to which the other sciences are content to trace everything back. This way of tracing things back does nothing for philosophy, because for it any link in the chain is as foreign as any other, and indeed that kind of interconnection is itself as much a problem for philosophy as are the things connected by it. . . . For (I repeat) what the sciences presuppose and lay down as the basis of their explanations and set as their boundary is precisely the real problem for philosophy, which in that way begins where the sciences leave off. It can't be based on proofs, for proofs derive •previously• unknown propositions from ones that are known; whereas for philosophy everything is equally unknown and foreign. It can offer no proposition from which it would follow that *the world with all of its phenomena exists*. So no philosophy can provide what Spinoza wanted, a demonstration from 'firm principles' •that the world exists•. Philosophy is also the most general Knowledge, whose main principles can't be consequences of others still more general.

The principle of contradiction merely establishes an agreement among concepts; it doesn't provide the concepts

themselves. The GP explains connections among phenomena, not the phenomena themselves; so philosophy can't set out to find either an efficient cause or a final cause of the entire world.¹ My philosophy doesn't ask where the world comes from or where it is going; it merely asks what the world is, subordinating the *Why?* to the *What?*. . . . To be sure, it could be said that each person knows without further aid *what* the world is, since he himself has the knowledge which is the world's presentation; and this would be true as far as it goes. But this knowledge is perceptual, *in concreto*. The task of philosophy is to reproduce it *in abstracto*, to raise

successive and changing perceptions, and in general everything that falls under the broad (and negative) concept of *feeling*, i.e. everything that is *not* clear abstract Knowledge [see chapter 11 above]

to a level where it *is* such a thing, the level of permanent Knowledge. So philosophy must be a statement *in abstracto* of the nature of the entire world, as a whole and in all its parts. If it is not to lose itself in here an endless multitude of individual judgments, it has to make use of abstraction, thinking in universal terms not only of all individuals but also of their differences.

Thus philosophy will partly separate and partly unite, in order (for the sake of Knowledge) to deliver the whole of the world's manifold gathered into a few abstract concepts according to its nature. However, through those concepts in which philosophy fixes the nature of the world knowledge has to be gained of the entirely individual as much as of what is universal. . . . So the capacity for philosophy consists in just what Plato said it to be: knowledge of the one in the many and of the many in the one. Philosophy will accordingly

¹ [AS gives these in Latin: **a** *causa efficiens* and **b** *causa finalis*—scholastic technical terms meaning **a** 'cause' (as we would understand this) and **b** 'goal' or 'purpose'.]

be a sum-total of very general judgments whose immediate ground of knowledge is the world itself in its totality, with nothing excluded—thus everything that is to be found in human consciousness. It will be

a complete replication—as it were, a mirroring—of the world in abstract concepts,

which is only possible by •uniting the essentially identical [see Glossary] under one concept and •assigning to different concepts things that are different from one another. [AS quotes (in Latin) Bacon saying essentially the same thing, adding that he ‘takes this in a more extended sense than Bacon could have conceived at his time’.]

[This paragraph returns to chapter 14’s theme of ‘perception versus proof.’] The accord that all aspects and parts of the world have with respect to one another, just because they belong to one whole, must also be found in this abstract copy of the world. Accordingly, any one of that sum-total of judgments could to a certain extent be derived from any other. But for that to happen, they must first *exist* and thus be antecedently provided as grounded in immediate knowledge of the world *in concreto*. . . .

16. Practical reason

After all this discussion of

reason as a special faculty of **knowledge** that only human beings have, and of the special facts about human nature (including human achievements) that are due to it,

it now remains for me to say something about

reason so far as it guides the **behaviour** of human beings, and in this respect can be called *practical*.

This topic mainly belongs not here but in the Appendix to this work, where I controvert the existence of the so-called

practical reason of Kant, which he (very conveniently!) depicts as the immediate source of all virtue and as the seat of an absolute (i.e. dropping down from heaven!) *ought*. I later provided in my *Fundamental Problems of Ethics* a detailed and thorough refutation of this Kantian principle of morality.

So here I have only a little to say about the actual influence of reason, in the true sense of that word, on behaviour. Already at the start of my discussion of reason [chapter 8], I noted in a general way how greatly human doings and changes differ from those of animals, and that this difference is solely due to the presence of abstract concepts in the human consciousness. Their influence on our entire existence is so thoroughgoing and significant that it has us relating to animals in somewhat the way a sighted animals relate to b animals lacking eyes (certain larvae, worms, and zoophytes): the b latter know about only their immediate environment, doing this by touch; whereas a sighted animals know about a broad circle of things, near and far. In just the same way, animals’ lack of reason limits them to perceptual presentations that constitute their immediate *present* environments strung out over time, i.e. to real objects; whereas our knowledge *in abstracto* enables us to take in, along with the narrow actual present, the entire past and future as well, together with the broad realm of possibility: we view life freely on all sides, and go beyond the present and the actual.

Thus what the eye is •in space and for •sensory knowledge reason is, to a certain extent, •in time and for •inner knowledge. But just as objects’ visibility gets its value and significance solely from being a predictor of their tangibility, so also the entire value of abstract knowledge lies in its relation to what is perceptible. So natural man always finds much more value in what is **known immediately and perceptually** than in abstract concepts, in what is **merely thought**: he puts empirical knowledge ahead of logical knowledge. But

the opposite order is maintained by those who—unlike the ‘natural man’ I have just been speaking of—live more in words than deeds, who have looked more into paper and books than into the actual world, and who at their worst become pedants and pencil-pushers. Only in these terms is it comprehensible how Leibniz, along with Wolf and all their successors, following the lead of Duns Scotus, could go so far wrong as to describe perceptual knowledge as merely confused abstract knowledge! (To Spinoza’s honour I must mention that his more accurate understanding reversed this, explaining all general concepts as having arisen from the confusion of what is known perceptually [Ethics, note to proposition 40 in part II].

That perverse way of thinking has given rise to the following three errors. (i) The evidentness that is special to mathematics has been rejected in favour of granting validity to logical evidentness alone. (ii) All non-abstract knowledge has been given the broad label *feeling* [see chapter 11 above], and valued little. (iii) Kantian ethics explained

the *good will* that immediately asserts itself when the circumstances are known, and leads to right and good action

as mere feeling and emotion, and consequently as worthless and without merit, and would recognise moral worth only in actions that have come from abstract maxims.

A man’s survey of his life as a whole—a gift of his reason that puts him ahead of the animals—can be likened to a geometrical, colourless, abstract, small-scale sketch of his life’s journey. It relates **a** him to **b** the animals in the way **a** the captain of a ship—whose chart, compass, and quadrant enable him to know exactly what the ship’s course and present position are—relates to **b** to the uninformed crew who see only waves and the sky. Thus it is worth noting—and is indeed wonderful—how besides **c** his life *in concreto* a person

always leads **a** a second life *in abstracto*. In **c** the former, prey to all the turbulence of reality and influence of the present, he has to strive, suffer, die like an animal. But his **a** life *in abstracto*, as it confronts him in the thoughts reason gives him, is the still mirroring of **c** the former life and of the world he lives in; it is ‘the small-scale sketch’ that I have just mentioned. *Here* in **a** the domain of restful reflective consideration, what fully possesses and intensely moves him **c** *there* appears cold, colourless, and for the moment foreign to him; **a** here he is a mere spectator and observer. In respect of this withdrawal into reflection he is like an actor who has played his part in one scene, takes his place among the audience until it is time for him to go on the stage again, and quietly looks on at whatever happens on the stage, even if it is the preparation for his own death (in the play), but afterwards he again goes on the stage and acts and suffers as he must.

This double life generates that human composure—so unlike animals’ absence of thought—with which a person, after thinking it through, decides that he *will* or sees that he *must* do something that is of great importance to him, cold-bloodedly allowing or carrying out something utterly frightful: suicide, execution, a duel, all sorts of life-threatening deeds, and in general anything his entire animal nature rebels against. In this we see how far reason has mastered animal nature and cries out to the strong ‘You must have iron courage’ [AS quotes this in Greek; it is from the *Iliad*.]

Here one can really say that reason expresses itself *practically*. Thus practical reason shows itself wherever

- conduct is directed by reason,
- one’s conduct is moved by abstract concepts,
- the determining factor is neither individual perceptual presentations nor momentary impressions like those that direct animals.

This is entirely different from and independent of the ethical worth of an action; acting in accordance with reason is entirely different from acting virtuously; reason is found as much in alliance with great malice as with great goodness, and is equally helpful to each—equally ready and serviceable for the methodical, consistent carrying out of noble and of bad intentions, of shrewd and of stupid maxims. This is just a consequence of reason's nature, which is feminine: it receives and stores, but does not create. [AS says that this is all discussed and illustrated in the Appendix, and can't be handled *here* because it is tied in with his attack on Kant's view of practical reason, [chapters 102-3].]

The most complete development of (in the true and genuine sense of the phrase) *practical reason*, the highest peak a man can reach merely through the use of his reason, where his difference from animals appears most clearly, is the ideal embodied in *Stoic wisdom*. For Stoic ethics is originally and essentially not a doctrine of virtue at all, but merely instructions for a reason-guided life, the goal and purpose of which is happiness through peace of mind. Virtuous conduct occurs in the course of this *per accidens* [see Glossary], as a means, not an end. So Stoic ethics is, in its whole essence and point of view, *fundamentally* unlike those ethical systems that directly insist on virtue, such as the doctrines of the Vedas, of Plato, of Christianity, and of Kant. The goal in Stoic ethics is a happiness. . . ., which can be achieved only through b virtue, that being the meaning of the saying that virtue is the highest good. But when a the end gets gradually forgotten in favour of b the means, virtue comes to be recommended in a way that discloses an interest that is entirely different from—indeed clearly inconsistent with—one's own happiness. This is one example of how, in this and other systems, truths that are known immediately (or, as they say, truths that are *felt*), lead us back to the

right way by means of bad logic. There is a clear example of this in Spinoza's *Ethics*, where the egoistic *to seek one's own advantage* is made by blatant sophisms to yield a pure doctrine of virtue!

·THE SPIRIT OF STOICISM·

According to what I take to be the spirit of Stoic ethics, it stems from the question of whether reason—

man's great prerogative which, **mediated** by intentional action and its consequences, so greatly eases life and its burdens

—might not also be able in an **immediate** way, i.e. through mere knowledge, to free him from all or most of the sorrows and various torments that fill his life. They [the Stoics] held it to be unsuitable to the pre-eminence of reason that beings who are gifted with it—and who through it comprehend and survey an infinitude of things and situations—should, by *the present* and by the incidents contained in the few years of such a brief, fleeting, and uncertain a life, be prey to such intense pains, such great fear and suffering as arise from the tumultuous press of desire and repulsion. They thought that the proper application of reason should be able to lift a person out of all that, making him invulnerable. [He quotes, in support of this, Antisthenes and Epictetus, interpreting one of the latter's sayings as meaning:] Want and suffering don't come directly and necessarily from *not having*, but from *desiring to have and not having*; so that this desire to have is the necessary condition under which not-having becomes a privation and causes pain. In addition, they knew from experience that what gives birth to and nourishes desire is only hope, only demand; so that we are not disturbed and plagued

•by the many ills that are common to all, and are unavoidable, or

- by unachievable goods, but only
- by the trivial more and less of the things we *can* avoid or achieve,

so that the ills that are always with us and the good things we must necessarily forgo are regarded with indifference. And the Stoics knew that—this being a peculiarly human characteristic—every *desire* is extinguished, and thus can no longer cause pain, when there is no *hope* to nourish it. The upshot of all this was that

all happiness rests only on the relation between **a** our demands and **b** what we receive. It doesn't matter how great or small the two magnitudes of the relation are, and the relation¹ can be produced as well by lessening **a** the first magnitude as by increasing **b** the second; so that all suffering really comes from a disproportion between **a** what we demand and expect and **b** what we get.

This disproportion obviously consists in a lack of knowledge, and could be completely cured through greater insight into what we should expect. Therefore Chrysippus says that one ought to live with a due knowledge of the transitory nature of the things of the world. For as often as a man loses self-command, or is struck down by a misfortune, or grows angry or faint-hearted, he shows that •he finds things to be different from what he had expected, and consequently •that he had been caught in error, not knowing the world and life, not knowing that the will of the individual is thwarted at every step not only by the chance of inanimate nature but also by the antagonism of aims and the wickedness of other individuals; so either •he has not made use of his reason so as to arrive at a general knowledge of this characteristic of life, or •he lacks judgment, because he doesn't recognise in

the particular what he knows in general, and is therefore surprised by it and loses his self-command. Every lively pleasure is an error, a delusion, because no desire once achieved can lastingly satisfy—indeed, every possession and every happiness is only lent to us for an indefinite time by chance, and can be demanded back within the hour. But every pain rests on the disappearance of such a delusion; thus both arise from defective knowledge. Joy and pain thus remain equally remote from the wise man, and nothing that happens disturbs the unshakeability of his spirit. In accordance with this spirit and goal of Stoicism, Epictetus begins with the thesis—to which he constantly returns, as to the core of his wisdom—that we should thoughtfully distinguish what depends on us from what does not, and then not count on the latter; this being a reliable way to stay free from all pain, suffering, and fear. But what depends on us is only our will; and this is the starting-point for a gradual transition to the doctrine of virtue, for it was noted that

a just as happiness and unhappiness are determined by the external world, existing independently of us,

b so also inner contentment or discontent with ourselves comes from the will.

The question then arose as to whether the terms *bonum* and *malum* ['good' and 'bad'] should be applied to **a** the former or to **b** the latter of these pairs. That was really a matter of arbitrary choice, making no real difference. Yet the Stoics endlessly disputed with the Peripatetics and Epicureans about this question. . . .

Zeno, the founder of Stoicism, seems originally to have taken a somewhat different path. His point of departure was this: to attain the highest good—i.e. blessedness through spiritual peace—one must live in harmony with oneself. [AS

¹ [He means the happiness-producing relation.]

gives this also in Greek and Latin.] However, this was possible only by way of reasoned self-determination according to concepts, not according to changing impressions and moods. But all that is in our power are **a** the maxims for our actions, not **b** their success or the external circumstances, so consistency requires us to have only **a** ·conformity to· the former as our goal, not **b** to the latter; and this again leads to the doctrine of virtue.

But Zeno's immediate followers seemed to find his principle of morality—living in harmony¹—too formal and empty of content. So they gave it material content by way of an addendum, 'living in harmony *with nature*', which was first added by Cleanthes. This forced the issue rather far afield, because of the large sphere of the concept ·of nature· and the vagueness of the word. For Cleanthes meant the whole of nature in general, but Chrysippus meant human nature in particular. It followed that only what was adapted to human nature—as the satisfaction of animal desires was adapted to animal natures—was virtue. So ethics was again forced to admit a doctrine of virtue. . . .

Stoic ethics, taken on the whole, is in fact a most estimable and admirable attempt to give reason—the great prerogative of human beings—an important and salutary purpose, namely to lift people out of the sufferings and pains to which every life is subject, by means of the instruction [which AS gives in Horace's Latin]: 'For which reason may you be able to live your life gently, may you not be driven and harrassed by always needy desires, or by fears and hopes

concerning things that profit little'; and through just that to make them in the highest degree participants in the dignity that is due to them as rational beings as distinguished from animals. . . .

This view that I hold of Stoic ethics requires it to be discussed in connection with my account ·in chapter 103· of what reason is and what it can do. But although its goal may be partly achievable by the application of reason and through a purely reason-centred ethics, and although purely rational characters are shown by experience to be surely the happiest, it is emphatically *not* the case that •anything perfect could be brought about in this way or that •a rightly employed reason could actually free us from all life's burdens and sufferings and lead us to a state of blessedness.² Rather, there is a perfect **contradiction** in wanting to live without suffering, a contradiction also carried by the common expression 'blessed life'; I now explain why.

·SUICIDE·

This contradiction in the ethics of pure reason is revealed by the fact that the Stoic is compelled to insert into his instructions for a blessed life (for that's what his ethics always is) a recommendation of suicide. . . ., for the case where bodily sufferings—which can't be philosophised away by propositions and inferences!—are overwhelming and incurable. Here his single goal of blessedness is after all frustrated, and nothing remains for escape from suffering but death, which is to be taken calmly like any other medicine. This reveals a strong contrast between Stoic ethics and all the others I

¹ It was introduced as 'living in harmony *with oneself*'; it's not clear what justifies AS in dropping 'with oneself', though his account of the history of this matter clearly requires him to do so.]

² [In that sentence, AS has a parenthetical remark about the 'purely rational characters' he speaks of. Left *in situ*, it makes the sentence horribly unwieldy; here it is, separated out: 'commonly called "practical philosophers", and rightly so, because the genuine philosopher, i.e. the theoretical philosopher, carries life over into concepts, whereas these ·practical· ones carry concepts over into life.']

have mentioned, which •make an immediate goal of virtue in itself, even if accompanied by the harshest sufferings, and •don't allow a man to end his life as an escape from suffering. (Not one of them has been able to give the true reason for the rejection of suicide, but they laboriously seek out all sorts of pseudo-reasons. The true reason will emerge in Book IV.) That contrast ·in attitudes to suicide· reveals and confirms the essential difference in fundamental principles between Stoicism (which is really only a particular form of eudemonism) and those other doctrines, even if they often coincide in their results and seem to be related ·like members of a single family·. But the above-mentioned **contradiction**, infecting Stoic ethics even in its fundamental thought, can also be seen in the fact that its ideal, the Stoic sage, even as the Stoics themselves describe him, could never come alive or achieve any inner poetic truth. He remains rather a stiff, wooden, stick-figure

- of whom nothing can be made,
- who does not know where to go with his wisdom, and
- whose perfect repose, contentment, blessedness flatly contradict the essence of humanity and cannot help us to have any perceptual presentation of it.

Set beside that, how differently appear the world-renouncers and voluntary penitents that Indian wisdom recommends and actually produces, or indeed of Christianity's Saviour, that superb figure full of profound life, of the greatest poetic truth and the highest significance, who with consummate virtue, saintliness sublimity stands before us in a state of supreme suffering.

Book II: The world as will. First consideration

The objectification of will

17. The inner meaning of presentations

In the first Book I considered presentation only as such, i.e. only with respect to its *general form*. To be sure, something was said about the *content* of abstract presentations, concepts, because they have all their content and meaning only through their relation to perceptual presentation, without which they would be worthless and empty. Now attending entirely to perceptual presentations, we shall want to discover their content as well, their finer details, and the shapes [see Glossary] they bring before us. It will be especially important to us to gain insight into their real meaning—that otherwise merely *felt* meaning—by virtue of which these images do not pass before us utterly foreign and mute, as they must otherwise do, but rather speak to us directly, are understood by us, and acquire an interest that lays claim to our whole being.

We turn our eye to **b** mathematics, **c** natural science, and **a** philosophy, each of which we hope might give us a part of the desired insight.

a Taking philosophy first, we find it to be a many-headed monster, with each head speaking a different language. Regarding the point raised here, the meaning of perceptual presentations, the heads are admittedly not entirely at odds with one another. Except for the sceptics and the idealists, they speak for the most part in considerable agreement about the main thing, an *object* that is the *ground* of presentation. . . . We get no help from that, for we don't know how to distinguish such an object from a presentation; rather, we find that they are one and the same thing, since every *object*

always and eternally presupposes a *subject* [see Glossary], and is therefore a presentation; which is why we have recognised being-an-object as belonging to presentation's most general form, which is precisely that of division into object and subject. And the GP. . . concerns only the interconnection of presentations in accordance with laws; it doesn't concern a connection between •the whole finite or infinite series of presentations and •something else, something that would not be a presentation and so could not be presented to us.

b If we look to mathematics for the desired fuller knowledge of those perceptual presentations that we have come to know only in an entirely general way, with respect to their mere form, it will speak to us of those presentations only as filling time and space, i.e. only as magnitudes. It will state with great exactness the *how many* and *how much*. But this still isn't the information that we are primarily seeking, because it is always only relative, i.e. a comparison of one presentation with others, and indeed a comparison only in respect of magnitude.

c Finally, if we look to the broad domain of natural science, divided into many fields, we can begin by distinguishing two main parts. Natural science is either **(i)** description of shapes, which I call *morphology*, or **(ii)** explanation of alterations, which I call *etiology*. Morphology deals with the unchanging forms; etiology deals with the changing matter according to the laws governing its change from one form into another. **(i) Morphology** takes in the whole extent of what is (not quite correctly) called 'natural history'. Especially as botany and zoology, it acquaints us with the various permanent (and thereby definitely determined)

shapes that stay the same during the constant change in the individuals that have these shapes, which constitute a major part of the content of perceptual presentation. It uses natural and artificial systems to classify, separate and unite these shapes, and brings them under concepts, which makes possible a general view and knowledge of them all. . . . Morphology does not have a branch that deals with the passage of matter into those shapes—i.e. the coming into existence of individuals—because every individual comes into existence through procreation from something that resembles it. The procreation process is mysterious; we don't yet have any clear knowledge of it; but the little that is known of it belongs in physiology, which belongs in the etiological branch of natural science. Mineralogy mostly belongs to morphology, but when it becomes geology it too tends towards etiology. **(ii) Etiology** proper comprises all the branches of natural science for which knowledge of causes and effects is everywhere the main concern; these branches tell us how one state of matter necessarily follows, according to an infallible rule, from another; how a particular alteration necessarily conditions and leads to a particular other one; showing this is called *explaining*. The principal branches in this are mechanics, physics, chemistry, physiology.

But when we listen to its instruction, we soon realise that etiology doesn't tell us what we mainly want to know, any more than morphology does. The latter introduces us to countless shapes that are infinitely various and yet inter-related by an unmistakable family resemblance; these are presentations for us, and when regarded merely as such they remain eternally foreign to us, like hieroglyphs that we don't understand. Whereas etiology teaches us that, in accordance with the law of cause and effect, *this* specific state of matter brings forth *that* one, and with that it has explained the latter and done its job. [AS goes on to say that

the explanations offered by etiology merely exhibit patterns in space and time; etiology is superficial, because it doesn't explain *why* those patterns keep turning up. He continues:] Etiology has so far achieved its purpose most completely in **a** mechanics, least completely in **b** physiology; but **a** the force by which a stone falls to the earth or one body bounces off another is, in its inner nature, as foreign and mysterious to us as **b** the force that produces the movements and growth of an animal. Mechanics

presupposes matter, gravity, impenetrability, communicability of motion by impact, rigidity, etc. as basic, calls them 'natural forces', and labels as 'natural laws' their necessary and regular appearance under certain conditions;

and only then does it begin its explanation, which consists in •providing a true and mathematically exact statement of how, where and when each force comes into play, and •tracing every phenomenon that it encounters back to one of those forces. Physics, chemistry, physiology do just the same in their domains, except that they presuppose even more and accomplish less. Consequently, even the most complete etiological explanation of the whole of nature would really be no more than a catalogue of inexplicable forces, and a reliable statement of the rule according to which appearances succeed one another in time and make way for one another in space. The inner nature of the forces that thus appear would not be explained, because the law that governs their arrangement does not reveal this; it stops at the level of the appearances and their order. It may be compared to a section of a piece of marble which shows many veins beside each other, but does not allow us to trace the course of the veins from the interior of the marble to its surface. . . .

So etiology is also unable to provide us with the desired insight into the appearances that we know only as our

presentations. For after all its explanations, they still confront us as mere presentations whose significance we don't understand, completely foreign to us. Causally connecting them merely provides us with the rule and relative order of their occurrence in space and time; it doesn't tell us how to know better *what* is thus occurring. . . .

What now drives us to keep inquiring, however, is that we are not satisfied with knowing

- that we have presentations,
- that they are thus and so, and
- that they are interconnected in accordance with such-and-such laws, whose general expression is in every case the GP.

We want to know the significance of those presentations; we are asking whether this world is •nothing more than presentation, so that it is passing before us like a dream with no substance, or a ghostly vision, not worth attending to, or whether it is •something else besides, and what that might be. This much is certain from the outset: this 'something' we are looking for must be utterly and in its entire nature fundamentally different from presentations. . . .

We already see here that the nature of things can never be approached *from outside*: however much we may examine things, we gain nothing but images and names. We are like someone circling a castle, vainly seeking an entrance and occasionally sketching the facades. Yet that is the path that all philosophers before me have walked.

18. The body and the will

It would never be possible for inquiries to reveal

- the significance of the world I am confronted with only as my presentation, or

- whatever it may be, beyond being mere presentation to the knowing subject [see Glossary],

if the inquirer himself were nothing more than the pure knowing subject (the winged head of a cherub without a body). But he is himself rooted in that world: finds himself in it as an *individual*; that is, his knowledge—which is the bearer of the entire world as presentation—is altogether mediated by a *body* whose states are (as I have shown) the understanding's point of departure for perception of that world. To the purely knowing subject this body is a presentation like any other, an object among objects. Its actions are known to him in exactly the same way as are the alterations of all other perceptual objects, and would be just as foreign and unintelligible to him as those are, if their significance were not unriddled for him in an entirely different way. Without that, he would see his body's actions as occurring in response to given motives with the constancy of a natural law, just like the alterations of other objects in response to causes, stimuli, motives. But he would have no closer understanding of the influence of those motives than he does of the causal connection of any other effect that makes its appearance. He would then call the inner (and to him unintelligible) nature of his bodily expressions and actions a 'force', a 'quality', or a 'character'—whatever he pleased—but beyond that would have no insight into it.

But none of this is how it is: rather, the solution to the riddle is given to the subject of knowledge in his appearance as an individual; and the solution is *will*. This and this alone gives him the key to his own appearance, reveals its significance to him, shows him the inner workings of its being, its actions, its movements. To the subject of knowledge, who appears as an individual through his identity with the body, this body is given in two entirely different ways:

- (1) as a presentation in perception by way of the understanding, as an object among objects and subject to their laws; and
- (2) as something that is immediately familiar to everyone, designated by the word *will*.

Every true act of his will is at once and inevitably also a movement of his body; he can't really will an act without at the same time becoming aware that it [the willed act] makes its appearance as a movement of his body. The **a** act of the will and the **b** action of the body are not two different objectively recognised states connected by the tie of causality; they aren't related as **a** cause and **b** effect; rather, they are one and the same, only given in two entirely different ways, **a** once quite immediately and **b** once in perception through the understanding. Actions of the body are nothing but acts of will that are objectified, i.e. passed into perception. I'll show later that this applies to every movement of the body, not only to those in response to motives but even to involuntary movements arising from mere stimuli; indeed 'I'll show' that the entire body is nothing other than objectified will, i.e. will that has become presentation. Therefore the body, which I called the **immediate object** according to the deliberately one-sided standpoint (that of presentation) adopted in Book I and in the treatise on the GP, I will call here, from a different angle, the **objectivity of the will**.¹ And in a certain sense one can therefore say: will is knowledge *a priori* of the body, and the body is knowledge *a posteriori* of the will.

Resolutions of the will² that relate to the future are merely reason's deliberations about what the person wants

to do some day; they are not real acts of will.³ Only the carrying out of the resolve stamps it 'as an act of will'; until that happens, it is only a decision that may be changed, something that exists only *in abstracto* within the faculty of reason. Only in reflection is willing different from doing; in reality they are one. Every true, genuine, immediate act of will is also at once and immediately a perceptible act of the body; and correspondingly every effect on the body is also at once and immediately an effect on the will [notice: not 'an effect of the will']. When it is contrary to the will it is called pain; when it is in accord with the will it is called gratification or pleasure. The gradations of both are widely different. But it would be quite wrong to call pain and pleasure presentations. They are, rather, immediate affections [see Glossary] of the will in the body that is its phenomenon: compelled momentary *willing of* or *willing against* the impression the body is undergoing. The only exceptions to this—bodily events that can be straightforwardly considered as mere presentations—are a few impressions on the body that don't stimulate the will, and through which alone the body is an immediate object of knowledge. ('I specify 'immediate' because the body, as a perception within the understanding, is of course an indirect = mediated object like all others.) What I am talking about here are affections of the purely objective senses of sight, hearing, and touch. [AS qualifies this in a needlessly obscure manner. He is confining himself to routine uses of the sense-organs, which 'provide the understanding with data from which perception is made' but are too weak to 'affect the will'. In contrast with these, he continues,] every

¹ [The shift from 'objectivised will' to 'objectivity of the will' is in the original, and not a blunder of the present version. Regarding 'immediate object': see the footnote in chapter 2 above.]

² [*Willensbeschlüsse*]

³ [*Willensakte*]

stronger affection of those sense-organs—or any other sort of affection of them—is painful, i.e. contrary to the will to whose objectivisation they therefore belong.

Nervous debility¹ expresses itself in this: impressions that should have merely enough strength to make them data for the understanding become strong enough to influence the will, i.e. arouse pain or pleasure; though more often pain, which is sometimes dull and indistinct, however, thus allowing not only individual tones and strong light to be sensed with pain, but also producing a general hypochondriacal disposition that the person is not clearly aware of.

The identity of body and will further shows itself in this fact among others: every intense and excessive movement of the will, i.e. every emotion, instantly reverberates through the body and its inner workings and disturbs the course of its vital functions. . . .

Finally, my knowledge of my will, although it is immediate, is still inseparable from my knowledge of my body. I know my will

- not as a whole,
- not as a unity,
- not completely according to its nature;

but rather I know it only in its individual acts, thus within *time*, which is the form of the phenomenon of my body as of any object; so the body is a condition of the knowledge of my will. Apart from my body, accordingly, I cannot really present this will to myself. In my treatise on the GP, I admittedly treat the will, or rather the subject of [see Glossary] willing, as a presentation or object of a particular kind; but there

I saw this object **coinciding** with the subject, i.e. ceasing to be an object. There I called this **coincidence** the miracle *par excellence*. The whole of the present work is to a certain extent an explanation of this. . . .

The identity of the will and the body, of which I have just given a preliminary sketch, can be proved [*nachgewiesen*] only in the way I have adopted here—the first time this has been done—which will be more and more fully adopted in the course of this work. It is the procedure of raising immediate consciousness (knowledge *in concreto*) to the level of abstract Knowledge of reason (knowledge *in abstracto*). On the other hand, from its very nature it can never be proved [*bewiesen*], i.e. derived as mediated knowledge from some other more immediate knowledge, because it is itself the most immediate knowledge; and if we don't grasp and retain it as such, we will seek in vain ever to regain it in a mediated way, as derivative knowledge.² It is knowledge of a quite special kind, the truth of which can never properly be brought under any of the four rubrics into which I divided all truth in the treatise on the GP, namely

- logical,
- empirical,
- transcendental, and
- metalogical.

For it is not, as all those are, the relation of an abstract presentation to •another presentation or to •the necessary form of intuitive or abstract presentation; rather, it is the relation of a judgment to the connection that a perceptual presentation, the body, has to something that is not a

¹ [This seems to be the unavoidable translation of *Nervenschwäche*, but the condition AS describes here doesn't fit 'nervous debility' as currently understood.]

² [In this passage, the first 'proved' could be 'proven', a technical term in law; the second 'proved' couldn't. AS is clearly describing two different procedures here, but his choice of verbs for them is a little puzzling.]

presentation at all but something totally different: *will*. So I want to distinguish this truth above all others, and call it ‘philosophical truth *par excellence*’. It can be expressed in various ways:

- ‘My body and my will are one’,
- ‘The thing that I call “my body” as a perceptual presentation I call “my will” so far as I am conscious of it in an entirely different manner, comparable to no other’,
- ‘My body is the objectivity of my will’,
- ‘Apart from the fact that my body is a presentation to me, it is still only my will’,

and so on.

19. Our double knowledge of our bodies

If I was reluctantly driven in Book I to explain the human body—as I did all other objects of this perceptual world—merely as a presentation to the knowing subject, it has now become clear that what in each person’s consciousness marks off from all others that are otherwise just like it is the fact that he is also conscious of his body in an entirely different way ·from how he is conscious of those others·, which we designate by the word *will*. And ·we now see that· it is just this double knowledge of our own body—

a of its actions and movements in response to motives;
as also b of what it undergoes through external impressions; in a word, of what it is not as b a presentation but a *in itself*

—that gives us the insight ·regarding it· that we don’t immediately have regarding the nature, the doings and the undergoings of any other real object.

The knowing subject is an *individual* precisely through this special relation to the one body which, apart from this

relation, is only one presentation to him among others. But the relation that makes the knowing subject an individual is—just for that reason—a relation he has between himself and just one among all the presentations to him. So this *one* is the only thing he is conscious of not merely as a presentation but also in an entirely different way, namely as a *will*. . . . What is he to make of this situation? There are two possible answers. (i) He may think that there is nothing special about his body, as a presentation, and that what’s special here is only the double relation that his knowledge has to it. (ii) Or he may think that this one object is inherently different from all others, is the only object that is both will and presentation, the others all being mere presentations, i.e. mere phantoms, so that his body is the only actual individual in the world, i.e. the only phenomenon of will and the only immediate object of any subject.

[In AS’s continuation of this, he equates (ii) with •the denial that there is any external world, i.e. with what he calls •‘theoretical egoism’ or •‘solipsism’. This can’t be refuted by ordinary causal reasoning, he says, but dismisses it as ‘mad’ and as needing ‘not so much a proof as a cure’. He kicks this around for a little, and then sums up with a famous metaphor.] We who are trying to broaden the limits of our knowledge through philosophy can view this sceptical line of thought as a minor border fortress which can’t indeed ever be forced into submission but whose garrison also can’t ever come forth from it, so that we can safely surround it and pass on.

Now that I have raised it to a level of clarity, I shall employ this double knowledge that we have, given to us in two completely different ways, of the nature and activity of our own bodies,

as a key to the essence of every phenomenon in nature. And I’ll assess all objects other than •our own body—objects

that are given to our consciousness not in a double manner, but only as presentations—by analogy with that body; so I'll assume that, just as they are entirely like our body as presentations, what there is to them apart from their role as presentations—their inner nature—must be the same as what we call in our own case *will*. For what other sort of existence or realness are we to attribute to the rest of the corporeal world? Where would we get the elements out of which to compose such a thing? Apart from *will* and *presentation*, nothing at all is known to us or even thinkable. If we want to attribute the greatest realness known to us to the corporeal world, which immediately confronts us only in a presentation, then we give it the realness that each person's body has *for him*, because for everyone that is the most real thing. But when we analyse the realness of this body and its actions, all we find in it, apart from its being a presentation to us, is *will*; with this its realness is exhausted. [After repeating much of that, AS says that there are different 'levels' at which will is manifested in phenomena, one such level being exemplified by cases where will is accompanied by knowledge and through this is driven by motives. This, he says,] pertains not to its essence but merely to its most distinct phenomenon as an animal or a human being. So if I say that the force that drives a stone to the earth is—in its essence, in itself, and apart from all presentation—*will*, don't take me to mean, crazily, that the stone has what ordinarily counts as a *motive* for moving as it does, interpreting me in that way because that is how will makes its appearance in human beings.

What I have so far presented in a preliminary and general way will now be given more thorough and detailed treatment, to establish, ground, and develop it in its entire compass. . . .

20. More about body and will. Individual character.

As I have said, the will proclaims itself primarily in the voluntary movements of our own body, as the inmost nature of this body, as what it is besides being an object of perception, a presentation. These voluntary movements are nothing other than the visible aspect¹ of the individual acts of will, with which they immediately coincide as being *identical* with them, distinguished only through the form of knowledge into which they have passed, i.e. through which they have become presentations.

These acts of the will always have a ground beyond themselves, in *motives*. But motives never determine more than what I will at *this* time, in *this* place, under *these* circumstances—not that I will in general, or *what* I will in general, i.e. the maxims that characterise my willing as a whole. So the over-all nature of my will can't be explained by motives; all that motives do is to settle how it is expressed at a given point in time; they are mere triggers for my will to display itself. My will itself lies outside the domain of the law of motivation; this law necessarily determines not my will but its phenomenon at any point in time.

Only in the context of my empirical character does a motive explain my conduct; but if I abstract from my character and then ask *why* I will this and not that, no answer is possible; because answers to *Why?*-questions fall within the province of the GP and only will's phenomenon is subject to the GP, not will itself, which can thus be called *groundless*. [AS says that he is relying here on 'Kant's doctrine of empirical and intelligible character' and on his own *Fundamental Problems of Ethics*, and says that he'll deal with all this more fully in Book IV [chapters 55 and 70]. His present concern, he

¹ [*Sichtbarkeit*, literally meaning 'visibility'.]

says, is just to emphasize] that this:

- one phenomenon is grounded by another (as my action is grounded by my motive)

is not in conflict with this:

- my action is in its nature in itself *will*, which itself has no ground,

for as the GP in all its shapes is merely the form of knowledge, its validity extends only to the presentation, to the phenomena, to the will's visibility, not to the will itself.

[What comes next is obscurely written. It purports to be an argument to show that just as

- (i) every action of my body is a phenomenon of an act of my will,

so also

- (ii) my body is the phenomenon of my will.

AS also identifies my will with 'my intelligible character', of which he says my empirical character is the 'temporal phenomenon'. In confirmation of (ii), he reminds us of something he has said before, namely that] every effect on my body also at once and immediately affects my will and is in this respect called pain or pleasure, in a lower degree pleasant or unpleasant sensation, and also that every intense movement of will, and so every emotion and passion, reverberates through the body and disturbs the course of its functions.

An etiological account (though not a complete one) can be given of my body's origination and (better) of its development and maintenance; that's what physiology is. But the way physiology explains its subject is exactly on a par with how motives explain action. So. . . physiological explanation of the body's functions is perfectly consistent with the philosophical truth that the entire existence of this body and the

whole array of its functions are only objectifications of the will of which the body's external actions are phenomena. Physiology seeks to trace these external actions—these immediately voluntary movements—to causes within the organism, e.g. explaining the movement of muscles in terms of an influx of fluids. . . . But even if explanations of this sort succeeded, that would not nullify the immediately certain truth that every voluntary movement is a phenomenon of an act of will. Any more than physiological explanation of vegetative life, however far it may extend, can nullify the truth that the entirety of the animal life thereby in development is in fact a phenomenon of will.¹ In general, I repeat, an etiological explanation can never provide more than the necessarily determined position in time and space of an individual phenomenon, its necessary occurrence *just there* in accordance with a firm rule; whereas the inner nature of any phenomenon remains for ever ungrounded on this path, is presupposed by every etiological explanation and merely designated by the terms 'force' or 'natural law' or—when actions are the topic—'character' or 'will'.

Thus, although every individual action—given the framework of a particular character—necessarily follows from a motive, and although the growth, nutritional process, and totality of alterations within the animal body happen in accordance with necessarily effective causes, it is nonetheless the case that

- the entire series of actions, and thus each individual one, and so
- their condition,
- the entire body itself that executes them, and consequently
- the process through which and within which it exists

¹ [The unexplained assumption that animal life is in development in vegetative life is in the original, and is not an artefact of the present version.]

are nothing other than the will's phenomenon, its coming into visibility, its objectivisation. This is the basis for the complete *fit* between •the human and animal body and •human and animal will in general. It resembles the way an intentionally made tool answers to the will of its maker, though it far surpasses that; and for this reason appears as purposiveness, i.e. as the teleological explicability of the body. The body's parts must therefore completely correspond to the principal desires through which the will manifests itself—they must be those desires' visible expression. Teeth, throat and intestinal tract are objectified hunger; the genitals are the objectified sex drive; the grasping hand, the hurrying feet, correspond to the more indirect desires of the will that they express. As the human form generally corresponds to the human will generally, so the individual bodily structure corresponds to the individually modified will, the character of the individual; so it is over-all and in all its parts full of character and expression. It's very remarkable that Parmenides has already expressed this in the following verses [and he quotes them in Greek and in Latin].

21. The will as thing in itself

These considerations make it possible for someone to know *in abstracto*—and thus distinctly and surely—something that everyone already immediately knows *in concreto*, i.e. as a feeling, namely

- that the nature *in itself* of his phenomenal being, which manifests itself to him as presentation, both in his actions and in his body which is their permanent substratum, is his *will*;
- that his will is what is most immediate in his consciousness, though it has not completely passed into the form of presentation in which object and subject

stand over against each other, but makes itself known to him in a direct manner, in which he does not clearly distinguish subject and object; and

- that his will is not known to the individual himself as a whole, but only in its particular acts.

Anyone who has along with me become convinced of this will find that it gives him the key to knowledge of the innermost essence of **the whole of nature**; for he will re-apply it to all those phenomena that are not given to him—as is his own phenomenal existence—both in immediate and mediated knowledge, but given only in the mediated way, thus merely one-sidedly, as *presentation* alone. Not only will he recognise that same will as the innermost nature of phenomena that are very like his own, in human beings and animals, but further **reflection** will lead him to recognise as well the force

- that drives and vegetates in plants,
- by which crystals form,
- that turns the magnet toward the North Pole,
- that produces a shock when metals of two different kinds are brought into contact, and
- gives matter its tendencies to repulsion and attraction, decomposition and combination, and lastly the gravity that acts so strongly on all matter, drawing the stone toward the earth and the earth toward the sun

as being with respect to its inner nature the same as what is in an immediate way so intimately known to him—better known than anything else—and which in its clearest manifestation is called *will*. [AS builds into this complex sentence the qualification that the physical 'force' he is identifying with will 'differs from human will only in its phenomenon'.] This use of **reflection** is the only thing that prevents us from staying with the phenomenon, and carries us over to the *thing in itself*. A phenomenon means a presentation and nothing beyond that: every presentation, of whatever sort

it may be, every object, is a phenomenon. *Will* alone is the *thing in itself*. As such, it is totally different from a presentation; it is that of which all presentations, all objects, are the phenomenon, the visible aspect, the objectivisation. It is the inmost nature, the kernel, of every particular thing and also of the whole. It appears in •every blindly acting force of nature and also in •men's preconsidered actions, the great difference between these two consisting merely in the degree of the manifestation, not in the nature of what is manifested.

22. Extension of the concept of will

For this *thing in itself* (I'll retain the Kantian term as a standing formula), which can never as such *be* an object because all objects are its mere phenomenon, we must borrow the name and concept of an object, i.e. of something in some way objectively given, and consequently of one of its own phenomena. But in order to serve as a help to the understanding, this has to be of all its phenomena the most complete, i.e. the clearest, the most developed, and the most directly enlightened by knowledge. And that is the human *will*. It must be well noted, however, . . . that the concept of will is here given a greater extension than it previously had. Knowledge of sameness in different phenomena and of difference in similar phenomena is precisely, as Plato so often notes, a condition of philosophy. But until now no-one had recognised that every kind of active and operating force in nature is essentially identical with will; so the multifarious kinds of phenomena—the different forces—were treated as radically different in kind rather than as different species of a single genus; so there was no word available to designate the concept of this genus. I therefore name the genus after its most excellent [*vorzüglichsten*, which could mean 'most

notable' or 'most important'.] species, the more close-in and immediate recognition of which leads us to indirect recognition of all the others. Anyone who couldn't achieve the broadening of the concept here required would be caught up in a permanent **misunderstanding**, always wanting to use the word *will* to refer to the only species that has been designated by it until now, namely

will directed by knowledge and expressing itself exclusively in accordance with motives, indeed only in accordance with abstract motives, and thus under the direction of reason;

which (I repeat) is only the clearest phenomenon of will. So we have to separate in thought •the immediately familiar innermost essence of this phenomenon and carry it over to •all weaker, less clear phenomena that have the same essence; and in that way we'll achieve the required broadening of the concept of will.

A different **misunderstanding** would be committed by anyone who thought that it doesn't really matter whether that essence-in-itself of all phenomena is called 'will' or something else. He would be right about this if that *thing in itself* were something whose existence we merely *inferred*, something we knew about only indirectly and merely *in abstracto*; then of course we could call it anything we liked; the name would stand as a mere sign for an unknown quantity. But the word *will*, whose role is (like a magic spell) to unlock for us the innermost essence of everything in nature, in no way designates •an unknown quantity, a Something reached by inferences, but rather •something we know immediately, something so very familiar to us that we know and understand much better what will is than anything else whatever.

Until now, the concept of will has been subsumed under the concept of force. Whereas I reverse this, and want every force in nature to be thought of as will. Don't think that

this is a negligible disagreement concerning words; rather, it is of the very highest significance and importance. For the concept of **force**, like all other concepts,¹ ultimately rests on—and is created out of—perceptual knowledge of the objective world, i.e. phenomena, presentations. The concept is an abstraction from the domain in which cause and effect reign, i.e. from perceptual presentation, and it refers to the causality of a cause at the point where the cause can't be further explained etiologically, and is the necessary presupposition of all etiologically explanation. On the other hand, the concept of **will** is the only one that has its origin not in the phenomenon, not in mere perceptual presentation, but comes from within; it comes from the most immediate consciousness of each of us, in which each knows his own individuality—according to its nature, immediately and apart from all form, even that of subject and object—and which at the same time is this individuality, for here the knower and the known coincide. Therefore: **(i)** If we trace the concept of force back to that of will, we are tracing something less known back to something infinitely better known, indeed to the only thing that is immediately and fully known to us, thereby greatly extending the range of our knowledge. **(ii)** If instead we subsume the concept of will under that of force, which is what everyone has done until now, we are abandoning our only immediate knowledge of the world's inner nature, letting it sink into a concept that has been abstracted from the phenomenon; and with that we can then never get beyond the phenomenon.

23. The illusion of free will. Will without motive

The will as *thing in itself* is entirely different from its phenomenon and wholly free from all of the phenomenon's forms, . . . which concern only its *objectivity* and are foreign to the will itself. Even presentation's most general form, that of *object for a subject*, does not concern it; still less the subordinate forms that have their common expression in the GP. As we know, even time and space belong to the GP, as does (therefore) the *plurality* that is made possible only through them. With this in mind I shall—borrowing an expression from the scholasticism of old—call time and space the **individuation-maker**, which I here ask, once for all, to be kept in mind.² For it is by means of **a** time and **b** space alone that what is one and the same in essence and concept yet makes its appearance as a plurality in **b** juxtaposition and **a** succession. Space and time are consequently the individuation-maker, the theme of so much pondering and disputing among the scholastics. [He gives a scholarly reference.]

So the will as thing in itself lies outside the domain of the GP in all its shapes, and consequently

- it is absolutely groundless, though all its phenomena are thoroughly subject to the GP;
- it is also free from all plurality, although its phenomena in time and space are innumerable;
- it is itself *one*—not as an object is one, where unity is thought of only in contrast with possible plurality; or as a concept is one, having arisen only by abstraction from plurality; but rather as what lies outside time and space, the individuation-maker, i.e. the possibility of plurality.

¹ [He has to mean 'like all other concepts except that of *will*'.]

² [The phrase AS asks us to keep in mind is the Latin *principium individuationis*, translated here and throughout as you can see.]

Only when we have become clear in our minds about all this—having been made so by the following discussion of the will's phenomena and various manifestations—will we fully understand the sense of the Kantian doctrine that time, space, and causality do not belong to the thing in itself but are only forms of knowledge.

The groundlessness of the will has actually been recognised where the will is most clearly manifested, as the will of human beings, which has been called 'free' and 'independent'. But those who talk this way overlook the fact that while the will itself is groundless its phenomenon is everywhere subject to causal necessity; and they describe as 'free' actions that are not so, since every individual action follows with strict necessity from the effect of motives on character. . . . The GP is the universal form of all phenomena, and man in his action must, like every other phenomenon, be subordinated to it. But because in self-consciousness the will is recognised immediately and in itself, this is also a consciousness of freedom. But what one experiences here is not will as thing in itself but rather a phenomenon of will, as such already determined and having entered into the form pertaining to phenomena, the GP. Hence arises a strange double fact. (i) Everyone takes himself *a priori* to be entirely free, even in his individual actions, and supposes that he could at any moment begin another way of life, which would mean becoming another person. (ii) But *a posteriori*, through experience, he finds to his amazement that he is not free but subject to necessity, that despite all intentions and reflection his behaviour does not change, and that he must go through life with the very character that he disapproves of, as it were playing out to the end the role he has taken on. I can't pursue this topic further at present, because it is ethical and so belongs elsewhere in this work [Book IV, chapter 55]. Here I want only to emphasize that the phenomenon of the

will (which is in itself groundless) is subject to the law of necessity, i.e. to the GP, just because it is a phenomenon; so that the necessity with which the phenomena of nature occur won't be an obstacle to recognising them as manifestations of the will. . . .

Until now, the only things that have been viewed as phenomena of the will are alterations that have no other ground than a motive, i.e. a presentation; so that will has been attributed only to human beings—or at most to animals, because (as I have mentioned elsewhere) the true and exclusive characteristic of animality is knowledge, presentation. But the instincts and constructional drives of animals show us that will is also active where no knowledge directs it. That they have presentations and knowledge is irrelevant here, for the goal they work towards as definitely as if it were a known motive is yet entirely unknown to them. Their action occurs here without motive, is not directed by presentations, and gives us our first and clearest sign that the will can also be active in the absence of all knowledge.

- The one-year-old bird has no presentation of the eggs for which it builds a nest.
- The young spider has none of the prey for which makes its web, or the ant-eater of the ants for which it is for the first time digging a pit.
- The larva of the stag-beetle makes the hole in the wood, in which it is to await its metamorphosis, making it twice as big if it is going to be a male beetle so as to make room for its horns.

. . . . In such behaviour by these animals, as in all their other behaviour, the will is obviously active; but it is blind activity, *accompanied* indeed by knowledge but not *directed* by it. Once we understand that presentation as a motive is not a necessary condition for activity of will, we'll more easily recognise the effectiveness of the will in cases where

it is less obvious. For example, we won't ascribe the shell that houses a snail to a will that is foreign to it yet directed by knowledge, any more than we'll suppose that the house that we ourselves construct comes into existence by a will other than our own. Rather, we'll recognise both houses as works of will that is objectified in both phenomena, acting in us in accordance with motives but in snails still blindly, as a formative impulse directed outwards. Even in us, the same will acts blindly in many ways: in all those functions of our body not directed by knowledge, in all of its vital and vegetative processes, digestion, circulation, secretion, growth, reproduction. Not only the body's actions but (as I have shown above) the body itself is altogether a phenomenon of will, objectified will, concrete will. So everything that happens within it must occur through the will, although the will is not here directed by knowledge, not determined in accordance with *motives*, but rather—acting blindly—in accordance with *causes*, which in this case are called stimuli. I call '**cause**' in the narrowest sense of the word any state of matter which, in necessitating another, itself undergoes as great an alteration as the other does, this being expressed by the rule 'Action and reaction are equal'. Further, with causes proper, the effect increases exactly in proportion to the cause, and vice versa. So...the degree of intensity of the effect can be measured and calculated on the basis of the degree of intensity of the cause, and vice-versa. Such causes, properly so-called, are at work in all mechanical phenomena, chemical processes, etc., in short, in all the changes in inorganic bodies. On the other hand, I call '**stimuli**' the causes that don't themselves undergo reactions proportional to their effect, whose intensity doesn't at all parallel the intensity of their effects, and which thus

can't be measured by them. Rather, a small increase in the stimulus can lead to a very great increase in the effect, or—to the contrary—entirely nullify the previous effect, and so on. All effects on organic bodies as such are of this sort: properly organic and vegetative alterations in animal bodies all happen in response to stimuli, not to mere causes. But stimuli, causes and motives never determine more than the point in time and space of the expression of a force, not the inner nature of the force itself. In accordance with my previous discussion, I recognise this force as *will*, to which I thus ascribe the unconscious as well as the conscious alterations of the body. The stimulus occupies a middle position: it's a **bridge** between

- a motive, which is causality that has passed through knowledge, and
- a cause in the narrowest sense.

It lies closer to motives in some cases, closer to causes in others, but should be distinguished from both. Thus, for example, the rising of sap in plants occurs in response to stimuli, and can't be explained on the basis of mere causes, whether through the laws of hydraulics or those of capillary action; but it is supported by these laws, and is over-all very close to purely causal alteration. By contrast, the movements of ·dancing plants· [he gives the Latin names of two species of them], although arising from mere stimuli, are like motivated movements, and almost seem to *want* to cross the **bridge**! The narrowing of the pupils with an increase in light occurs in response to a stimulus, but it is associated with a motivated movement: too strong a light would have a painful effect on the retina, and to avoid this we contract our pupils.¹

What leads to erections is a motive, since it is a presen-

¹ [AS seems to say here that the pupils contract *because of* the threat of pain, but perhaps he means something more plausible.]

tation.¹ But it acts with the necessity of a stimulus, i.e. it can't be resisted and can be rendered ineffectual only by removing it. It is just the same with disgusting objects that arouse an inclination to vomit. [There follows a long passage about breathing, which AS says is motivated; we could commit suicide by holding our breath, he says, if we were strongly enough motivated to do so; there have been examples of this, and the possibility of it is partly supported by scientific evidence. He includes this: 'Breathing provides the most obvious example of the fact that motives operate with just as much necessity of effect as stimuli and mere causes in the narrowest sense, and can be made ineffective only by opposing motives.' That leads to this:] Knowing that necessity is common to movements in response to motives and to those in response to stimuli makes it easier for us to grasp that what happens entirely lawfully in organic bodies in response to stimuli is in its inner nature *will*, which is—never in itself, but in all its phenomena—subject to the GP, i.e. to necessity. So we shan't stop at recognising **animals** as phenomena of will—in their actions and also in their entire existence, bodily structure and organisation—but shall even carry this over to **plants**, whose totality of movements occurs in response to stimuli, regarding them as phenomena of this *nature in itself* of things, of which we alone have immediate knowledge. For the only essential difference between animals and plants is that animals alone have knowledge and movements conditioned by it in response to motives. Thus what makes its appearance with respect to presentation as plants—as mere vegetation, blindly driving force—we shall regard as *will* with respect to its nature in itself, and recognise it as the thing that constitutes the basis

of the phenomenon that *we* are, as it is expressed in our actions and indeed in the entire existence of our body.

All that remains for us is to take the final step of extending our treatment also to all the forces at work in nature in accordance with general, unchangeable laws governing the movements of **all inorganic bodies**, whose lack of organs means that they have no sensitivity (for stimuli) and no knowledge (for motives). So we must apply the key to understanding things' *nature in itself*—which only immediate knowledge of our own nature could give us—also to the phenomena of the inorganic world that are at the furthest distance from us.

When we consider these ·inorganic· things with an inquiring eye—when we see

- the mighty, ceaseless **drive** with which the waters rush to the deep,
- the **persistence** with which the magnet keeps turning to the North Pole,
- the **longing** with which iron flies towards the magnet,
- the violence with which electricity's poles **try** to be reunited, and which like the violence of human desires is increased by obstacles,
- crystals quickly and suddenly forming with so much regularity of structure that it seems to show a decisive and determinate **endeavour** in various directions,
- how selectively bodies, set free by their fluid state from the bonds of rigidity, **attract** and **repel** one another,

and when, finally, we feel in an entirely immediate way how a weight whose **striving** towards the mass of the earth burdens our body, incessantly presses on it in pursuit of its one endeavour—then it won't be hard for us to recognise ·in

¹ [AS is thinking of the male erection as caused by some arousing tactual or visual input, i.e. by a presentation. So far, so good; but why does he say also that it is a motive? Puzzling!]

these inorganic bodies·, distant as they are from us, *our own* nature, the one that

- in us pursues its purposes by the light of knowledge, but
- there in the weakest of its phenomena strives only blindly, dully, one-sidedly, and unalterably,

and yet must in both cases bear the name *will*, because it is everywhere one and the same, just as first dawn shares the name ‘sunlight’ with the rays of full midday. Thus *will* designates that which is the being in itself of everything in the world—the one and only core of every phenomenon.

The **a** phenomena of inorganic nature *seem* to be utterly different from the **b** will that we perceive as the inner reality of our own being; this is primarily because of the contrast between the fully determined conformity to law in **a** one of these sorts of phenomenon and the seemingly unregulated choice involved in **b** the other.

b ·The reason for the latter is that· in human beings individuality comes powerfully to the fore; everyone has his own character; so that a given motive won’t have the same effect in everyone, its effect in a given individual being modified by a thousand circumstances that he knows about but others don’t. For this reason, actions can’t be determined in advance on the basis of motives alone without bringing in the other factor—exact information about the individual character and the knowledge that accompanies it.

a By contrast, the phenomena of natural forces are at the other extreme: their effects conform to general laws—no deviation, no individuality—in accordance with circumstances that are evidently present ·as distinct from being known only by some individual·, and are subject to the most exact predetermination; a single natural force expresses itself in exactly the

same way in its millions of phenomena.

To clarify this point—to demonstrate the identity of the one and indivisible will through all of its diverse phenomena, in the weakest as in the strongest—we have first to consider how the will as thing in itself relates to its phenomenon, i.e. how *the world as will* relates to *the world as presentation*. Doing this will open up for us the best path toward a deeper examination of the whole theme of this second Book.

24. The concept of will and natural science

We have learned from the great Kant

- that time, space, and causality. . . exist in our consciousness independently of the objects that appear in them and constitute their content; or in other words,
- that they can be arrived at just as well if we start from the subject as if we start from the object.

So they can with equal right be called •the subject’s forms of perception or •characteristics of the object *qua* object (for Kant: appearance), i.e. presentation. Those forms can also be viewed as the indivisible boundary between object and subject: all objects must make their appearance within them, but the subject completely possesses and surveys them, independently of the objects making their appearance.

If the objects that appear in these forms are not empty phantoms, but **have a significance**, they must **signify something**, be the expression of something that is not (as they are) object, presentation, a merely relative existence for a subject, but which exists without any such dependence on something that stands over against it as a condition; that is, it must be not a presentation but a *thing in itself*. So we can at least ask: are those presentations, those objects, something else beyond and apart from their status as presentations, as objects of a subject? And if so, what would they be? What is

that other side of them, totally different from presentation? What is the thing in itself? My answer has been *will*; but I set that aside for now.

Whatever •the thing in itself may be, Kant rightly concluded that time, space, and causality (which I afterwards found to be shapes of the GP, the general expression of the forms of the phenomenon) are not properties of *it* but could belong only to its phenomenon. For since the subject recognises and construes them wholly out of himself, independently of all objects, they must attach to being-a-presentation as such, not to whatever it is that takes on this form. [AS develops this point in a very difficult passage in the course of which he repeats that **a** time, **b** space, and **c** causality—and items that presuppose them:

- plurality, through **b** juxtaposition and **a** succession,
- change and duration, through the law of **c** causality,

—are applicable not to what takes on ‘the form of presentation’ but only to ‘this form itself’. And he says that how the thing in itself ‘announces itself in an immediate way’ does not involve any of the famous three or of any items that presuppose them. Out of his dauntingly tangled development of this, AS emerges with the conclusion that] our guaranteed source for knowledge that is satisfactory, utterly exhaustive, and clear as to its ultimate ground consists in the *forms* of all phenomena, known to us *a priori*. The forms that are relevant to perceptual knowledge (which is all we are concerned with here) are time, space, and causality. Grounded *a priori* in these alone is the whole of pure mathematics and pure natural science. Only in these sciences, therefore, does knowledge find no obscurity, does not run up against the unfathomable, that which is not further derivable, the groundless, i.e. will). Even Kant (I said this earlier) was willing to call those sorts of knowledge—along with logic—*science*. But they show us nothing beyond mere

relationships, the relation of one presentation to another, form without any content. Any content they get, any phenomenon that fills those forms, contains something that is not completely knowable in its whole nature, something that cannot be entirely explained through something else and is thus groundless; and through this the knowledge becomes less evident and loses complete transparency. But that which escapes being grounded is precisely *the thing in itself*, something that is not a presentation, not an object of knowledge, but has become recognisable only because it has entered into that form. The form is originally foreign to it, and the thing-in-itself can never become entirely one with it, can never be traced back to mere form, and—since this form is the GP—can never be completely explained. Even if

- all of mathematics gives us exhaustive knowledge of magnitude, location, number—in short, spatial and temporal relations in phenomena, and even if
- all of etiology provides a complete statement of the law-governed conditions under which phenomena occur in time and space—though it doesn’t go further than telling us why a particular phenomenon has to appear precisely *here* at one time and *here* at another,

these never take us into the inner nature of things; there always remains Something for which no explanation can be ventured but which explanation always presupposes. . . . Something that •has taken on a certain form and •now comes to the fore in accordance with that form’s law; but this law determines only

- its coming to the fore, not that which comes to the fore,
- only the How not the What of the phenomenon,
- only the form, not the content. . . .

Mechanics, physics, chemistry teach us the rules and laws according to which the forces of impenetrability, gravity,

rigidity, fluidity, cohesion, elasticity, heat, light, elective affinities,¹ magnetism, electricity etc. operate, i.e. the law, the rule, that these forces observe in their occurrence at any point in time and space; but however hard we work on them, the forces remain occult qualities [see Glossary]. [In the rest of this paragraph AS emphasizes in various complicated ways that our patterns of explanation, and our associated uses of the concept of necessity, are entirely confined to the level of presentations, and have no bearing on *what* is presented in them, namely the thing in itself.]

In all ages an etiology that failed to recognise its own goal has tried to reduce

- all organic life to chemical processes, or to electricity,
- all chemical qualities to mechanism (effects produced by the shapes of atoms),
- these partly to phoronomy, i.e. to time and space as united in the possibility of movement, and to geometry, i.e. to location in space. . . . and
- geometry to arithmetic,

which because of its single dimension is the mode of the GP that is the most comprehensible, the most easily surveyed, fathomable all the way down. I cite as examples of the procedure here described

- the atoms of Democritus,
- the vortexes of Descartes,
- the mechanical physics of Lesage, who in the 1780s tried to explain chemical affinities and gravitation through impact and pressure. . . .,
- Reil's 'form and compounding' as the cause of animal life, which also tends in this direction, and finally
- the crude materialism that recently—in the middle of the 19th century!—was served up again by people

who thought it was something original.

This materialism begins with a mindless disavowal of the life-force, leaving phenomena involving life to be explained through physical and chemical forces, and these in turn to be explained in terms of the mechanical workings of matter—the matter, location, shape, and movement of fictional 'atoms'—and so would reduce all forces of nature to impact and repulsion, which are materialism's *thing in itself*. [To reinforce his contempt for 19th century materialism, AS says that it includes theories of light and colour which he mocks as 'crass, mechanical, Democritean plodding'; he finds it almost incredible that anyone should still think that Newton was right about colour '50 years after the appearance of Goethe's theory of colours'. He will return soon, he says, to 'this mistaken reduction of original natural forces to others', but 'that is enough for now'. He goes on about where we would get to if we carried materialism's project the whole way through: total explanatory success, led by the GP to 'the holiest thing in the temple of wisdom'; but with nothing on our plates but phenomena—all form and no content. He concludes (echoing things he said back in chapter 7):] If we proceeded in this way, the entire world would be derived from the subject, establishing what Fichte, with his empty bombast, tried to *seem* to establish.

But this is not how things go: fantasies, sophistries, castles in the air have been constructed in this manner, not science. There has been success, and every success has brought true progress in reducing the many and manifold phenomena in nature to single original forces; a number of forces and qualities that were first held to be distinct have been derived from others (e.g. magnetism from electricity), and their number thus diminished. Etiology will have

¹ [A now outdated concept that is roughly equivalent to *valency* in chemistry.]

reached its goal when it has recognised and displayed all the *original*—i.e. underived—forces of nature and established their mode of operation, i.e. the rules by which, according to the directing principle of causality, their phenomena occur and determine one another's positions in time and space. But *primal* forces will always remain; the phenomenon will always contain, as an irresolvable residuum, a content that cannot be reduced to its form and so can't be explained—in the manner of the GP—on the basis of something else.

For in every thing in nature there is something of which no ground can ever be given, no explanation is possible, no further cause can be sought—namely, the specific nature of its action, i.e. the nature of its existence, its essence. For every single one of a thing's effects there is indeed always a cause to be shown from which it follows that the thing had to be effective right here, right now; but never a cause of its being effective at all and in just this way. If it has no other qualities—if it is a mote in a sunbeam—it at least displays that unfathomable Something in the form of weight and impenetrability. This Something relates to the natural thing in the way a man's will relates to him; and, like that will, it isn't subject to explanation with respect to its inner nature. It is indeed identical with that will. For every one of the will's acts at this time, in this place, a motive can be proved from which—given that person's character—it necessarily had to ensue. But no ground can be provided for

- his having this character,
- his willing at all,
- his will's being moved by just precisely this one motive, or indeed for
- its being moved by any motive.

That which is for a human being his unfathomable character, presupposed by all motive-based explanations of his actions, is for every inorganic body just the same as its essential

quality, its mode of effectiveness, the manifestations of which are called forth by external effects on it but which is itself determined by nothing outside it, and thus is inexplicable. Its individual manifestations, through which alone it becomes visible, are subordinated to the GP, but it itself is groundless. The scholastics had in essence already accurately recognised this and called it *forma substantialis* [Latin for 'substantial form'].

It is an equally great error, though a common one, to think that the most frequently occurring, most general, and simplest phenomena are the ones we understand best, whereas really they are only the ones that we in our ignorance have become most accustomed to. We can no more explain why a stone falls to the earth than explain why an animal moves. It has been supposed (I repeat) that

- by proceeding from the most general natural forces—such as gravitation, cohesion, impenetrability—we could use them to
- explain ones that are less common and are effective only under particular combinations of circumstances (e.g. chemical qualities, electricity, magnetism), and then on the basis of these we could
- understand organisms and the life of animals, indeed even human knowledge and willing.

Men silently resigned themselves to starting from mere occult qualities, not trying to illuminate them because the aim was to build on them, not to dig down under them. Such a building would always hover in the air. What use are explanations that eventually take us back to something of which we are as ignorant as we were of the initial problem? In the end, do we understand any more of the inner nature of those general natural forces than we do of the inner nature of an animal? Isn't the one as unexplored as the other? Unfathomable because it is groundless, because it is the

content—the *What* of the phenomenon—which can never be reduced to its form, to the *How*. But we who have in view not etiology but philosophy—i.e. not relative but unconditioned knowledge of the nature of the world—take the opposite way and start from

- that which is directly and most completely known to us, altogether familiar, lying closest to us,

in order to understand

- that which is known to us only from afar, one-sidedly, and indirectly,

and we want on the basis of the strongest, most significant, clearest phenomenon to understand those that are less perfect and weaker. With the exception of my own body, only one side of things is known to me, that of presentation; their inner nature remains closed off and a deep mystery to me, even if I know all the causes of their alterations. The only way I can get insight into the mode and manner in which those lifeless bodies are altered in response to causes, and so understand what their inner nature is, is by comparing

- what happens in me when a motive leads my body to perform an action with
- the inner nature of my own alterations when they have external causes.

I can do this because my body is the one object of which I know not merely the one side, the side of presentation, but also the second side, which is called *will*. Thus instead of believing that

I would better understand my own organic existence, and then my knowing and willing and movement in response to motives, if only I could trace them back to movements following from causes through electricity,

chemical processes, mechanism,

if I am to pursue philosophy and not etiology, I must go in the opposite direction and

- understand even the simplest and commonest movements of inorganic bodies that I see ensuing in response to causes on the basis of my own movement in response to motives, and
- recognise the unfathomable forces that express themselves in all the bodies in nature as identical in kind with *will* in me, differing from it only in degree. . . .

Spinoza says that a stone flying through the air as a result of impact would, if it had consciousness, think it was flying of its own will.¹ I add only that the stone would be right. Impact is for it what motives are for me; and what in the case of the stone makes its **appearance** as cohesion, weight, persistence in a given state, is in its **inner essence** the same as what I recognise as *will*, which the stone would also recognise as will if knowledge came to it. In that passage, Spinoza was focusing on the necessity with which the stone is flying, and rightly carries that over to the necessity of a person's individual acts of will. Whereas I consider ·first· the inner nature which alone imparts meaning and validity to all real necessity (i.e. effect following upon a cause) as its presupposition. In men this is called character; in a stone it is called quality, but it is the same in both. It is called *will* where there is immediate knowledge of it. Its degree of visibility, objectivisation, is the weakest in stones, the strongest in human beings.

Even Saint Augustine recognised, with accurate sentiment, this identical element in the striving of all things and in our willing, and I can't forbear from presenting his naïve expression of the matter. [He quotes it in Latin; we can do

¹ [Letter 56 in the version of Spinoza's letters presented on the website from which the present text came.]

without it.]

It should also be noted that even Euler saw that the nature of gravitation must eventually come down to bodies' having an 'inclination or desire' (and so *will*). This turns him away from the concept of gravitation as it is found in Newton, and inclines him to try to modify that in accord with the earlier Cartesian theory, deriving gravitation from the impact on bodies of an ether, as 'more rational, and more suitable for people who prefer clear and comprehensible principles'. He wants to ban *attraction* from physics as an occult quality [see Glossary]. This perfectly fits the view of dead nature—as a correlate of the immaterial soul—that was dominant in Euler's time. This is worthy of notice because it shows that this subtle mind, seeing glimmering at a distance the fundamental truth that I have established, hurriedly switched and in his fear of seeing all the fundamental views of his time endangered sought refuge in ancient already discarded absurdities.

25. Space and time as the principle of individuation. Plato's ideas.

We know that all *plurality* is necessarily conditioned by time and space and is thinkable only within them; so we call space and time the individuation-maker. [AS goes on to say, in a needlessly complicated way, that time and space belong to the world of presentations, and have no bearing on *will*, the thing in itself. So *will* can be said to be *one*, not as an individual or even as a concept is *one*, but as something that has no possibility of plurality. Despite the plurality of things in space and time, *will* remains indivisible. There's

no question of there being a smaller part of it in a stone than in a human being: the part/whole relation is confined to space. (And the only more/less contrast that is relevant to the thing in itself has to do not with parts of it but with its degree of visibility or objectivisation—more in plants than in stones, more in animals than in plants.) *Will* reveals itself just as entirely in one oak tree as in millions of them. AS concludes:] Therefore, one might also maintain that if *per impossibile* a single being, even the most insignificant, were to be wholly annihilated, the entire world would have to perish with it. . . .¹

People have tried in many ways to bring the immeasurable greatness of the cosmos closer to everyone's power of comprehension, and have then taken the opportunity to make edifying remarks about

- the relative minuteness of the earth, and indeed of human beings;

and, in the other direction, about

- the greatness of the mind within this human being who is so small—a mind that can discover, grasp, even measure this cosmic magnitude, and so on.

All very well! But when I think about the vastness of the world, the most important point is that the *being in itself* whose manifestation is the world cannot have its true self pulled apart and scattered throughout boundless space, and that this endless extension belongs only to its manifestation. **The thing-in-itself is present entire and undivided in every object of nature and in every living being.** So nothing is lost if we remain with some individual thing. True wisdom is to be attained not by

¹ [He is referring to the situation where not only is (say) a grain of dust wiped out as a presentation but what it is a presentation of is also wiped out. That would be the annihilation of *will*, and thus of the world. It may be worth noting that Spinoza wrote: 'If one part of matter were annihilated, the whole of extension would also vanish at the same time.' This is in his Letter 4 on the website from which the present text came.]

- taking the measure of the boundless world, or
- (more to the point!) by personally flying through infinite space, but rather
- by examining some individual thing in its entirety, trying to arrive at complete knowledge and understanding of its true and proper nature.

·PLATO'S IDEAS·

Plato's 'ideas' will be discussed in detail in Book III, but I bring them now in a preliminary way because I want to use the word 'idea' in his sense, which is legitimate for me because I take his ideas to be

the different levels¹ of the objectification of will that, expressed in countless individuals, stand before us as their unattained paradigms, or as the eternal *forms* of things—not themselves entering into time and space (the medium of individuals), but standing fixed, subject to no change, always being, never having become, while individuals arise and pass away, are always *becoming* and never *are*.

[He goes on to say that Kant wrongly used the word 'idea' to stand for 'abstract productions of scholastically dogmatising reason' and that he—AS—should always be understood to mean it in 'the genuine and original meaning that Plato gave it'; and so:] I thus understand by 'idea' any particular and fixed level of objectification of will, so far as the latter is thing in itself and thus foreign to plurality; these levels relate to individual things as their eternal forms or their paradigms. Diogenes Laërtius gives us the briefest and most concise expression of this famous Platonic doctrine: 'Plato said that it was as if the ideas subsisted in nature as paradigms; other things resembled them, standing to them in the nature of a likeness.' I take no further notice of the Kantian misuse;

what needs to be said about it is in the Appendix.

26. Original forces. Malebranche

·ORIGINAL FORCES·

The most general forces of nature are displayed as the lowest level of the objectification of will, some of them showing up in all matter without exception, such as gravity, impenetrability; others dividing things up so that some hold sway over *this* kind of matter, others over *that*, such as forces that produce rigidity, fluidity, elasticity, electricity, magnetism, chemical properties and qualities of every sort. They are immediate phenomena of will, as much so as are the actions of human beings; and as such are groundless, like the characters of human beings. Only their individual phenomena are subject to the GP, like the actions of human beings; the forces themselves can never be called either effects or causes, but are the presupposed conditions of all causes and effects, through which their own nature unfolds and reveals itself. So it is unintelligible to ask about a *cause* of gravity or of electricity; when something causes something else, a force is in play, but the force is not itself the effect of a cause or the cause of an effect.

So it is wrong to say: 'Gravity is the cause of the stone's falling.' Rather, the nearness of the earth is the cause here, in that it draws the stone to it. Remove the earth and the stone will not fall, even though gravity remains. The force itself lies entirely outside the chain of causes and effects, which presupposes time and has meaning only with reference to it; so the force lies outside of time as well. Any individual alteration has another individual alteration as its cause, but not the force of which it is the expression. For what

¹ [the German is *Stufen* = 'steps', 'rungs', 'grades'.]

gives a cause its efficiency every time it occurs is a natural force. As such, it is groundless, i.e. lies entirely outside the chain of causes and outside the domain of the GP, and is philosophically recognised as an immediate objectivisation of the will that is the *in-itself* of the whole of nature; but in etiology (in this case physics) it is set down as an original force, i.e. an occult quality.

On the higher levels of objectivisation of will we see individuality come significantly to the fore, especially in human beings with their great diversity of individual character, i.e. of complete personality, already externally expressed by strongly marked individual physiognomy, taking this to include the whole bodily form. No animal has anything close to this degree of individuality; only the higher animals have a touch of it, but ·even in them· the character of the species still overwhelmingly predominates, so that they have little individual physiognomy. The further down we proceed, the more is any trace of individual character lost in the general character of the species. . . . From familiarity with the psychological character of the species, we know exactly what is to be expected of the individual; whereas in the human species every individual has to be studied and fathomed on his own. This study is made extremely difficult by the fact that a human, endowed with reason, may put it to use by dissimulating, [and he adds facts about the complexity of human brains compared with those of ‘other animals’]. A noteworthy feature of the individual character that distinguishes human beings from all animals is this: animals satisfy their sex drive without any noticeable choice, whereas in human beings the choice is carried so far—in an instinctive manner that is independent of all reflection—that it rises to the level of a mighty passion! So every human being is to be regarded as an especially determined and characterised phenomenon of *will*. . . . In animals this **individual** character is entirely lacking, with

only **species** having a characteristic significance; and the further we move from human beings the less sign there is of individual character, so that plants have no individual qualities left, except ones that can be fully explained from the favourable or unfavourable external influences of soil, climate, and other accidents [see Glossary]; and individuality entirely vanishes in the inorganic realm of nature. [AS continues with a strange passage maintaining that ‘a crystal is to a certain extent to be viewed as an individual’. His (obscure) reason for this involves •the platonic notion of *idea*, and •a comparison with a tree, which he says can be seen as ‘a systematic aggregate of small plants’. He emerges from this tangle thus:] Individuals as such, i.e. with traces of an individual character, are no longer to be found in inorganic nature. All its phenomena are expressions of general natural forces, i.e. of levels of the objectification of will that are

- not objectified (as in organic nature) through a variety of individuals that collectively express the whole of the *idea*, but are
- displayed only in the species, and as a whole, without any variation in each particular member of it.

Since •time, •space, •plurality, and •causedness don’t pertain to *will* or to *ideas* (levels of the objectification of will), but only to will’s phenomena, it follows that a natural force—e.g. of gravity or electricity—must be displayed in precisely the same way in all the millions of its phenomena, with differences amongst them being created only by external circumstances.

This unity of will’s nature in all its phenomena, this immutable constancy of the phenomena in accordance with the principle of causality, is called a *natural law*. Once such a law has become known to us through experience, we can accurately forecast and rely on the character of its phenomenon. But this conformity to law of the phenomena of the lower levels of the objectification of will is just what

makes them so different from the phenomena of the same will in the higher (i.e. clearer) levels of its objectification—in animals; and in men and their actions, in which the stronger or weaker influence of the individual character, and the susceptibility to motives that often remain hidden from the spectator because they lie in the person's knowledge, have had the result that the sameness in nature of the two kinds of phenomenon—inorganic and organic—has been entirely overlooked until now.

When one proceeds from knowledge of individuals and not knowledge of ideas, the unfaillingness of natural laws has something surprising—indeed sometimes almost horrifying—about it. One might marvel that nature does not forget its laws even a single time. [AS •gives examples of unusual combinations of circumstances (whether contrived or accidental) that dependably produce—'today as much as 1000 years ago, at once and without delay'—the same result every time; •says that this does but shouldn't impress people more than does the operation of natural forces in everyday phenomena; and •recites at length the philosophical insights that will lead us, if we have them, to understand that 'this amazement over the lawful character and punctuality of the working of a natural force' is childish.]

Thus every general original natural force is in its inner nature nothing but a low-level objectification of will; we call every such level an eternal *idea* in Plato's sense. But a natural law is the relation of an idea to the form of its phenomenon. This form is time, space, and causality, which are necessarily and inseparably connected and related to one another.

Through time and space, an idea is multiplied into countless phenomena, but the order in which these phenomena appear is strictly determined by the law of causality; this law is (as it were) the norm that regulates the borders between

the phenomena of various ideas, regulating what space, time, and matter are allotted to them. [AS goes on to say that the 'common substratum' of the various phenomena is 'the aggregate of existing matter', which has to be divided up amongst them; that's why there has to be a law of causality to govern how they make way for each other. He continues:] Thus the law of causality is essentially bound up with the law of the persistence of substance; each getting meaning only from the other. But space and time in turn also relate to the phenomena in just the same way. For

- time is merely the possibility of one portion of matter having contrary determinations, and
- space is merely the possibility of persistence of the same matter under all contrary determinations.

That is why I described matter in Book I as the union of time and space [see page 14.] [AS enlarges on this in an 'aside' which reminds the reader of the doctrines of Book I, because (he says) the reader can't fully understand the two Books unless he attends to the 'inner accord' between them: will and presentation are inseparably united in the actual world, though they have for expository reasons been 'torn apart' in these two Books. He continues with a very long discussion aiming to illustrate the fact that the law of causality merely determines how the phenomena of natural forces share possession of matter, whereas the original natural forces themselves are not subject to causality. He imagines a complex machine that works because of the material's **gravity, rigidity** and **impenetrability**, these being 'original, unexplained forces'; then **magnetism** comes into play; or the machine's copper sheets are laid on sheets of zinc with an acid solution between them, and the matter in the machine immediately falls subject to another original force, **galvanism**. If the temperature is increased and oxygen added, the machine burns up, revealing that **chemical energy** has

laid claim to that matter. AS offers variations on this theme, and finally sums up:] Chemical forces sleep for millennia in a bit of matter before contact with reagents sets them free, *then* they make their appearance; but time exists only for this phenomenon, not for the forces themselves. Galvanism sleeps for millennia in copper and zinc, and they lie quietly alongside of the silver which necessarily goes up in flames as soon as all three come into contact under the requisite conditions. Even in the organic realm, we see a dried grain preserve its sleeping force for three thousand years, and then grow into a plant when favourable circumstances eventually occur.

·MALEBRANCHE·

If this exposition has made clear the difference between a force of nature and all its phenomena; if we have seen that the force is the will itself at this particular level of its objectification, that multiplicity comes to phenomena only through time and space, and that the law of causality is nothing but the determination of the position in time and space of individual phenomena; then we'll recognise the complete truth and deep sense of Malebranche's doctrine of occasioning causes, *causes occasionelles*. It is well worth the trouble to compare my own present account with this doctrine of his [he gives a reference to a particular passage in Malebranche], and to observe the most complete accord between his doctrine and mine along with such a great difference between our systems of thought. Indeed, I have to marvel at how Malebranche, entirely caught up in the positive dogmas that his age irresistibly forced upon him—in such bondage, under such a burden—hit on the truth so accurately and even knew how to combine it with those dogmas, at least verbally.

·Underlying this success of Malebranche's is the fact

that the power of truth is incredibly great and inexpressibly enduring. We find frequent traces of it everywhere, even in the most bizarre (indeed, most *absurd*) dogmas of different times and lands—often in strange company, in amazing mixtures, yet still recognisable as truth. It is like a plant that germinates under a pile of rocks and climbs its way through many detours and deviations until it arrives—misshapen, faded, stunted—into the light.

Malebranche is of course right: every natural cause is only an occasioning cause, provides only an occasion, an opportunity for the phenomenon of that one and indivisible will that is the *in-itself* of all things, and whose various levels of objectification constitute the whole visible world. Only the appearance—the becoming visible—in this place at this time is brought about by the cause and is in that way dependent on it, but not the whole of the phenomenon, nor its inner nature. This is the will itself, to which the GP doesn't apply and which is therefore groundless. Nothing in the world has a sufficient cause of its existence generally, but only a cause of existence just here and just now. That a stone exhibits now gravity, now rigidity, now electricity, now chemical qualities, depends on—and is to be explained by—causes, impressions on it from without. But these qualities themselves—

and thus the stone's whole inner nature which consists in them, and therefore manifests itself in all the ways referred to; thus that the stone is such as it is, that it exists at all

—all this has no ground, but is the visible appearance of the groundless will. Every cause is thus an occasional cause. We have found this to be so in the part of nature that has no knowledge; but it also holds for the actions of animals and human beings, where it is no longer •causes and stimuli but •motives that determine the point of entry for phenomena. For in both cases it is one and the same will that appears;

very different in the levels of its manifestation, multiplied in the phenomena of these levels and at each level subordinated to the GP; but in itself free from all this.

Motives do not determine a man's character, but only its phenomenon—and thus his actions, his life's outward shape—not its inner significance and content. These come from his character, which is the immediate phenomenon of the will, thus groundless. Why one person is evil-minded and another one good doesn't depend on motives and external influences such as teaching and preaching, and is in this sense wholly inexplicable. But whether an evil person

- shows his wickedness in petty injustices, cowardly intrigues, base villainy committed within the narrow sphere of his environment, or rather
- as a conqueror suppresses nations, throws a world into lamentations, spills the blood of millions

is the outward form of his phenomenon, not of its essence; it depends on the circumstances that fate has placed him in, on his surroundings, on external influences, on motives. But his decision in response to these motives can never be explained by them; it comes from the will of which he is a phenomenon. More about this in Book IV. The way a ·human· character discloses its properties is very like the way bodies in the unthinking part of nature disclose theirs. Water remains water with the properties intrinsic to it. But whether it mirrors its banks as a quiet lake, or leaps foaming from a cliff-top, or shoots high in an artificial fountain—that depends on external causes. Each is as natural to it as the others; it is equally ready for all of them, but in each case it is true to its character and always reveals only that. So too will each human character reveal itself under every circumstance; but what phenomena come from it will always depend on what the circumstances were.

27. Conflict in nature. Will as blind

If the foregoing account of the forces of nature and their phenomena has enabled us to see clearly how far an explanation from causes can go, and where it must stop if it is not to degenerate into the vain attempt to reduce the content of all phenomena to their mere form (in which case there would ultimately remain nothing but form), we'll be in a position to determine in a general way what is to be demanded of etiology as a whole. It has to seek out causes for all the phenomena in nature, i.e. the circumstances in which they always occur; then bringing original forces of nature into the picture, accurately distinguishing whether a diversity in phenomena arises from a diversity of forces or only from diversity in the circumstances in which force is expressing itself, and being as careful to avoid

- taking to be a phenomenon of distinct forces what is really an expression of a single force in diverse circumstances, as to avoid
- taking to be expressions of a single force what comes from a diversity of original forces.

This immediately involves *judgment*; which is why so few people can broaden their insight in physics, though all can broaden their experience. Laziness and ignorance lead people to appeal prematurely to original forces; this is shown to an extreme that borders on satire in the 'entities' and 'quiddities' of the scholastics. The last thing I would want is to reintroduce them! It is no more permissible to avoid a physical explanation by •appealing to the objectification of will than it is to do so by •appealing to the creative force of God. For physics demands causes, and will is never a cause. Its whole relation to the phenomenon is not in accordance with the GP. But that which *in itself* is the will exists in another aspect as presentation, i.e. as phenomenon.

As such, it obeys the laws that constitute the form of the phenomenon.

Though every movement is a phenomenon of will, it must have a cause through which it is explicable with reference to a particular time and place, i.e. as an *individual* phenomenon. With a stone the cause is a mechanical one, with a human being's movements it is a motive; but it can never be lacking. On the other hand, the universal common nature of all phenomena of one particular kind, that which must be presupposed if the explanation from causes is to have any sense and meaning, is the general force of nature, which in physics must remain an occult quality, because with it the etiological explanation ends and the metaphysical one begins. But the chain of causes and effects is never broken by an original force that has to be brought in. It doesn't run back to such a force as if it were its first link; but the nearest link and the remotest both presuppose the original force, and couldn't explain anything without it. [AS goes on—with much repetition of earlier material—to explain why 'the etiology of nature and the philosophy of nature never interfere with one another'; and to foreground the term *natural law*, which he explains as 'an infallible rule' governing the circumstances in which a given natural force comes into play. Such a law is a general 'fact'; it falls under the GP, and is in the realm of etiology, not philosophy.]

Consideration of nature as a whole will then be completed by *morphology*, which lists, compares, and classifies all the enduring shapes of organic nature. It has little to say about the cause of the coming into existence of individual beings, since this is in every case a matter of **a** procreation (the theory of which is a separate matter)¹ and in rare cases of **b** spontaneous generation [i.e. life emerging from arrangements

of dead matter]. Strictly speaking, **b** the latter includes the way all low levels of the objectivisation of will—and thus all physical and chemical phenomena—emerge in **individual** cases; and etiology's task is to state the conditions for this emergence. Philosophy, on the other hand, concerns itself only with what is **universal**, in nature as in everything else. So the original forces are its subject matter; it recognises them as different levels of the objectification of the will which is the inner nature or *in-itself* of this world—the world that philosophy, when it sets aside that inner nature, describes as mere presentation to the subject.

[AS turns to the error of a type of etiology which tries to explain everything in terms of just one original force, namely impenetrability. He cites Descartes and the atomists who tried to explain everything, including life, in terms of impact-mechanics, and continues:] While there has been retreat from this position, the same thing is still done in our own day by electrical, chemical and mechanical physiologists who stubbornly try explain the aliveness and all the functions of an organism in terms of how its constituents are shaped and how they are put together. A recent journal article [he gives a reference] says that the goal of physiological explanation is to reduce organic life to the general forces considered by physics.

[AS goes on railing against those—he contemptuously cites Lamarck—who hold that life can be explained purely by heat and electricity. If they were right, he says,] the organism would be blown together by the encounter of these forces just as accidentally as human and animal *shapes* in clouds or stalactites, and thus would be of no further intrinsic interest.

This application to organisms of physical and chemical types of explanation might *within certain limits* be permitted

¹ [The original has *für sich geht*, literally meaning 'goes its own way'.]

and useful. As I will explain, the life-force calls upon and uses the forces of inorganic nature, but it doesn't *consist of* them any more than a smith consists of his hammer and anvil. So not even the simplest case of plant life—let alone *animal* life—will ever be explicable on the basis of them, e.g. on the basis of capillary action and endosmosis. The following consideration will prepare our way for this rather difficult exposition.

·THE PREPARATORY DISCUSSION·

Given what I have been saying, it is an aberration on the part of natural science when it aims to reduce higher to lower levels of the objectivisation of will. For misconstruing or denying original and self-subsistent natural forces is just as mistaken as the groundless assumption of unique forces when what is in question is merely a particular mode of appearance of ones already known. Thus Kant is right to say that it is absurd to hope for a Newton of a blade of grass, i.e. someone who would reduce a blade of grass to phenomena of physical and chemical forces, of which it would then be a chance coming-together, a mere quirk of nature in which no unique idea made its appearance. . . . The scholastics, who would not have permitted this sort of thing, would rightly say that it is a total disavowal of *substantial form* and its demotion to the level of mere *accidental form*; for Aristotle's 'substantial form' designates precisely that which I call a degree of the objectification of will in a thing.

It shouldn't be overlooked that in all ideas—i.e. in all the forces of inorganic and all the structures of organic nature—it is *one and the same will* that reveals itself, i.e. enters into the form of presentation, into objectivisation. Its oneness must therefore be recognisable through an inner resemblance among all its phenomena. This reveals itself at the higher levels of will's objectivisation—thus in the plant

and animal realms—as the universally prevailing analogy of all forms, the **fundamental type** that recurs in all the phenomena. This is the directing principle of the admirable zoological systems coming from the French in this century, and is most fully demonstrated in comparative anatomy. [AS praises (with some reservations) the work of Schelling's school in looking for 'analogies in nature', especially their emphasis on the fact that the separation of a force into activities that oppose one another and strive for reunification is a **fundamental type** that includes almost all the phenomena of nature, from magnets and crystals through to human beings. Not that there's anything new in this:] Knowledge of this fact has been current in China since the most ancient times, in the doctrine of the opposition between *Yin* and *Yang*.

Indeed, just because all things in the world are the objectivisation of one and the same will—and thus identical in their inner nature—it must be the case not only that

- there is that unmistakable analogy among them, with every incomplete thing showing the trace, indication, disposition of its more complete neighbour, but also that
- because all those forms belong to the world only as *presentation*, it is conceivable that even in the most universal forms of the presentation—in that peculiar [see Glossary] space-time framework of the phenomenal world—it may be possible to discern and establish the fundamental type and plan of what fills the forms.

A dim recognition of this seems to have given rise to the Kabbala and all the mathematical philosophy of the Pythagoreans, as well as that of the Chinese in the I Ching. And even in Schelling's school we find—along with many attempts to discover analogies among all the phenomena of nature—several (failed) attempts to derive natural laws from the mere laws of space and time. Anyway, we can't

know how far a brilliant mind might some day go toward succeeding in both endeavours. [What follows is a very long and enormously tangled sentence which constitutes a set of warnings.

- a Don't lose sight of the distinction between phenomenon and thing in itself.
- b Given that it's one and the same will that is objectified in all ideas, don't infer from this that there is only one idea.
- c Don't (for example) try to reduce chemical or electrical attraction to gravitational attraction, despite their inner analogy.
- d Don't let the inner analogy in the structure of all animals trick you into confusing and identifying species, or explaining the more complete ones as chance variations of the less complete.
- e Don't try to reduce physiological functions to chemical or physical processes.

AS emerges from this with a concession, namely that the procedure condemned in warning e can after all be justified 'within certain limits'; he says that what follows will provide the justification.]

When a number of phenomena of the will at its lower levels of objectification (and thus at the level of the inorganic) come into conflict with one another—with each, according to the directing principle of causality, trying to take over the available matter—this dispute gives rise to the phenomenon of a higher idea, which overpowers all the less complete ones while taking an analogue of them up into itself. This process is graspable only through •the identity of the will that makes its appearance in all ideas, and •its striving for ever-higher

objectification. So we see (for example) in the solidifying of bone an unmistakable *analogue of* the crystallization that originally held sway in the calcium, though ossification can never be *reduced to* crystallization. The analogy shows itself in a weaker fashion in the solidifying of flesh. The compounding of fluids in animal bodies and their secretion¹ is an analogue of chemical compounding and precipitation; the laws of the latter are still at work even here, but in a subordinate way, greatly modified, overpowered by a higher idea. Thus merely chemical forces outside of an organism will never produce such fluids. . . .

The more complete idea that emerges from such a victory over a number of lower ideas (objectifications of will) gains a completely new character by taking up into itself a more highly potentiated analogue of the ones it has overpowered: will is objectified in a new and clearer way: initially through spontaneous generation, then through assimilation into the available seed, there arise organic fluids, plants, animals, human beings. Thus out of the conflict among lower phenomena, higher ones come forth, devouring them all and yet bringing about to a higher degree everything they were striving for. So here the law indeed holds sway: 'The serpent becomes a dragon only by devouring serpents' [quoted in Latin from Francis Bacon].

I wish I could overcome the obscurity that clings to the content of these thoughts by the sheer clarity of my account! But I am well aware that the reader's own considerations must come to my aid if I am not to remain uncomprehended or to be misunderstood.

·NATURE AS A BATTLEFIELD·

According to the view in question, traces of chemical and

¹ [This word and the German *Sekretion* refer to the process in which a cell etc. produces a fluid and releases it into the rest of the body. It has nothing to do with keeping anything secret.]

physical ways of operating can be found in an organism, but it can never be *explained* by them. Why?

- Because the organism is not •a phenomenon produced when those forces *happen* to combine, but •a higher idea that has subjected the lower through an *overpowering assimilation*;
- because the *one* will that is objectified in all ideas is striving for the highest possible objectification, and here abandons the lower levels of its phenomenon after a conflict with them, so as to appear at a level that is higher and thus more powerful.

No victory without a battle: the higher idea, able to advance only by overpowering the lower ones, meets resistance from them, and although they are made to serve it they continually strive to achieve independent and complete expression of their nature. Just as

- a magnet that has lifted an iron bar continues to fight with gravity, which—as the lowest objectification of will—has a prior claim on the matter in the bar, and is in this battle actually *strengthened*, as though stimulated to greater efforts by the resistance, so also
- every phenomenon of will, including that which is displayed in the human organism, maintains an enduring battle against the many physical and chemical forces that, as lower ideas, lay prior claim to the matter in question.

Thus sinks the arm that someone had held raised for a while, overpowering gravity. Thus the pleasing sensation of health—which proclaims the victory of the idea of the self-conscious organism over the physical and chemical laws that originally governed the body's fluids—is always accompanied by greater or less discomfort arising from the resistance of these forces, and on account of which the vegetative part of our life is constantly attended by slight pain. Thus too, digestion depresses all the animal functions, because it engages the

entire life-force in overpowering nature's chemical forces for the sake of assimilation. And thus the burden of physical life in general, the necessity of *sleep* and in the end of *death*, where those subjugated natural forces—finally favoured by the circumstances—win back from an organism fatigued by constant victory the matter that had been torn from them, and achieve an unhindered display of their nature. So we might say that every organism displays the idea of which it is the image only after subtraction of the part of its force expended in overcoming the lower ideas that contest it for its matter. This seems to be what Jakob Böhme has in mind when he somewhere says that all human and animal bodies—and indeed all plants—are really half dead. How completely an organism expresses its idea, i.e. how near it comes to the *ideal* that pertains to beauty within its species, depends on how successful it is in overpowering the natural forces that express lower levels of the objectivisation of will.

So everywhere in nature we see conflict, battle, and alternation of victory. And this, as we'll later see more clearly, reflects the quarrel with itself that is essential to the will. Every level of the objectification of will fights other levels for matter, space and time. Persisting matter must constantly vary its form, because mechanical, physical, chemical, organic phenomena try (directed by the principle of causality) to tear that matter away from one another, as each eagerly presses forward, wanting to reveal its idea. This conflict can be traced through the whole of nature; indeed nature exists only through it—as Aristotle said: 'If strife were not present in everything, all things would be one.' But this conflict is only the revelation of the internal division that is essential to will.

This general battle is most clearly visible in the animal world, which has the plant world for its nourishment and in which every animal is itself prey and nourishment for

another. . . . So the will for life is pervasively feeding on itself and, in various forms is its own nourishment, until finally—at the top of the food chain—the human species, having overpowered all the others, views nature as something fabricated for its own use, even though that same species, as we'll find in Book IV, reveals that battle within itself. [AS then speaks of different levels where 'the same conflict' occurs:

- insects [the details he gives are gruesome];
- plants;
- basic physiology, e.g. water into sap, bread into blood;
- small-scale inorganic nature, e.g. when developing crystals interfere with one another;
- large-scale inorganic nature.

He illustrates the last of these with 'the constant tension between centripetal and centrifugal forces' to which the planets are subjected, goes on to adjudicate some theories about the origin of the solar system, and emerges from this lengthy tangle with a striking conclusion:] The striving and flying without goal comes to give expression to the *nullity*—the lack of ultimate purpose—that by the end of this Book we'll have to recognise in the striving of will in all its phenomena. . . .

Lastly, we can recognise this conflict of all the phenomena of will against each other in mere matter as such; for Kant was right in saying that the forces of repulsion and attraction are the essence of the phenomenon of matter, so that it owes its very existence to a battle between opposite striving forces. . . ., the forces of attraction and repulsion, with the first in the form of gravity pressing from all sides toward the center, the second in opposition in the form of impenetrability, whether by way of rigidity or elasticity. This constant pressing and resistance can be regarded as the objectivisation of will on its very lowest level, and expresses its character even there.

Here we then see, on the lowest level, will displayed as a

blind urge, a dark, dull impulse that could not possibly be immediately known. It is its simplest and weakest mode of objectification. This blind and unconscious striving appears throughout the whole of inorganic nature, in all the original forces that physics and chemistry study so as to know their laws. Each of these forces is displayed to us in millions of law-governed phenomena that are *entirely* similar, showing no trace of individual character and merely multiplied through time and space, i.e. through the individuation-maker, as an image is multiplied through the facets of a glass.

[AS now presents the following doctrine. Will works in a blindly unknowing way through nearly all the different levels of its objectification, including plants and the *basic metabolism* of every animal. (With plants and upwards, there are stimuli rather than causes, but they are blind too.) But things change when we come to animals' *nourishment*: an animal can't get the food it needs merely by making **movements in response to stimuli** caused by what *happens* to be available in its environment; so nourishment must be sought out, selected. This requires **movements in response to motives** and thus requires knowledge. So knowledge enters the picture as a *tool*, required at this level for maintenance of the individual and propagation of the species.] It comes to the fore, represented by the brain or a larger ganglion, in just the same way that any other endeavour or determination of the will is represented by an organ in its objectification, i.e. displayed as an organ with respect to presentation.

With this tool alone there now stands with one stroke *the world as presentation* with all its forms:

- object and subject,
- time,
- space,
- plurality, and
- causality.

The world is now showing its second side. Up to here it has been mere *will*; now it is also *presentation*, an object for the knowing subject. The will that has so far pursued its sure and infallible drive in obscurity has now at this level lit a light for itself, this being needed as a means to solve the nourishment difficulty mentioned above. The previous [here = 'lower-level'] infallible sureness and lawfulness with which it operated was effective in inorganic and in merely vegetative nature because it was active only in its original nature as a blind urge, *will*, without input from a second entirely different world, the world as presentation. This world is indeed only the image of will's own nature, while being itself of an entirely different kind; and now [= 'at this level'] it is encroaching on the connected whole of its phenomena. With this, will's infallible sureness comes to an end. Even animals are exposed to illusion, to deception. They have merely perceptual presentations, however—no concepts, no reflection—and are therefore bound to the present and can't think about the future. It seems as if this no-reason kind of knowledge was not always sufficient for the purposes of animals, and sometimes needed a helping hand, so to speak. For we are confronted with two remarkable kinds of phenomena in which •blindly working will and •will that is illuminated by knowledge encroach on each other's domains. **(i)** On the one hand we find—co-existing with animal activities directed by perceptual knowledge and its motives—an activity accomplished without motives and thus with the necessity of blindly effectual will, namely in mechanical drives that are not directed by motives or by knowledge but have the appearance of producing their works in response to abstract rational motives. **(ii)** On the other hand, in a contrary case, the light of knowledge penetrates the workplace of blindly effectual will and illuminates the vegetative functions of the human organism: in magnetic

clairvoyance.

Finally, when will has achieved its highest degree of objectification, perceptual knowledge through **understanding**. . . no longer suffices. That complicated, many-sided, malleable being, man, most needy and exposed to countless harms, had for the sake of survival to be illuminated by a double knowledge: his perceptual knowledge had to be (as it were) raised to a higher power, to a reflection of itself, namely **reason** as the ability to manage abstract concepts. This brought

- reflection,
- surveying the future and the past, resulting in
- deliberation, concern, the capacity for premeditated action independent of the present, and finally
- fully distinct consciousness of the decisions of one's own will as such.

But if the possibility of illusion and deception arrived with merely perceptual knowledge, so that the previous infallibility in the blind striving of will is eliminated, now, with the arrival of reason, that sureness and immunity from deception in the expressions of will. . . is almost entirely lost:

- instinct fully withdraws,
- the deliberation that would now replace everything generates vacillation and lack of assurance, as I explained in Book I [late in chapter 12]: and
- error becomes possible, which often hinders adequate objectification of will through deeds.

For although in someone's character will has taken on its particular and unalterable direction, according to which willing infallibly occurs when motives are present, error can falsify its expressions—delusory motives having as great an influence as well-founded ones—and *nullify* the latter, as when superstition interposes imaginary motives that compel a person to act in a manner exactly contrary to how his will

would otherwise express itself in the given circumstances. Agamemnon slaughters his daughter; a miser gives alms out of pure egoism, in the hope of eventual hundredfold recompense, and so on.

So every sort of knowledge, rational as well as merely perceptual, comes originally from will itself, and enters into the nature of animals and human beings—(the higher levels of its objectification)—as a mere tool, a means for maintaining the individual and the species, just as are the body's organs. Originally destined to serve the will, to accomplish its purposes, it remains almost entirely in that service, in all animals and in nearly all human beings. Yet we will see in Book III [chapter 36] how, in individual human beings, knowledge is able to withdraw from this subservience, throw off its yoke and stand purely on its own, free from all the will's purposes, simply as a clear mirror of the world from which *art* proceeds. Finally, we will see in Book IV how this kind of knowledge can react back on the will, so that the will nullifies itself; this is the start of *resignation*, which is the ultimate goal—indeed the innermost essence—of all virtue and holiness and deliverance from the world.

28. Two kinds of purposiveness

We have considered how many and how diverse are the phenomena that will is objectified in—indeed, we have seen the endless and irreconcilable battle among them. [AS goes on to insist, repetitively and at length, that none of this concerns 'the one will' but only its many phenomena.]

Although will finds its clearest and most complete objectification in the human being, as a (platonic) idea, the latter could not *by itself* express will's essence. The idea of the

human can't appear in its proper significance unless it is displayed not •by itself and torn out of context but rather •accompanied by the sequence of levels down through all animal structures, through the vegetable kingdom, down to the inorganic. . . . These lower levels are as much presupposed by the idea of the human being as the blossoms of a tree presuppose its leaves, limbs, trunk, and roots; they form a pyramid whose apex is the human being. It can also be said, for those who like comparisons, that their phenomenon accompanies that of humanity as necessarily as full light is accompanied by continuous gradations of all the intermediate shades through which it loses itself in darkness. [And he adds another comparison, from music, which he says may sound paradoxical but won't do so when he gives his account of music in Book III [chapter 52].]

But we find that this *inner necessity* that shows in the sequence of the levels of the will's phenomena is also expressed by an *external necessity* by virtue of which human beings need animals for their own maintenance, each of these in descending levels needs others and then finally plants, which in turn need earth, water, chemical elements and their compounds, the planets, the sun, rotation and revolution around it, the tilt of the ecliptic, and so on. This basically comes from the fact that will has to feed on itself, because it is a hungry will, and outside it there is nothing •for it to devour•. This is the source of predation, anxiety, and suffering.

Just as

(i) recognition of the oneness of will as thing in itself, in the infinite diversity and multiplicity of phenomena, is the only thing that provides true insight into the wondrous, unmistakable analogy among all the pro-

¹ [AS is thinking of the common musical form in which we are presented with a *theme and variations*. He is saying that the productions of nature are

ductions of nature, into the family resemblance that permits us to regard them as variations on a single theme that is not given,¹

so also, to the same extent,

(ii) distinctly and deeply holding to our recognition of that harmony—of that essential interconnection of all the parts of the world, the necessity in their gradations that we have just been considering—there will open up for us a true and satisfactory insight into the inner nature and meaning of the undeniable *purposiveness* of all the organic products of nature, which indeed we presuppose *a priori* when we observe them and make judgments about them.

This purposiveness is of a double sort. On the one hand there is an inner purposiveness, i.e. an agreement among all the parts of an individual organism, so ordered that the maintenance of the individual and of its species is a consequence of it and is therefore presented as the purpose of that arrangement. But on the other hand there is an external purposiveness, namely, a relation of inorganic nature to organic nature in general, and of individual parts of organic nature to one another, which makes possible the maintenance of organic nature as a whole, or of individual animal species, and thus leads to our judging it to be a means toward that purpose.

·INNER PURPOSIVENESS·

We have considered the great multiplicity and diversity of the phenomena in which the will objectifies itself; indeed, we have seen their endless and implacable strife with each other. Yet, according to my whole discussion up to here, the will itself as *thing-in-itself* is by no means included in that multiplicity and change. The will has no concern with

- the diversity of the (platonian) [see chapter 25] ideas, i.e.
- the levels of objectification,
- the multitude of individuals in which each of these expresses itself, or
- the struggle of forms for matter.

All this doesn't concern the will itself, but only *how* it is objectified. . . . Just as a magic-lantern shows many different pictures, which are all made visible by one and the same light, so in all the multifarious phenomena which fill the world together or throng after each other as events, only one will is manifested, of which everything is the visibility, the objectivity, and which remains unmoved in the midst of this change; it alone is thing-in-itself; all objects are manifestations, or (in Kant's terms) phenomena. Although the will finds its clearest and most complete objectification in human beings, as platonian ideas, its nature can't be revealed by man alone. In order to manifest the full significance of the will, the idea of man would need to appear—not alone and detached from everything else, but—accompanied by the whole series of levels, down through all the forms of animals, through the vegetable kingdom to inorganic nature. All these supplement each other in the complete objectification of will; they are as much presupposed by the idea of man as the blossoms of a tree presuppose leaves, branches, trunk, and root; they form a pyramid, of which man is the apex. They might be characterised by this comparison:

Their manifestations accompany that of man as necessarily as full daylight is accompanied by all the gradations of twilight, through which it gradually loses itself in darkness;

or by this:

They are like the echo of man ·and thus of the same

like variations presented without the theme. (A famous musical case where that happens is Elgar's "Enigma Variations").]

pitch as man.; animal and plant are respectively a third and a fifth below man; and the inorganic kingdom is an octave down.

The full truth of this last comparison will become clear only when I try in Book III to fathom the deep significance of music. [He sketches some outlines of his theory of music. Then:] More about this in its proper place, where it won't sound so paradoxical. We find, however, that the **inner necessity** of the gradation of the will's manifestations, which is inseparable from its adequate objectification, is expressed by an **outer necessity** in the whole of these manifestations themselves; which is why man needs animals for his support, animals at their different levels need each other as well as plants, which in their turn require earth, water, chemical elements and their combinations, the planet, the sun, rotation and motion round the sun, the tilt of the ecliptic, and so on. All this ultimately results from the fact that the will must feed on itself, for there exists nothing beside it, and it is a hungry will. Hence arise predation, anxiety, and suffering.

Our knowledge of the unity of the will as *thing-in-itself* in the endless diversity and multiplicity of the phenomena can provide us—as nothing else can—with the true explanation of that wonderful, unmistakable *analogy* of all the productions of nature, that family likeness on account of which we can regard them as variations on the same ungiven theme. So in like measure, through the distinct and thoroughly comprehended knowledge of that harmony, that essential connection of all the parts of the world, that necessity of their gradation which we have just been considering, we shall obtain a true and sufficient insight into the inner nature and meaning of the undeniable purposiveness of all organic productions of nature, which indeed we presupposed *a priori* when considering and investigating them.

This purposiveness is of two sorts. **(i)** There is inner

purposiveness, where the parts of an individual organism are inter-related in a way that makes possible the survival of that organism and of its whole species, so that this survival is presented as the purpose of those inter-relations. **(ii)** There is also outer purposiveness, where the relation of inorganic nature to organic nature as a whole, or the relation of parts of organic nature to other parts, makes possible the survival of organic nature as a whole or of individual animal species, and therefore presents itself to our judgment as the means to this end.

Inner purposiveness is connected with the scheme of my work in the following way. If in accordance with what I have said all variations of form in nature, and all multiplicity of individuals, belong (not to the will itself but) merely to its objectivity and the form thereof, it necessarily follows that the will is indivisible and is present as a whole in every manifestation, although the levels of its objectification—the platonic ideas—are very different from one another. To make things easier to grasp, we can treat each of these ideas as an individual and intrinsically simple act of the will, in which its nature is more or less completely expressed; but the individuals are appearances of the ideas, and thus of those acts in time and space and plurality. On the lowest levels of objectivisation, such an act (or such an idea) retains its unity even in its phenomenon; whereas to make its appearance on higher levels it needs a whole series of conditions and developments strung out through time, which taken together complete the expression of its nature. . . .

For example, the life of a **crystal** has only one manifestation, the process of its growth, which then receives its full expression in rigidified form, the corpse of that brief life! But a **plant** needs a time-taking succession of developments of its organs to express the idea of which it is the phenomenon. For an **animal** to display its idea completely, it needs not

only •a succession of different *structures* but also •*actions* of the animal that give voice to its empirical character, which is the same in its entire species. . . . With **human beings**, the empirical character is of course unique to each individual. So far then, the *empirical* character not only of every man but of every species of animal and plant, and even of every original force of inorganic nature, is to be regarded as the manifestation of an *intelligible* character, i.e. of a timeless, indivisible act of will.

Here I would like in passing to call attention to the innocence¹ with which every plant expresses and openly exhibits its entire character—reveals its entire being and willing—in its mere structure, which is what makes the physiognomies of plants so interesting. Whereas an animal can be recognised with respect to its idea only through observation of its doings; and for human beings what is needed is not mere observation but complete examination and testing, since reason makes them capable of a high degree of dissimulation. Animals are more innocent than human beings by the same amount as plants are more innocent than animals. In animals we see the will for life **more naked**, as it were, than in human beings, where it is clothed in so much knowledge and cloaked by their capacity for dissimulation—that their true essence appears almost only by chance and sporadically. It shows itself in plants **entirely naked**, though much weaker, as bare, blind pressing for existence, without purpose or goal. For plants reveal their entire essence at first glance and in complete innocence, although they hold their genitals—which in all animals are kept in the most hidden place—for display at their very top. This innocence on the part of plants rests on their lack of knowledge; guilt consists not in willing but in willing with

knowledge. Thus every plant tells us right from the start of its home, of the latter's climate, and of the nature of the soil from which it sprouted. Therefore, one doesn't need much practice to know whether an exotic plant belongs to a tropical or a temperate zone and whether it grows in water, in swamps, on mountains, or on the heath. Beyond that, however, every plant gives voice to the particular will of its species and says what can be expressed in no other language.

But now to apply all this to the teleological consideration of organisms, so far as this concerns their inner purposiveness. If in inorganic nature the idea, which is everywhere to be seen as a single act of will, reveals itself in a single manifestation which is always the same, so that one may say that here the *empirical character* directly partakes of the unity of the *intelligible character*—coincides with it, so to speak—so that no inner design can show itself here; and if on the other hand all organisms express their ideas through a series of a successive developments conditioned by a multiplicity of b co-existing parts—so that only the sum of the manifestations of the empirical character collectively constitute the expression of the intelligible character—this necessary b co-existence of the parts and a succession of the stages of development doesn't destroy the unity of the appearing idea, the act of will that is expressing itself; indeed, this unity finds its expression in the necessary relation and connection of b the parts and a stages of development with each other, in accordance with the law of causality. . . .

[AS goes on to say that this interdependence of all the parts and episodes is what gives the organism the unity that matches the unity of its idea. It leads us to recognise the various parts and functions of the organism as means and

¹ [*Naivetät*; one might prefer 'artlessness', but AS is going to contrast it with *Schuld* = 'guilt', so 'innocence' is inevitable.]

purposes with respect to one another, with the organism itself as the ultimate purpose of them all. After some development of this line of thought, which AS admits to be ‘a perhaps somewhat difficult exposition’, he emerges with the claim that anyone who has understood him up to here] will now properly understand the point of the Kantian doctrine that •the purposiveness of the organic and •the lawful character of the inorganic are first introduced into nature by our faculty of understanding, so that both belong only to the phenomenon, not to the thing in itself. The above-mentioned amazement (chapter 26) over the infallible constancy of the lawful character of inorganic nature is in essence the same as amazement (chapter 28) over the purposiveness of organic nature. For in both cases what surprises us is only our glimpse of the original unity of ideas that, with respect to the phenomenon, had assumed the form of plurality and diversity.

·EXTERNAL PURPOSIVENESS·

Now let us turn to the external purposiveness that shows itself not in the inner economy of organisms but in the support and help they get from outside—from inorganic nature and from one another. The general explanation of this is to be found in the materials I have just presented:

The entire world with all its phenomena is the objectivisation of a single indivisible will, the idea that relates to all other ideas as a harmony relates to the individual voices; so that the unity of will must also show itself in mutual accord among all its phenomena.

But we can greatly clarify this insight if we go somewhat more closely into the manifestations of that external purposiveness and agreement of the different parts of nature with each other, an inquiry that will also throw some light on what I have been saying. The best way to do this is by considering

the following analogy.

The character of every individual human being—the part of it that is thoroughly individual, and not merely the character of its species—can be viewed as a particular idea corresponding to a unique act of objectification of will. This act itself would then be his intelligible character, his empirical character being its phenomenon. The empirical character is altogether determined by the intelligible character, which is groundless will, i.e. is as *thing in itself* not subject to the GP. In the course of someone’s life, his empirical character must match his intelligible character and cannot turn out otherwise than as the latter’s nature requires. But this determination extends only to what is essential with respect to the course of life that is appearing in accord with it. What is inessential involves a finer determination of the events and actions that are the material [*der Stoff*] in which the empirical character shows itself. These are determined by external circumstances, which provide the motives to which the character reacts according to its nature, . . . so they can turn out to be very different even if what is essential in the phenomenon, its content, remains the same. Thus, for example, it is inessential **a** whether someone gambles for peanuts or for money; but **b** whether he cheats at the game or goes about it honestly is a matter of essentials. The **b** latter is determined by the intelligible character, the **a** former by external influence. Just as one theme can be expressed in a hundred different variations, so one character can be expressed in a hundred very different lives. But various as the outward influences may be, the empirical character that expresses itself through the course of life must still—whatever form it takes—accurately objectify the intelligible character, for the latter adapts its objectification to the given material of actual circumstances. We have now to assume something analogous to the influence of outward

circumstances on the life that is determined in essential matters by the character if we want to understand how the will, in the original act of its objectification, determines the various ideas in which it objectifies itself—i.e. the different forms of natural existence of every kind—among which it distributes its objectification, so that these must necessarily have a relation to one another in the manifestation.

[AS goes on to say that among the parts of nature there has to be an adjustment that is not time-sensitive (because time is phenomenal, and the adjustment we are talking about is directly required by will). He illustrates this with facts about how our planet developed in ways suitable to the *later* existence of life on it; and goes on from there to a multitude of facts about organisms' adaptation to their environments and to their needs. He stresses the instincts that lead animals to prepare for futures (e.g. having eggs to hatch) of which they have no thought, and concludes:] Thus in general, animal instincts provide the best elucidation of all the rest of the purposiveness of nature. For just as instinct is action resembling what is done with the thought of a purpose, while no such thought is involved, so all structure [*Bilden*] in nature resembles something done with the thought of a purpose, while no such thought is involved. . . .

The **mutual adaptation and accommodation of phenomena** that springs from this unity does not cancel the inner conflict—making its appearance as a general battle within nature—that I have depicted as essential to will. This **harmony** goes only so far as to make possible the endurance of the world and of the beings in it, which would have long since perished without it. So it extends only to the endurance of species and their general life-conditions, but not to that of individuals. If that harmony and accommodation enable **a** species in the organic realm and **b** general natural forces in the inorganic realm to exist alongside—and even to support—

one another, the inner conflict of the will objectified through all of those ideas nevertheless shows itself in **a** the ceaseless war of extermination waged by individuals of those species and in **b** constant wrestling among the phenomena of those natural forces. . . .

29. Will as purposeless

Here I conclude Book II. This is the very first communication of a previously unknown line of thought, so it can't be entirely free of traces of the idiosyncrasies of the individual who thought it up; but I hope that despite this I have succeeded in giving the reader the clear certainty •that this world in which we live and exist is in its entire being through and through *will* and at the same time through and through *presentation*; •that this presentation presupposes a form, namely *object and subject*, and hence is relational; and •that when we ask 'What is left after we set aside that form and all its subordinate forms according to the GP?', the answer is that it must be something totally different from presentation and can be nothing other than *will*, which is accordingly the real *thing in itself*. Everyone finds himself to be this will that constitutes the real nature of the world, just as he also finds himself to be the knowing subject to which the entire world is presentation, a world that exists only in relation to his consciousness, as its necessary bearer. . . . All this will be made more complete and more convincing in Books III and IV. . . .

Consider this question:

All will is will *for* something, has an object, a goal.
Well, then, this will that is depicted to us as the *being in itself* of the world—what does it strive for?

This question, like so many others, rests on confusing **a** the thing in itself with **b** the phenomenon. The GP, of which one

form is the law of motivation, extends to **b** the latter alone, not to **a** the former. It is only of phenomena, of individual things, that a ground can be given, never of the will itself or of the idea in which it is adequately objectified. Thus there is a cause—i.e. a necessary producer—to be sought for every individual happening in nature, but never for the natural force that is revealed in countless phenomena of that kind. So to ask for a cause of gravity, electricity, etc. is to reveal a simple misunderstanding arising from a lack of thoughtful awareness. . . . Every particular act of will by a knowing individual necessarily has a motive without which that act would never have occurred. But just as

- material causes merely determine that at this time, in this place, and with this material, a manifestation of this or that natural force must take place, so also

- a motive determines a knowing being's act of will only at this time, in this place, and under these circumstances, as a particular act, but by no means determines that this being wills anything and wills in this manner; this is the expression of his intelligible character, which—being will itself, the thing-in-itself—has no ground, for it lies outside the domain of the GP. So every human being has standing purposes and motives by which he directs his actions, and is always able to account for his individual doings. But if he were asked why he wills at all, or why he has a will to exist at all, he would have no answer; rather, the question would strike him as absurd. And this reaction would be his consciousness pronouncing that he himself is nothing but will, and that obviously if he wills he wills something or other.

In fact the absence of all goals, all boundaries, belongs to the essence of will in itself, which is an endless striving. . . . This can be seen in its simplest form on the very lowest

level of the objectivisation of will: *gravity*, which constantly strives although an ultimate goal is obviously impossible for it. For even if it united all existing matter into a single clump, the gravity within the clump, striving for the centre, would still have to do battle with impenetrability in the form of rigidity or elasticity. The striving of matter can thus only be constantly impeded, never fulfilled or satisfied. But that is exactly how it is with all striving on the part of all the phenomena of will. Every goal achieved is in turn the start of a new race, and so on ad infinitum. **a** The plant elevates its phenomenon from the seed through stem and leaf to blossom and fruit, which is in turn only the start of a new seed, of a new individual, which again runs the old course, and so on through endless time. **b** It is just the same with the course of an animal's life: procreation is its pinnacle, after which the life of the individual quickly or slowly declines, while a new one repeats the same phenomenon, assuring nature of the survival of the species. . . . **c** Finally, the same thing shows itself in human endeavours and desires, which always delude us into thinking their satisfaction to be ultimate goals of willing. Actually, once they are achieved they no longer look the same and are soon forgotten. . . . We are fortunate enough if *something* remains to desire and strive after, so that we can maintain the game of passing from desire to satisfaction and from that to a new desire (the quick course of which is called happiness, the slow course suffering), and not grind to the halt that displays itself as frightful, life-congealing boredom, faint longing without any particular object, deadening languor.

According to all of this, when knowledge illuminates it, will always knows what it is willing now, what it is willing here, but never what it wills in general. Every individual act has a purpose, whereas the whole process of willing has none; just as every single natural phenomenon is determined

by a sufficient cause to occur in this place, at this time, whereas the force that is manifested in it never has any cause, because that force belongs to the thing in itself, to groundless will.

The sole example of self-knowledge with respect to will

as a whole is presentation as a whole, the entire perceptual world. That is the objectivisation, the revelation, the mirror of the will. What it has to say in this capacity will be the topic of my further consideration.

**Book III: The world as presentation: second consideration.
Presentation independent of the GP.
The platonic idea.
The object of art.**

30. Levels and platonic ideas

In Book I the world was depicted as mere presentation, object for a subject; I considered it from its other side in Book II, and found that—looked at in this way—it is will, which is what that world is beyond presentation. In the light of this knowledge, I said that the world as presentation can be called—as a whole and in its parts—the *objectivisation of the will*, meaning that the will has become object, i.e. has become presentation. We also recall that the objectification of will had many—though definite—levels on which, with increasing degrees of clarity and completeness, the essence of will entered into presentation, i.e. was displayed as an object. In these levels we already recognised Plato's ideas, for the levels are just particular species, or original unchanging forms and properties of all natural bodies, both inorganic and organic, as well as general forces that reveal themselves in accordance with natural laws. The totality of these ideas is thus displayed in countless individuals and particularities to which they relate as originals to their copies. The plurality of such individuals can be presented only through space and time, their arising and passing away only through causality, in all of which forms we recognise only the various modes of the GP, which is the ultimate principle of all finitude, of all individuation, and the general form pertaining to presentation so far as it falls within the knowledge of the individual. Ideas, on the other hand, are not covered by the

GP; so neither plurality nor change pertains to them. While the individuals in which it is displayed are countless, and ceaselessly come into being and pass away, the idea remains standing unchanged as one and the same, and the GP has no meaning in respect of it. Since this, however, is the form under which all of the subject's knowledge stands, so far as it is knowledge of an individual, ideas will also lie entirely outside the range of knowledge of the individual as such. So ideas can become objects of knowledge only if the knowing subject's individuality is nullified. Closer and more detailed explanation of this is what will now occupy us.

31. Platonic ideas and Kant's thing in itself

First, however, the following very important comment. I hope that I succeeded in Book I in convincing the reader that what in the Kantian philosophy is called the *thing in itself* and plays a role there as such a significant doctrine

and yet an obscure and paradoxical one, especially because of how Kant introduced it, namely through an inference from something grounded to its ground, which has proved to be a stumbling-block and is indeed the weak side of his philosophy,

when reached by the entirely different path I have taken, is nothing other than *will*, with the sphere of that concept broadened and defined in the way I have indicated. I also hope that after my exposition no-one will object to

identifying •the particular levels of objectification of the world-constituting will with •what Plato called the *eternal ideas* or *unchangeable forms*—the chief part of his doctrine, though also the most obscure and paradoxical, an object of reflection, dispute, ridicule, and admiration on the part of so many and such different thinkers over the course of centuries.

Now if will is the thing in itself, while ideas are the immediate objectivisation of that will on some particular level, then Kant's thing in itself and Plato's ideas (which are to him the only things that really exist) then we find these two great obscure paradoxes from the two greatest western philosophers to be (of course not identical, but) very closely related and distinguished from one another only by a single feature. Despite their inner agreement and affinity, the two great paradoxes *sound* very different because of the extraordinarily different individualities of their authors, which makes them the best commentaries on one another, like two quite different paths to a single goal. A few words will serve to make this clear.

Kant: What Kant says is essentially this: Time, space, and causality are not determinations of the thing in itself, but belong only to its phenomenon, being nothing but forms of our knowledge. And since all plurality and all coming into existence and going out of existence are possible only through time, space, and causality, it follows that they too attach only to the phenomenon and not to the thing in itself. But because our knowledge is conditioned by those forms, the whole of experience is only knowledge of the phenomenon, not of the thing in itself; so its laws can't be made valid for the thing in itself. This extends even to our own *I*, which we know only as phenomenon, not according to what it may be in itself.

Plato: But Plato says this: The things of this world that our senses perceive have no true being: they are always *becoming*, but never *are*; they have only a relative being, all of them existing only in and through their relations to one another; so their entire existence can just as well be called a non-existence. They are consequently not even objects of *genuine knowledge*, for that has to be of something that exists in and for itself and always in the same manner; rather, they are objects of *opinion* arising from sensation. As long as we are limited to perception of *them*, we are like men sitting in a dark cave, so tightly bound that they can't even turn their heads, and by the light of a fire burning behind them see nothing but shadowy images (on the wall in front of them) of real things passing between them and the fire; each seeing the others—and indeed himself—only as shadows on that wall. Wisdom for them would consist in predicting the order of those shadows as learned from experience. The only things that can be called truly existent—because they always *are* and never *become* or *pass away*—are the real archetypes for those shadowy images: they are the eternal ideas, the basic *forms* of all things. . . . They are the only things of which there is any real knowledge, since an object of knowledge must be something that exists always and in every respect (and so in itself), not something that exists and then doesn't exist, depending on how one views it.

It is obvious—and requires no further proof—that the inner sense of the two doctrines is entirely the same, that both explain **a** the visible world as a phenomenon that is in itself nothing and has a meaning and borrowed realness only through **b** what is expressed in it (for Kant the thing in itself, for Plato the ideas); even the most general and most essential forms of **a** that phenomenon are altogether foreign to **b** that which is truly existent according to both doctrines. Kant directly and as a matter of theory denied that

those forms—space, time, and causality—were applicable to the thing in itself. Plato, on the other hand, was not quite so forthright; he *indirectly* withheld those forms from his ideas by denying of ideas something that is only possible through those forms, namely •multiplicity of similar things and •coming into and going out of existence.

To illustrate this remarkable and important accord, suppose that an animal is standing before us, in the fullness of its vital activity, and consider how these two philosophers will describe it.

Plato will say: 'This animal has no true existence, but only a seeming one, a constant becoming, a relative existence that might as well be called a kind of non-being as being. What is truly existent is only •the idea that finds its image in that animal—i.e. •the animal in itself—which doesn't depend on anything, but has being in and for itself, not having become, not coming to an end, but always existing in the same manner. [AS gives the Greek for all the key phrases in this.] As long as we recognise in this animal its idea, it makes no difference •whether we have this animal now before us or its ancestor that lived 1000 years ago, •whether it is here or in a distant land, •whether it shows itself to us in this or that manner, position and action, or (lastly) •whether it is this animal or some other individual of its species. All this is nothing, and relates only to the phenomenon; only the idea of the animal has true being and is an object of real knowledge.' Thus Plato.

Kant would say¹ something like this: 'This animal is a phenomenon within time, space, and causality, which are not determinations of the thing in itself but are the *a priori* conditions of the possibility of experience that lie within our

knowledge faculty. So this animal—as we perceive it *now* and *here* as an individual within the context of experience, i.e. in terms of the chain of causes and effects—is not a thing in itself but a phenomenon valid only in relation to our knowledge. To know it as it is in itself—and thus independently of all determinations that lie within time, space, and causality—would require a way of knowing that is different from the only one possible for us, through the senses and understanding.'

To bring Kant's terminology still closer to the Platonic, we might have him say:

Time, space and causality are that structure of our intellect whereby what is really *one* actual being of a given kind is displayed to us as a plurality of beings of the same kind, constantly arising and passing away in endless succession.

Apprehension of things by means of and according to that structure is *immanent* [see Glossary]; whereas that which is conscious of the true state of the case is *transcendental*. We get the latter *in abstracto* from the criticism of pure reason,² but in exceptional cases it can also occur intuitively. That last clause is what I have to add—what I am working to explain in this Book III.

If **a** Plato's doctrine and since his time **b** Kant's had been properly interpreted and grasped, if people had truly and seriously pondered the inner sense and content of the two great masters' doctrines, instead of tossing around the technical terms of **a** one of them and parodying the style of **b** the other, they couldn't have failed to discover •to what an extent these two great sages agree, and •that the pure meaning—the ultimate goal—of their doctrines is altogether the same. Not

¹ [The switch from 'will say' to 'would say' is in the original.]

² [*Kritik der reinen Vernunft*, which is the title of Kant's book, but AS seems not to be referring to that.]

only would Plato then not have been constantly compared with Leibniz, who inherited nothing from him, not to mention being compared with a gentleman of note still living¹, as if in mockery of the shades of that great thinker of antiquity, but in general people would have advanced much further—or rather would not have regressed so shamefully—as they have in these last 40 years. They would not have let themselves be led by the nose today by one windbag and tomorrow by another, and would not have inaugurated the 19th century in Germany, so significant in its portent, with the performance of philosophical farces over Kant's grave (as the ancients sometimes did at the funeral rites for their dead)—to the justified ridicule of other nations, for that sort of thing is utterly unbecoming to the serious, indeed strait-laced, German. 'The contempt that has fallen on philosophy is caused by her having associates and courtiers who are not fit for her dignity; she ought to have attracted legitimate people, not bastards.' [Quoted in Latin and Greek from Plato.]

People followed Kant's words—

'presentations *a priori*'

'forms of perception and thought known independently of experience'

'original concepts of pure understanding'

and so on—and asked whether Plato's ideas, which are indeed also supposed to be •original concepts but also •recollections of truly existing things that were perceived before one's lifetime, were the same as Kant's forms of perception and thought that lie *a priori* in our consciousness. Because of a slight resemblance in their terminology, these two diametrically opposed doctrines—

•the Kantian doctrine of forms that confines the individual's knowledge to phenomena, and

•the platonic doctrine of ideas, knowledge of which precisely denies those forms
—have been subjected to careful comparisons, and discussions and disputes over whether they are identical. It was *eventually* decided that they are not, and that Plato's doctrine of ideas and Kant's critique of reason were in no way in agreement with one another. But enough of this.

32. Platonic ideas are not the thing in itself

Despite the inner accord between Kant and Plato and the identity of •the goal that the two had in mind, or of •the world-view that drew them to philosophy and led them in it, my discussion up to here shows that for me *idea* and *thing in itself* are not outright one and the same thing. Rather, an idea is for me the immediate and thus adequate objectivisation of the thing in itself, which is *will*—will that isn't yet objectified, so hasn't yet become presentation. Kant held that the thing in itself is free of all forms attaching to knowledge as such; so he should have expressly withheld the status of *object* from his thing in itself, which would have saved him from the major inconsistency that was soon found •in his system•. (His not doing so arose from his not seeing that

being-an-object-for-a-subject is the foremost of the forms attaching to knowledge as such, since it is the first and most general form of all phenomena,

this being a mere mistake, which I diagnose in the Appendix.) The platonic idea, on the other hand, necessarily *is* an object, something known, a presentation, which differentiates it from the thing in itself (as nothing else does). It has merely set aside (or rather has not yet acquired) the subordinate

¹ F.H.Jacobi [AS's footnote.]

forms of the phenomenon, all of which fall under the GP, retaining only the first and most general form, that of presentation in general, of being an object for a subject. It is the subordinate forms that multiply ideas into particular and transitory individuals; it makes no difference to an idea how many of those there are. Thus, . . . between •the particular thing that makes its appearance in accordance with the GP and •the thing in itself (which is *will*), stands •the idea, which is the only immediate objectivisation of will because the only form of knowledge as such that it has taken on is that of presentation in general, i.e. of being an object for a subject. So it alone is the most adequate possible objectivisation of will, or of the thing in itself; indeed it *is* the thing in itself, but under the form of presentation. This is the basis for the great accord between Plato and Kant, although very strictly speaking they are not talking about the same thing. . . .

If it is permissible to make inferences from impossible premises: Suppose we no longer knew individual things, or events, or change, or plurality, but in pure unobscured knowledge took in only ideas, only the stepladder of objectification of the one will, of the true thing in itself, then our world would be a *timeless present*.¹ . . . Time is merely the individual's divided and dismembered view of ideas that are beyond time, hence eternal; therefore, as Plato says, time is the moving image of eternity.

33. Knowledge and will

As individuals we have no knowledge except what is subject to the GP, and this excludes knowledge of ideas; so it is

certain that if we can rise from knowledge of single things to knowledge of ideas, this can occur only through an alteration taking place in the subject, corresponding and analogous to that great change in the entire nature of the object, [that is, the change from *single thing* to *idea*]. By virtue of this alteration, the subject, now that it knows an idea, is no longer a single individual.

You'll recall from Book II that knowledge in general belongs to the objectification of will at its higher levels; and sense-organs,² nerves, brain are—like other parts of organic beings—an expression of will at this level of its objectivisation, and therefore the presentations arising from it are equally determined to the service of will, as a means toward achievement of its [i.e. knowledge's] now more complicated goal, the maintenance of a being with many needs. Thus originally and in its essence, knowledge is entirely in the service of will, and. . . all knowledge that follows the GP remains in a more or less close relation to will. For the individual finds his body to be an object among objects, to all of which he has many relations and references in accordance with the GP, consideration of which always leads back by a shorter or longer path to his body and thus to his will. Since it is the GP that gives objects this reference to the body and thereby to the will, it is also the sole endeavour of will-serving knowledge to get to know objects with respect to relations determined by the GP, and thus to pursue their many relationships in space, time and causality. For it is only through these that objects matter to the individual, i.e. have a relation to his will. So will-serving knowledge takes in nothing about objects except their relations

¹ [*nunc stans* = Latin for 'standing now'.]

² [Correcting a presumed slip by AS. He wrote *Sensibilität* = 'sensitivity'; but his phrase *andere Theile des organischen Wesens*, meaning 'other parts of organic beings', makes it impossible that he meant here to use an abstract noun.]

- at this time,
- in this place,
- under these circumstances,
- through these causes,
- with these effects;

in short, as individual things. If all these relations were eliminated, all objects would also vanish for this sort of knowledge, because they are all it knows of them.

I shouldn't hide the fact that what the sciences regard as *things* are really nothing but their relations: temporal and spatial relations, the causes of natural changes, similarities of shape, motives for events. The sciences differ from ordinary knowledge only in their systematic form, the way they help knowledge through handling all individuals in general terms by bringing them under concepts, and the completeness of knowledge that this brings about. All relations have themselves only a relative existence. For example, all being in time is also non-being. For time is just what enables one thing to have contrary determinations [by being F at one time and non-F at another]. So every phenomenon that is in time is also *not*; [Meaning 'is not in time' or 'does not exist'? The original does not choose between these.] for what separates its beginning from its end is only time, something essentially vanishing, insubstantial, and relative, which I am now calling 'duration'. But time is the most general form of all objects of will-serving knowledge, and is the prototype for all its other forms.

Knowledge remains as a rule always subject to the service of will, having arisen for the sake of this service, indeed having grown out of the will, as it were, as the head grows from the trunk. In animals this subservience of knowledge

to the will cannot be eliminated. In human beings, the elimination occurs only as an exception; I shall examine it more closely in the next chapter. This difference between human beings and animals is externally expressed by the difference in the relation between head and trunk. In lower animals the two are still entirely fused; in all of them the head points toward the earth, where all the objects of their will lie. Even in higher animals the head and trunk are much more *one thing* than in the human being, whose head appears as if freely set upon the body, only carried by it, not serving it. This prerogative of the human is displayed to the highest degree by the Apollo of Belvedere:¹ the head of the god of the Muses stands on his shoulders, gazing so freely far and wide that it appears to be entirely detached from the body, no longer being a servant to it.

34. Losing oneself in nature

[For 'subject' as used here see Glossary.] The possible (though exceptional) move from ordinary knowledge of individual things to knowledge of ideas occurs suddenly, with knowledge tearing itself away from the service of will. In it the subject ceases to be merely individual and is now the pure, will-less subject of knowledge, which no longer pursues relations according to the GP, but rests in constant contemplation of the given object, absorbed in it, without attending to its connections with anything else.

Making this clear requires a detailed discussion, and the disconcerted reader must put up with this attitude until he has grasped the whole thought expressed in this work, and then the attitude will vanish of itself.

¹ [A famous though controversial Greek or Roman sculpture in the Belvedere courtyard of the Vatican. Google 'Apollo of Belvedere' and you'll see how right AS is about how its head relates to its trunk.]

Suppose that someone, lifted by the power of his mind, •abandons his usual way of regarding things which merely pursues relations among them always with the ultimate goal of relating them to his will under the direction of modes of the GP, and thus •no longer considers the *where*, the *when*, the *why*, and the *whither* of things but simply and solely the *what*, does not allow abstract thinking, the concepts of reason, to occupy his consciousness, but devotes the entire power of his mind to perception, becomes entirely absorbed in it and lets his whole consciousness be filled with peaceful contemplation of the natural object that is present to him right then—be it a landscape, a tree, a cliff, a building, or whatever—entirely *losing* himself in this object, forgetting even his individuality, his will, and remaining only as pure subject, as a clear mirror of the object. In this case it's as though the object alone existed, with no-one perceiving it, so that it's no longer possible to separate the perceiver from the perception: the two have become one, his whole consciousness being filled by a single perceptual image. Suppose that the object has been removed to this extent from all relation to anything beyond it, the subject removed from all relation to will: then what is known is no longer the individual thing as such, but rather the idea, the eternal form, the immediate objectivisation of will at this level. So anyone caught up in this perception is no longer an individual, but is a *pure*, will-less, painless, timeless subject of knowledge.

Just now this is a very striking claim, which I know confirms Thomas Paine's saying that 'It is but one step from the sublime to the ridiculous'; but it will gradually be made clearer and less surprising by what is to follow. It is also what Spinoza had in mind when he wrote: 'The mind is eternal insofar as it conceives things under the aspect of eternity.'

In such contemplation •the individual thing becomes with a single stroke •the idea of its species, and •the perceiving individual becomes •the *pure subject of knowledge*. The individual as such knows only individual things, the pure subject of knowledge knows only ideas. For the individual is the subject of knowledge in its relation to some particular individual phenomenon of will, and is in the service of the will. This individual phenomenon of will is subject to the GP in all its shapes. All knowledge relating to the individual follows the GP, and that is the only knowledge suited to the purposes of the will. The **knowing individual** and the single thing it knows are always in some place, at some time, and links in the chain of causes and effects. The **pure subject of knowledge** and its correlate, ideas, have passed out of all those forms belonging to the GP: time, place, the knowing individual, and the individual that is an object of knowledge have no meaning for them. When (in the way I have described) a knowing individual is raised to being the pure subject of knowledge, and the thing he is thinking about is raised to being an idea, the *world as presentation* comes entirely and purely to the fore, and the complete objectification of will occurs; for ideas alone are the will's adequate objectivisation. An idea incorporates object and subject in equal manner within itself, since that distinction is its only form. In it, however, the two are of entirely equal weight, and just as the object here is nothing but presentation to the subject, so also the subject, being entirely absorbed in the object of perception, has become this object itself, its entire consciousness being nothing more than the most distinct image of the latter. This consciousness—if one thinks of the totality of ideas (or levels of the objectivisation of will) as running through it in succession—really constitutes the entire world as presentation. Individual things at any time and place are nothing but ideas, multiplied by the GP

(the cognitive form pertaining to individuals as such) and thereby obscured with respect to their pure objectivisation. Just as, with the idea coming to the fore, subject and object are no longer distinguishable in it—since it is only when they completely fill and penetrate one another that ideas, adequate objectivisation of will, the true world as presentation, arises—so also in the same way, the knowing individual and the known individual are as things in themselves not distinct from one another. For with complete abstraction from that true *world as presentation*, nothing remains but the *world as will*. Will is the in-itself of ideas, which objectify it completely; it is also the in-itself of individual things and of the individuals who know them, which objectify it incompletely. As will, beyond presentation and all its forms, it is one and the same in the object contemplated and in the individual who, soaring high in this contemplation, becomes conscious of himself¹ as pure subject. The two are thus in themselves not distinct. For in themselves they are will, which is here self-knowing, and plurality and diversity exist only as *how* this knowledge comes to it, i.e. only in the phenomenon, by virtue of its form, the GP. As little (without an object, without presentation) as I am a knowing subject, but mere blind will, just as little (without me as subject of knowledge) is the thing that I know an object, but mere will, blind pressing. This will is in itself, i.e. beyond presentation, one and the same as mine: only in the world as presentation, whose form is always at least that of subject and object, do we come apart as known and knowing individuals. As soon as the world as presentation is eliminated, nothing remains but mere will, blind pressing. That it attains to objectivisation, becomes a presentation, means that with a

single stroke we have both subject and object. But the fact that this objectivisation is purely, completely, an adequate objectivisation of will means that we have the object as idea, free from the forms that belong to the GP, and we have the subject as pure subject of knowledge, free from individuality and subservience to will.

According to this, anyone who has so far submerged and lost himself in the perception of nature that he is now only a pure knowing subject, is by that fact made immediately aware that he is the condition—and thus the bearer—of the world and all objective existence; for this is now displayed to him as dependent on his own existence. He thus draws nature into himself, so that he experiences it only as a quality of himself. It is in this sense that Byron says:

Are not the mountains, waves and skies, a part

Of me and of my soul, as I of them?

Who then, feeling this, could take himself to be absolutely transitory, as compared to imperishable nature? He will rather be gripped by the state of mind that is pronounced by the Upanishad of the Veda [see Glossary]: ‘All these creatures together am I, and beyond me no being exists.’

35. Ideas distinguished from their phenomena

To get to a deeper insight into the essence of the world, it is unavoidably necessary to learn to distinguish •will as thing in itself from •its adequate objectivisation, and to distinguish •the different levels at which this difference appears more and more distinctly and fully, i.e. the ideas themselves, from •the merely phenomenal existence of these ideas in the forms of the GP, the method of knowledge that individuals are caught up in. Then we will agree with Plato in attributing

¹ [who... himself' could be 'which ... 'itself'. The German doesn't distinguish personal and from impersonal pronouns; this version chooses between them according to what seems natural in each context.]

true being only to ideas, and granting to things in space and time—to this world that is real for the individual—only a seeming, dreamlike existence. Then we will see how one idea reveals itself in so many phenomena and offers its nature only piecemeal, one aspect at a time, to the individuals who are aware of it. We will then distinguish **a** the idea itself from **b** the mode and manner in which its phenomenon falls within the observation of individuals, recognise **a** the former as essential, **b** the latter as inessential. I'll consider some examples of this in matters that range from the most trivial to the grandest.

•When clouds pass, the shapes they form are not essential to them. The essence of the forces that are objectified in them—their nature—their idea—is their being elastic vapours that are compressed by the impact of the wind, scattered, stretched, torn apart; the shapes are only something for the individual observer. •When a stream cascades over stones, the eddies, waves, foam-shapes it displays are inessential to it. Its essence is its conforming to gravity, behaving like an inelastic, highly mobile, formless, transparent fluid; *when it is perceptually known*, this is its idea. Those images are for us only as long as we know as individuals. •Ice on the window-pane forms in accordance with laws of crystallisation. These reveal the essence of the natural force at work in this case, display its idea; but the trees and flowers that are depicted in the ice are inessential and exist only for us.

What appears in clouds, stream, and crystal is the weakest reverberation of the will, which comes into play more completely in plants, more completely still in animals, and most completely in human beings. But only what is essential at all the levels of its objectification constitutes an idea; whereas the idea's unfolding—subject to the shapes of the GP—of multi-faceted phenomena is inessential to it, and lies

merely in the manner of knowledge that individuals have, and is real only for them. The same thing applies to the unfolding of the idea that is the most complete objectivisation of will, [namely, the idea of humanity]; as a consequence, the history of the human race, the bustle of events, the changing times, the various forms of human life in different lands and centuries—all this is only the contingent form of that idea's phenomenon, not of the idea itself . . . and is as foreign, inessential, and indifferent to the idea as are the shapes to the clouds that display them, the eddies and foam-shapes to the stream, the trees and flowers to the ice.

For anyone who has grasped this, and knows how to distinguish will from idea, and idea from its phenomenon, worldly events will have significance not in and for themselves but only as letters in which the idea of humanity can be read. Such a person will not agree with the folk who believe that time may produce something new and significant, that through it or in it something absolutely real may come into existence, or that time as a whole may have its own beginning and end. . . . In the many forms of human life and ceaseless change of events, he will regard as enduring and essential only the idea in which the will for life has its most complete objectivisation, and which shows its diverse aspects in the properties, passions, errors, and strengths of the human race—in selfishness, hate, love, fear, audacity, frivolity, stupidity, slyness, wit, genius, and so on. . . . He will find that it is in the world as in the dramas of Gozzi, in all of which the same characters keep appearing with like intentions and a like fate: the motives and events are of course different in each play, but the spirit of the events is the same. . . .

If we were allowed a clear look into the realm of possibility and over all the chains of causes and effects, if the spirit of the earth were to show us

a picture of the superb individuals, enlighteners of the world, and heroes whom chance had destroyed before the time for their effectiveness had arrived, and then shown us great events that would have altered world history and brought in periods of the highest culture and enlightenment, but which the blindest chance, the most trivial circumstances, prevented from happening, and finally shown us the splendid powers of great men that would have enriched entire ages but which the men—led astray by error or passion, or compelled by necessity—squandered on unworthy and barren objects, or just frittered away in play—
—if we saw all this, we would shudder and lament over the lost treasures of entire ages. But the spirit of the earth would smile and say: ‘The source from which individuals and their powers flow is as inexhaustible and infinite as time and space. . . . No finite measure can exhaust that infinite source. So an undiminished infinity stands ever open for the recurrence of any event or work that was nipped in the bud. In this world of the phenomenon, true loss is as little possible as true gain. Will alone exists: it is the thing in itself, the source of all those phenomena. Its self-knowledge and consequent decisive affirmation or denial is the only *event in itself*.¹

36. Art. Genius. Madness

History follows the thread of events. It. . . derives them in accordance with the law of motivation, a law that determines the will in cases where its appearance is illuminated by

knowledge. At the lower levels of its objectivisation, where the will operates without knowledge, natural science concerns itself with •the laws for the alterations of will’s phenomena, this being *etiology*, and with •what does not change in them, this being *morphology*. This almost endless task is lightened by the aid of concepts, which gather things into generalities so that we may deduce particulars from them. Finally, mathematics is concerned with the mere forms in which ideas make their appearance as elaborated into plurality, i.e. in time and space. All of these, whose common name is *science*, thus proceed in accordance with the GP in its various modes. . . .

What kind of knowledge is concerned with

the aspect of the world that is the only truly essential one, standing beyond and independent of all relations—the true content of its phenomena—that which is subject to no change and is thus for all time known with equal truth, in a word:

ideas, that are the immediate and adequate objectivisation of the thing in itself, of will? It is *art*, the work of genius. It reproduces the eternal ideas that are grasped through pure contemplation, that which is essential and enduring in all the world’s phenomena; and, depending on the material in which it reproduces them, it is visual art, poetry, or music. Its single origin is knowledge of ideas, its single goal is the communication of this knowledge.

Science, following the unresting and inconstant stream of the fourfold forms of reason and consequent, with each goal it reaches it sees further, and can never reach a final goal or attain full satisfaction, any more than by running we can reach the place where the clouds touch the horizon; whereas art is always at its goal. For it plucks the object

¹ This last sentence cannot be understood without acquaintance with Book IV. [AS’s footnote].

of its contemplation out of the stream of the world's course and holds it isolated before itself. And this single thing that was a vanishingly small part of that stream becomes for it a representative of the whole, equivalent to countless things in space and time. It stays with the single thing, it stops the wheel of time, relations vanish for it; its only object is that which is essential, the idea.

So we can characterise art quite simply as **a** *the way of considering things that is independent of the GP*, contrasting it with **b** the GP-guided consideration in experience and science. The **b** latter way of considering things is comparable to an infinite horizontal line, **a** the former to a vertical line intersecting it any arbitrary point. The **b** GP-guided way of considering things is rational, and is the only one that is applicable and helpful in practical life as in science; **a** the one that turns away from the GP is the genius's way of considering things, which is applicable and helpful only in art. The **a** first way is Aristotle's; the **b** second is, on the whole, Plato's. The **a** first is like the mighty storm that . . . carries everything with it; the **b** second like the peaceful sunbeam intersecting the storm's path, entirely unmoved by it. The **a** first is like the countless forcibly propelled drops of a waterfall, constantly changing, never halting for a moment; the **b** second like the rainbow resting still upon this raging turbulence.

Ideas can be grasped only through the pure contemplation described above, entirely absorbed in the object, and the nature of genius consists in a pre-eminent capacity for such contemplation. This requires entirely forgetting one's own person and relationships; so genius is just the most complete objectivity, i.e. an objective orientation of the mind, as opposed to one that is subjective, directed to one's own person, i.e. to the will. Thus, genius is the capacity for

- maintaining a purely perceptual state,

- losing oneself in perception, and
- withdrawing knowledge from service of the will that it existed originally only to serve, i.e.
- entirely losing sight of one's interest, one's willing, one's goals, and thus getting utterly outside one's own personality for a time, so as to remain as a *pure knowing subject*, clear vision of the world.

And this not just for a moment but for long enough—and with as much thoughtful awareness—as is needed to reproduce in reflectively considered art what the artist has absorbed in this way, and 'to solidify in lasting thoughts what hovers before one in a fluctuating appearance' [quoted from Goethe].

It is as if an individual can have genius only if he has come by a measure of knowledge-power that far exceeds what is required for the service of an individual will; the liberated surplus of knowledge now becomes the subject purified of will, the clear mirror of the nature of the world.

This is the explanation of the liveliness—to the point of restlessness—in individuals of genius: the present can rarely satisfy them because it doesn't fill their consciousness. This gives them that character of unresting endeavour, that ceaseless search for objects that are new and worth contemplating; as well as the almost never satisfied demand for others like themselves, up to their level, with whom they might communicate. Whereas an ordinary person, entirely filled and satisfied by the ordinary present, gets absorbed in it, and then—finding his equals everywhere—he obtains that special contentment with everyday life that is denied to the genius.

Imagination has rightly been recognised as an essential component of genius; indeed it is sometimes taken to be identical with it, but the identity claim is wrong, as I shall explain shortly. Firstly, here is why genius requires imagination:

The objects for the genius are the eternal ideas, the persisting essential forms of the world and all its phenomena; but knowledge of ideas is necessarily perceptual, not abstract; so the genius's knowledge would be limited to ideas of objects actually present to his person and dependent on the set of circumstances that bring them to him, if imagination didn't broaden his horizon far beyond the reality of his personal experience and put him in a position to use what little has entered his actual awareness to construct everything else, and so to have almost all of life's possible scenes passing before him. Also, actual objects are nearly always very defective copies of the ideas displayed in them; so the genius needs imagination to see (not what nature has actually constructed in things, but rather) what it has tried to construct but couldn't bring about because of the battle among its forms that was mentioned in Book II, chapter 27. I'll return to this later when I discuss sculpture. Imagination thus broadens the genius's field of vision beyond the objects that are actually available to his person, both qualitatively and quantitatively. For this reason, unusual strength of imagination is required for genius.

But not conversely: even persons wholly lacking in genius can have much imagination. For just as one can regard an actual object in either of two ways—

- a** purely objectively, grasping its idea, as the genius does, or
- b** merely with respect to its relations to other objects and one's own will, according to the GP, as people commonly do,

—so also a mental image can be perceived in either of those two ways:

- a** as a means toward knowledge of ideas, the communication of which is a work of art, or
- b** using the mental image in building castles in the air that gratify one's self-interest and whims, momentarily deluding and delighting them. . . .

He who plays **b** this game is a dreamer. He easily allows the images that delight his solitude to intermingle with reality, and so unfits himself for real life. Perhaps he will write down his imaginative jugglery, producing the commonplace novels of all genres that entertain him and his like and the public at large, with readers dreaming of themselves in the role of the hero and then finding the depiction most '*Gemütlich*'.¹

The ordinary person. . . .is (I repeat) altogether incapable of keeping up a frame of mind that is wholly disinterested [see Glossary] in every sense, which is what true contemplativeness is; he can direct his attention to things only insofar as they have some relation to his will, even if a very indirect one. This requires only a knowledge of relations, so the abstract concept of a thing is sufficient and usually even more useful than mere perception, and the ordinary person does not look for long at anything. Rather, he quickly seeks in everything that comes his way the concept under which to bring it and then loses interest in it. So he is quickly done with everything, with

- works of art,
- beautiful natural objects, and
- the view of life in all of its scenes that is truly of significance everywhere.

He doesn't linger on any of those; he seeks only his path in life, or anyway whatever might some day be his path. . . .

¹ [AS means this word contemptuously. It can mean anything in the range of 'pleasing', 'charming', 'enjoyable', 'entertaining'. etc.]

The genius, on the other hand, whose faculty of knowledge is robust enough to enable it to withdraw at times from the service of his will, lingers on the consideration of life itself, tries to grasp each thing's idea, not its relations to other things; for that, he often neglects to consider his own path in life, and usually walks it clumsily enough. [AS goes on to say, not always clearly, that this deep difference between **a** the genius and **b** the ordinary person shows in superficial ways also, notably in their facial expressions. He says that the 'lively and firm' expression of **a** one speaks of his contemplativeness, whereas **b** the other's expression is usually 'stupid or dull' and, when it is not that, it shows him as on the watch for whatever might satisfy his will.]

Since the knowledge that is part of genius, or knowledge of ideas, does not follow the GP, whereas what does follow it imparts shrewdness and rationality in life and brings the sciences into existence, individuals of genius will be burdened with the deficiencies entailed by neglect of the latter kind of knowledge.

But notice: I am going to discuss this only as it applies to these individuals while they are actually engaged in the kind of knowing that is part of genius; which is emphatically not the case at every moment of their life, because the great (though spontaneous) exertion required for will-free comprehension of ideas necessarily relaxes, leaving those individuals, for long intervals, with pretty much the strengths and weaknesses of ordinary people. For this reason, the conduct of the genius has for ages...been viewed as the conduct of a superhuman being distinct from the individual himself, only intermittently taking possession of him.

The aversion that individuals of genius have for directing their attention to the content of the GP will first show itself...as an aversion toward mathematics, for its procedure

is directed toward the most general forms of the phenomenon, space and time, which are themselves only modes of the GP—a procedure that is the outright opposite of the one that seeks out only the content of the phenomenon, the *idea* that is expressed in it apart from all relations. Also, the logical method of mathematics will be repugnant to the genius because it doesn't involve real insight and so cannot give satisfaction. All it offers is a chain of inferences...; so the mental power that it mainly calls on is *memory*, needed so that the person can have available all the earlier propositions to which he is appealing. Experience has also confirmed that great geniuses in art have no capacity for mathematics; no-one has ever been outstanding in both. ·The poet and dramatist· Alfieri relates that he could not even comprehend Euclid's fourth theorem! Goethe is often enough taken to task for his lack of mathematical knowledge by ignorant opponents of his theory of colours. Of course in this case, which involved (not calculating and measuring in accordance with hypothetical data, but) direct knowledge by the understanding of cause and effect, that criticism was so utterly absurd and inappropriate that the critics showed their total lack of judgment, as they also did by their other Midas-pronouncements. The fact that

almost half a century after Goethe's theory of colours first appeared, the Newtonian nonsense is in undisturbed possession of academic chairs in Germany, and people still speak quite seriously about seven homogenous kinds of light and their different refrangibilities

will one day be counted among the great intellectual earmarks of men in general and of Germans in particular.

These materials also explain the equally familiar fact that exceptional mathematicians have little receptiveness for works of fine art, which is naively expressed in the familiar

anecdote about the French mathematician who, after reading Racine's *Iphigenia*, shrugged his shoulders and said 'What does that prove?'. Also, shrewdness consists in a quick grasp of relations according to the law of causality and motivation, whereas the knowledge that is part of genius is not directed toward any relations; so a shrewd person (so far as and while he is so) will not have genius, and a genius (so far as and while he is so) will not be shrewd.

Finally, perceptual knowledge, the domain in which ideas lie, is the exact opposite of the rational or abstract knowledge directed by the GP of knowledge. And it is well known that great genius is seldom paired with pre-eminent reasonableness; on the contrary, individuals of genius are often subject to intense emotions and irrational passions. The reason for this is not the weakness of reason but rather

- partly, the extraordinary energy of the individual of genius, which expresses itself through the intensity of all his acts of will, and

- partly, the fact that a perceptual knowledge through the senses and the understanding overpowers b abstract knowledge, creating a decisive orientation toward the perceptual; and for individuals of genius the supreme energy of perceptions so far outshines colourless concepts that their actions are no longer directed by b the latter but by a the former, making them irrational, pulling them in the direction of the unreflective, of emotions, of passions.

•MADNESS•

Because their knowledge has partially withdrawn from the service of will, in conversation they attend not so much to the other person as to the matter they are talking about, which is vividly present to their mind. Thus they will judge or speak too objectively for their own good, say things that it would be shrewder to leave unsaid, and so on. They end up showing

a tendency towards soliloquies, and can in general show a number of weaknesses that actually verge on madness. It has often been noted that genius and madness have an aspect with respect to which they border on one another, indeed pass over into one another. [AS cites literary examples of this, involving Horace, Seneca, Plato, Democritus, and others, ending with:] And finally Pope says:

Great wits to madness sure are near allied,
And thin partitions do their bounds divide.

Particularly instructive in this respect is Goethe's *Torquato Tasso*, in which he shows us not only the suffering, the essential martyrdom, of genius as such, but also its steady passage into madness. Finally, the fact that genius and madness are in immediate contact is confirmed in part by the biographies of men of great genius such as Rousseau, Byron and Alfieri, and by anecdotes from the lives of others. [AS goes on to say that his 'frequent visits to insane asylums' have convinced him that there's a link between madness and very high levels of talent; and he offers a peculiar statistical argument to show that this is non-random. (In the course of this argument, he comments on the rarity of actual geniuses.) After kicking this around a little, he emerges thus:] In the meantime, I will explain as briefly as possible my view about the purely intellectual basis for the relation of genius to madness, for this will help me to explain the real nature of genius, i.e. of the only mental endowment that can produce genuine works of art. But this requires a brief explanation of madness itself.

A clear and complete insight into the essence of madness—an accurate and sharp concept of what really distinguishes the mad from the sane—has not yet been found, as far as I know.

Mad people can't be denied to have reason or to have

understanding; for they speak and understand, they often make perfectly accurate inferences, and as a rule they quite accurately perceive their environment and see the connection between causes and effects. Visions and fantasies of delirium are not ordinary symptoms of madness: delirium distorts perception; madness distorts thoughts. Mad people don't usually go wrong in their recognition of what is immediately *present*; their insane talk always refers to what is *absent* or *past*, and only through these refers to their connection with what is present. So their malady seems to me especially to affect their memory. It's not that they are wholly lacking in it [he gives evidence for that]; but in them the thread of memory is broken, and no uniformly interconnected recollection of the past is possible. Individual scenes from the past are accurate, but there are gaps in recollecting them, which the mad people fill out with fictions that are either

- constantly the same, becoming *idées fixes*, and then it is a fixed delusion, melancholia; or
- or always different, ideas that happen to occur to them at the moment; then it is called folly, *fatuitas*.

That's why it is so hard, when a mad person is brought into a madhouse, to question him about the previous course of his life. In his memory the true is increasingly polluted with the false. He accurately takes in his immediate environment, but it is distorted by its fancied connection with an imagined past. So he identifies himself and others with persons who exist only in his fancied past, no longer recognises many of his acquaintances, and so—for all of the accuracy of his thoughts about things that are individually present—maintains wholly false relations between those and things that are absent.

If his madness reaches a high degree, an utter loss of memory ensues, making him entirely incapable of concern for what is absent or past, and entirely determined by the

mood of the moment combined with the fictions that fill the past in his head; and then, if one's superior power is not constantly made evident to him, one is never for a moment safe from violence or murder at his hands.

A madman's knowledge, like that of animals, is limited to the present; but what distinguishes them is that an animal has no presentation of the past as such, though the past affects it through the mediation of habit. The dog recognises its former master years later—i.e. gets the usual impression at the sight of him—but it has no recollection of that earlier time. Whereas the madman carries a past around *in abstracto* in his faculty of reason; but it is a false one, which exists only for him, whether long-term or just for the moment. The influence of this false past then prevents him from making the use that animals do of the accurately recognised present.

Intense spiritual suffering, unexpected horrific events, often lead to madness; and here is my explanation of why. All such suffering is, as an actual event, limited to the present; so it is only passing, and to that extent never disproportionately difficult. It becomes excessively great only as an enduring pain; but as such it is only a thought, and therefore lies in one's *memory*. Now when such a sorrow, such painful knowledge, is so agonising that it becomes simply unbearable and threatens to overcome the individual, then terrified nature seizes on madness as the ultimate life-preserver. The tormented mind breaks the thread of its memory, fills the gaps with fictions, and so seeks refuge in madness from the mental suffering that exceeds its strength, as when a limb smitten with gangrene is amputated and replaced with a wooden one. As examples, consider raging Ajax, King Lear, and Ophelia. For the only creatures of true genius to which one can appeal here as generally familiar are equivalent to actual persons in their truth; in any case,

abundant actual experience shows us altogether the same thing. A weak analogy of this sort of passage from pain to madness is the fact that we often all, as if mechanically, by means of some loud exclamation or movement, seek to dispel a painful remembrance that suddenly strikes us, to divert ourselves from it, forcibly to distract ourselves.

What I have said shows us that the madman accurately grasps the particular present and many particular bits of the past, but mistakes the relations among them—the big picture—and thus thinks wrongly and talks wrongly. And this is exactly his point of contact with the individual of genius. For the genius also

in abandoning knowledge of relations according to the GP, so as to see and seek in things only their *ideas*, to grasp their true essence in its perceptual expression, in which respect *one* thing represents its entire species and therefore, as Goethe says, one case is as good as a thousand,

loses sight of the big picture. The present scene that he takes in with such extraordinary vividness appears in such a bright light that the other links in the chain withdraw into the dark; and this gives rise to phenomena that have long been recognised as resembling those of madness. That which in particular given things exists only incompletely and weakened by modifications is raised by the man of genius, through his way of contemplating it, to the *idea* of the thing, and thus to completeness. So he sees extremes everywhere, and his own conduct tends to extremes; he doesn't know how to hit the mean; he lacks soberness, and the result is as I have described it. He knows the ideas completely but not the individuals. So a poet may know *man* deeply and thoroughly while having a very imperfect knowledge of *men*; he is easily deceived—a plaything in the hands of the crafty.

37. What works of art are for

I repeat: genius consists in the capacity for •knowledge independent of the GP, and therefore knowledge not of individual things. . . .but of their ideas, and for •being the correlative of ideas, and thus no longer an individual but a pure subject of knowledge; and •I now add that• this capacity •cannot be the exclusive privilege of the genius, but• must be possessed to *some* degree by all human beings. Otherwise they would be no more capable of enjoying works of art than they are of producing them, and would have no receptiveness for the *beautiful* and the *sublime*; indeed those words could mean nothing to them. So we must assume that—unless some people are entirely incapable of aesthetic satisfaction—all human beings have this power of knowing the ideas in things, thereby briefly relinquishing their personality. The genius's only advantage is that he has this kind of knowledge in a higher degree and for a longer duration, which allows him to hold it isolated in his consciousness in the way that is needed if he is to make something that *reproduces* this object of knowledge, this reproduction being a work of art. Through this he communicates to others the idea he has grasped. It is the same idea, unaltered •in the process of reproduction•, so that the aesthetic satisfaction is essentially one and the same, whether it is called forth by a work of art or directly through perception of nature and of life. The work of art is merely a means of making it easier to have the knowledge in which that satisfaction consists. That the idea confronts us more easily through the art-work than directly through nature and reality is solely due to the fact that the artist—thinking now only of the idea and not of the reality—has reproduced only the idea in his work, separating it out from reality and omitting all distracting contingencies. The artist lets us look into the world through his eyes. That

he has these eyes—that he knows the inner nature of things apart from all their relations—is the gift of genius, which is **innate**. But that he is equipped to share this gift with us, to give us his eyes, that is the **acquired** part, the technical side, of art. For this reason, having presented the nature of aesthetic knowledge in its most general outlines, I shall proceed to a more detailed consideration of the beautiful and the sublime, taking nature and art together, no longer isolating art. I shall first consider what happens in a person when the beautiful moves him, when the sublime moves him; it makes no intrinsic difference whether •his being moved derives directly from nature, from life, or •he gets it only through the mediation of art.

38. The subjective side of aesthetic experience

In the aesthetic manner of contemplation we have found *two inseparable components*:

- knowledge of the object not as a single thing but as a platonic idea, i.e. as the enduring form of some entire species of things, and
- the contemplating person's awareness of himself not as an individual but as a *pure will-less subject of [see Glossary] knowledge*.

The condition under which the two components always occur together was abandonment of the method of knowing that is bound to the GP, though this is the only one that is useful for the service of will, as also for science.

And we'll see the pleasure produced by contemplation of the beautiful coming from those two components—which plays a larger part depends on what the object of aesthetic

contemplation is.

All willing arises out of need, thus out of lack, thus out of suffering. So fulfillment puts an end to the suffering; but for every wish that is fulfilled at least ten are thwarted. Further, desire lasts long, its demands go on for ever; fulfillment is brief and scantily measured out. But even final satisfaction is only illusory: every **a** fulfilled desire is at once replaced by a **b** new one; the person concerned knows that **a** the former is an error; so is **b** the latter, but he doesn't *yet* know that about it.¹ No object of willing, once attained, can give lasting satisfaction; it is always like alms tossed to a beggar, getting him through another day of life so as to renew his torment tomorrow.

Therefore, so long as

- our consciousness is filled with our will,
- we are given over to the press of desires with its constant hopes and fears, and
- we are subjects of willing,

we can never have lasting happiness or rest. Whether we give chase or flee, fear disaster or strive for enjoyment, it's essentially the same story: concern for will and its constant demands, whatever form they take, fills and perpetually moves our consciousness; but without *rest* there is no possibility of true well-being. So the subject of willing is constantly on the turning wheel of Ixion, continues to draw its water in the always-leaking vessel of the Danaïds, is the eternally yearning Tantalus.

But when some external cause or inner mood suddenly lifts us out of the endless stream of willing—rips knowledge away from enslavement to will—our attention stops being directed toward motives of willing, and instead grasps •things

¹ [AS means that if the person realises that he was mistaken in thinking that the *satisfaction of* desire **a** was complete in the sense of quelling desire. He knows this because he has seen that **a** *was* immediately followed by a new desire. He hasn't *yet* seen that happen to **b**.]

free from their relation to will, thus without interest, without subjectivity, regarded purely for themselves, entirely given over to •them merely as presentations, not as motives. Then the *rest* that is always sought but never reached on that first path of willing has all at once occurred of itself, and we are utterly content. It is the painless state that Epicurus prized as the highest good and as the state of the gods. For we are, for that moment, freed from the wretched press of the will, we celebrate the Sabbath of the workhouse of willing, the wheel of Ixion stands still.

This state, however, is just what I described above as

- required for knowledge of ideas,
- pure contemplation,
- absorption in perception,
- losing oneself in the object,
- forgetting all individuality, and
- surrendering the kind of knowledge that follows the GP and takes in only relations.

It is the state in which—simultaneously and inseparably—

- the single perceived thing rises to the idea of its species,
- the knowing individual rises to ·the level of being· the pure subject of [see Glossary] will-less knowledge, and
- neither of them now stands within the stream of time and other relations.

It then makes no difference whether one sees the sunset from the prison or from the palace.

An inner state of mind, a predominance of knowing over willing, can produce this state in any circumstances. This is shown to us by those excellent Dutchmen who directed such a purely objective perception on the most insignificant objects, producing a lasting monument to their objectivity and spiritual repose in ‘still lifes’ which the aesthetic beholder cannot regard unmoved, for they present to him the peaceful,

still, will-free frame of mind of the artist, which was needed to contemplate such insignificant things so objectively, to observe them so attentively, and to repeat this perception so cool-headedly; and as the picture invites the viewer to participate in this state, his emotion is often increased by the contrast between it and the unquiet frame of mind, disturbed by vehement willing, in which he finds himself. In the same spirit, landscape-painters, particularly Ruisdael, have often painted very insignificant country scenes which produce the same effect even more agreeably.

The **inner** power of an artistic nature can accomplish that much entirely on its own. But that purely objective state of mind is facilitated and **externally** enhanced by suitable objects, by the abundance of natural beauty that invites us—indeed urges us—to perceive it. That beauty almost always succeeds in •tearing us (even if only for a moment) from subjectivity, from enslavement to will, and •transporting us into the state of pure knowledge. Even someone tormented by passions, or by hardship and cares, is suddenly quickened, cheered, and uplifted by a single free glimpse into nature: the storm of the passions, the press of desire and fear, and all the torment of willing are then at once quieted in a wonderful way. For at the moment when we, torn away from willing, have given ourselves over to pure will-less knowledge, we have stepped (as it were) into another world where everything that moves our will, and thereby so intensely shakes us, no longer exists. That liberation of knowledge lifts us out of all this as intensely and completely as do sleep and dreams: happiness and unhappiness have vanished; we are no longer an individual but only a pure subject of knowledge. We remain only as the world’s *one* eye that looks out from all knowing beings, but only in humans can it free itself entirely from the service of will—so entirely that all differences in individuality vanish and it makes no

difference whether the gazing eye belongs to a mighty king or a tormented beggar. For neither happiness nor sorrow is carried across that border. So close to us is a domain **a** in which we entirely escape from all our sorrow. But who has the power to maintain himself there for long? As soon as our consciousness connects that purely perceived object with our will, with our person, the magic comes to an end and we •fall back into **b** the •kind of• knowledge dominated by the GP, •no longer recognise the idea but the individual thing, the link in a chain to which we too belong, and •are again given over to all our unhappiness.

Most people, since they entirely lack objectivity, i.e. genius, almost always occupy **b** the latter standpoint. So they prefer not to be alone with nature: they need society, or at least a book. That is because their knowledge remains in the service of will; so they seek in objects only some sort of reference to their will, and with anything that has no such reference, a constant desolate 'It doesn't help me' sounds in their interior like a ground bass; so that they in their loneliness find even the most beautiful surroundings to be barren, dark, foreign, and hostile.

Finally: it is also that blessed state of will-less perception that spreads such a wondrous magic over the past and over distant places, and—by way of self-deception—depicts them in such a flattering light. For when we call to mind days long past, spent in a distant place, our imagination calls back only the objects, not the subject of [see Glossary] will which carries about with it, then as now, its incurable sorrows; they are forgotten, having since then often made place for others. Now, objective perception is just as effectual in recollection as present perception would be if it were in our power to give ourselves over to it in a state free of willing. Thus it happens that—especially when some hardship has made us more than usually fearful—a sudden recollection of scenes from long

ago and far away flits across our minds like a lost paradise. Imagination calls back only the objective, not that which is individually subjective, and we fancy that the objective part stood before us at that past time as purely as its image now stands in our imagination, unobscured by any reference to our will; though in fact the relation of objects to our willing tormented us back then as severely as it does now. We can free ourselves of all suffering from present objects as well as from remote ones, so long as we can •rise to regarding them purely objectively and so •produce the illusion that those objects alone are present, not ourselves. Then—rid of the suffering self—as pure subjects of knowledge we become *one* with those objects, and as foreign as our needs are to them, so foreign are they at such moments to ourselves. Only the world as presentation remains; the world as will has vanished.

I hope that through all these considerations I have made clear how, and how greatly, aesthetic satisfaction comes from the subjective condition, i.e. from •the liberation of knowledge from the service of will, •forgetting oneself as an individual, and •raising consciousness to the pure, will-less, timeless subject of knowledge, independent of all relations. Along with this subjective side of aesthetic contemplation there always enters—as a necessary correlate—its objective side, the intuitive grasp of the platonic idea. But before I turn to a closer consideration of this and of its role in the achievements of art, my purposes in this work require me to give a little time to the subjective side of aesthetic satisfaction, so as to complete my discussion of that with an account of impressions of the *sublime*, which depend on that •subjective• side alone and arise through a modification of it. After that, my treatment of •both sides of• aesthetic satisfaction will be completed with a discussion of its objective side.

But I must first add the following remarks to what I have said. Light is the most gladdening of things; it has become the symbol of all that is good and healthy. In all religions it symbolises salvation, while darkness symbolises damnation. . . . Dante's Paradise would look very much like Vauxhall in London, for all the blessed spirits appear as points of light and are arranged in regular figures. The absence of light immediately makes us sad; its return cheers us. Colours immediately arouse a keen delight, which reaches its highest degree when they are transparent. All this depends entirely on the fact that light is the correlative and condition of the most perfect kind of knowledge of perception, the only knowledge that doesn't in any way affect the will. For sight, unlike the affections of the other senses, cannot directly and through its sensuous effect make the sensation of the special organ agreeable or disagreeable, which is to say that it has no immediate connection with the will. Such a quality can only belong to the perception which arises in the *understanding*, and then it lies in the relation of the object to the will. This is not the case with hearing: sounds can give pain directly, and can also be sensuously agreeable, directly and without regard to harmony or melody. Touch, as all of a piece with the feeling of the whole body, is still more subordinated to this direct influence on the will; and yet there is such a thing as a sensation of touch which is neither painful nor pleasant. But smells are always either agreeable or disagreeable, and tastes still more so. Those last two senses are therefore most closely related to the will, and therefore they are the most ignoble senses, which Kant has called 'the subjective senses'. The pleasure over light is in fact only the pleasure over the objective possibility of the purest and fullest perceptual knowledge, and as such it

may be traced to the fact that pure knowledge—freed and delivered from all will—is in the highest degree pleasant, and of itself constitutes a large part of aesthetic enjoyment. These facts about light explain the incredible beauty we find in the reflection of objects in water. The action of reflected rays of light—

- that lightest, quickest, finest kind of action of bodies on each other,
- to which we owe by far the completest and purest of our perceptions

—is here brought clearly before our eyes, distinct and perfect, in cause and in effect, and indeed in its entirety; hence the aesthetic pleasure it gives us, which is entirely based on the subjective ground of aesthetic satisfaction, and is pleasure in pure knowing and its method.

39. The aesthetically sublime

These considerations are meant to emphasise the subjective part of aesthetic satisfaction, i.e. this satisfaction in so far as it consists in pleasure in mere perceptual knowledge as such, as opposed to knowledge linked with will. They are directly connected with the following explanation of the state of mind that has been called the feeling of the *sublime*.

I have already noted that it is easiest to move into the state of pure perception when objects accommodate themselves to this, i.e. when by their complex but also definite and clear form they easily become representatives of ideas—which is what *beauty* in the objective sense consists in. Above all, *natural* beauty has this property, which enables it to give even the most insensitive people some fleeting aesthetic satisfaction. [AS then offers a bold speculation

¹ [Schwärmerei, which could mean 'wild imaginings', 'fanaticism', or the like.]

(he admits that it ‘borders on wildness’¹) about why we find plants beautiful, followed by a dense and difficult passage the gist of which is given when he goes on:] Thus what distinguishes the feeling of the sublime from that of the beautiful is this:

- with the beautiful, pure knowledge gets the upper hand without any struggle: the object’s beauty—i.e. the property of it that facilitates knowledge of its idea—has effortlessly cleared from one’s consciousness the will and any knowledge of relations that serve it, leaving the mind as a pure subject of knowledge that doesn’t even remember the will; whereas
- with the sublime, the state of pure knowledge is first achieved by consciously and forcibly hauling the mind up to a level above the will and knowledge referring to it. The person must be conscious not only of achieving but also of maintaining this elevation² which is therefore accompanied by a constant memory of will—not of any particular individual willing, such as fears or desires, but rather of human willing on the whole. . . . If a real individual act of will entered consciousness through some actual personal distress and danger from objects, then the individual will would at once win the upper hand, the repose of contemplation would become impossible, the impression of the sublime would vanish, making place for that anxiety in which the individual’s efforts at self-rescue suppress any other thought. Some examples will do much to clarify this theory of **a** the aesthetic sublime and place it beyond doubt; they will also display the variety of *degrees* of the sense of the sublime. The only difference between **a** that and **b** the sense of the beautiful is that **a** the former involves—along with the pure, will-free knowledge and knowledge of ideas beyond all relations determined by the GP (which it shares with **b**)—an

additional factor, namely the person’s elevation above the known hostile relation of the object contemplated to the will in general. So there arises—according to whether this additional factor is

- strong, loud, pressing, close, or only
- weak, distant, merely indicated

—several degrees of the sublime, indeed of passages from the beautiful to the sublime. It suits my purposes to make the weaker of them first evident in examples, although readers whose aesthetic receptiveness is not great, and whose imagination is not lively, will understand only the succeeding examples of the higher and clearer degrees of the impression of the sublime. If you are one of those, focus on those later examples, and leave to themselves the examples to be cited first, of very weak degrees of the impression in question.

Just as a human being is at the same time **a** tempestuous and dark pressing of the will and **b** eternal, free, cheerful subject of pure knowledge—with their focal points, their opposite poles, being **a** the genitals and **b** the brain—so correspondingly the sun is at the same time **a** source of **b** light—condition of the most perfect kind of knowledge, and for that reason the most delightful of things—and **a** a source of heat, the first condition of all life, i.e. of all the will’s phenomena at its higher levels. Thus **a** heat is for will what **b** light is for knowledge. So light is the greatest diamond in beauty’s crown, and has the most decisive influence on knowledge of any beautiful object: its *sheer presence* is an indispensable condition of beauty; its *presence with a favourable position* heightens even the beauty of the most beautiful. But above all else, the beauty of architecture is heightened by its favour, through which even the most

² [‘elevation’ here translates *Erhebung*, the abstract noun from *erheben*, of which the past participle, *erhaben*, is here translated as ‘sublime’.]

insignificant thing becomes a beautiful object.

If we view in harsh winter the rays of the low-standing sun reflected by stony masses, where they illuminate without warming and so are favourable to **b** the purest kind of knowledge and not to **a** will, the contemplation of the light's beautiful effect on these masses takes us (as all beauty does) into a state of pure knowing. [The rest of this obscure sentence says, in effect, that the lack of **a** warmth serves as a reminder to someone in **b** this state of knowledge of what *will* can do; this prompts him to persist in pure knowing and to turn away from willing; and so he passes from the feeling of the beautiful to the feeling of the sublime. AS admits that this that this is 'a weak example' of his thesis.]

Let us put ourselves in a very lonely place with unlimited horizon, under cloudless skies, trees and plants in motionless air, no animals, no people, no moving waters, the deepest stillness; such surroundings are like a summons to seriousness, to contemplation, pulling entirely free from the will and its neediness. But this is just what imparts to such a scene of desolate stillness a touch of the sublime. Because it provides no object (favourable or unfavourable) for the will that always needs to be striving and achieving, all that is left is the state of pure contemplation; and whoever is incapable of this will be shamefully degraded, prey to the emptiness of inactive will and the torment of boredom. (This provides a test of our intellectual worth, a good criterion of which is the degree of our power of enduring—or even of loving—solitude.) The scene I have sketched provides an example of the sublime at a low degree, for in it

- the state of pure knowing, in its peace and all-sufficiency

is mingled, by way of contrast, with

- a recollection of the dependence and poverty of a will that stands in need of constant action.

This is the species of the sublime for which the sight of the boundless prairies of the interior of North America is celebrated.

Now let such a region be deprived even of plants and show only naked cliffs. Then—with the complete absence of the organic material necessary for our survival—the will at once becomes uneasy, the barren waste takes on a frightful character, our mood becomes more tragic, the elevation to pure knowing occurs with a more decisive tearing away from the interest of the will, and because we persist in the state of pure knowing, the feeling of the sublime comes clearly to the fore.

[AS continues with his crescendo of cases, through to the sense of the sublime that one can get from contemplating a terrific storm at sea, which he sums up thus:] In the unshaken spectator of this scene, the dual character of his consciousness reaches its highest level of clarity: he feels himself to be **(i)** an individual, a fragile phenomenon of will that can be broken to bits by the slightest blow from the forces of nature and at the same time **(ii)** the eternal, restful subject of [see Glossary] knowledge that is the bearer of this entire world, the frightful battle with nature being only a presentation to it. . . . This is the full impression of the sublime. It is occasioned in this case by the sight of a power incomparably superior to the individual, threatening him with annihilation.

In an entirely different manner, this sense of the sublime can arise when a mere magnitude in space and time is made present to an individual's mind, its immensity reducing him to nothing. We can call the previous kind the *dynamical* sublime, and this second kind the *mathematical* sublime, retaining Kant's terminology and his accurate drawing of the line between them (though I diverge from him entirely in my explanation of the inner essence of the mathematical

sublime). . . .

When we lose ourselves in contemplation of the infinite size of the world in space and time, meditate on the thousands of past years that have flowed by and on those to come—or indeed, when the night sky actually brings countless worlds before our eyes, impressing the world’s immensity on our consciousness—we feel ourselves reduced to nothingness, feel ourselves as individual, as animate body, as transitory phenomenon of will, dwindling into nothingness like a drop in the ocean. But at the same time there rises against such a spectre of our own nullity, against such a *lying impossibility*, the immediate awareness that all these worlds exist only in a presentation to us. . . . The magnitude of the world that previously caused us unrest now rests within us; our dependence on it is nullified by its dependence on us.

[AS goes on to say that a sense of the mathematical sublime can be derived from much smaller spaces such as those of the domes of St Peter’s church in Rome or St. Paul’s in London. He doesn’t make clear how or why this is so, unless an explanation is to be gathered from this:] Many objects of our perception arouse the impression of the sublime by virtue of the fact that

- their size or age makes us feel ourselves diminished to nothingness in the face of them, and yet
- we revel in the pleasure of viewing them.

Of such a sort are very tall mountains, the Egyptian pyramids, colossal ruins of great antiquity.

My explanation of the sublime can be extended even to ethical matters, namely to what is called a *sublime character*. If someone has such a character, his will is not aroused by objects that would plainly be suited to arousing it; rather, when these objects are in play, knowledge retains the upper hand. Someone with such a character will regard people

purely objectively, not in terms of how they might relate to his will. For example, he will

- take note of their failings, even of their hatred and injustice against him, without being aroused to hatred;
- see their happiness without feeling envy;
- recognise their good qualities, without wanting any closer connection with them; and
- perceive the beauty of women, without desiring them.

His personal happiness or unhappiness will not affect him strongly; rather, he will be as Hamlet describes Horatio:

for thou hast been
—As one, in suffering all, that suffers nothing—
A man, that fortune’s buffets and rewards
Hast ta’en with equal thanks, etc.

For in the course of his own life and its misfortunes, he will look less to his individual lot than to that of humanity in general, and comport himself accordingly more as knowing than as suffering.

40. The stimulating as the opposite of the sublime

Since opposites are mutually illuminating, it may be in order to note here that the real opposite of the sublime is something that may not be recognised as such at first glance, namely the stimulating [*Reizende*, which could mean something more like ‘charming’]. By this I understand *what arouses the will with the immediate prospect of satisfaction*.

Whereas the feeling of the sublime arises when something plainly unfavourable to the will becomes an object of a pure contemplation that can be maintained only if one constantly turns away from the will and rises **above** its interest, the stimulating pulls the beholder **down** from the pure contemplation that is required for any apprehension of the beautiful, subjecting his will to the necessity of stimulation

by objects immediately appealing to it; so the observer no longer remains a pure subject of knowing but becomes the needy, dependent subject of willing. . . . [For these uses of 'subject of, see Glossary]

I find only two species of the stimulating in the domain of art, both of them unworthy of it. **(i)** One is the Dutch kind of still life, which gives the beholder an appetite for the food it depicts and thus brings in the will in a way that defeats aesthetic contemplation. Painted fruit is still allowable, since it offers itself as a further development of the flower and through its form and colour as a product of natural beauty, without the viewer's being downright compelled to think of its edible quality; but unfortunately we often find dishes served up and prepared by artists with illusory naturalism: oysters, herrings, crabs, buttered bread, beer, wine, etc., which is entirely objectionable. **(ii)** In historical painting and sculpture, the stimulating element consists in naked figures whose posture, half-clothed state, and entire treatment is aimed at arousing lewd feelings in the viewer; which nullifies purely aesthetic contemplation and undermines the purpose of art. This fault exactly matches the one I have criticised the Dutchmen for. The ancients, for all the beauty and perfect nakedness of their figures, are almost always free of it, since the artist himself created them in a spirit that was purely objective, filled with ideal beauty, not in a spirit of low subjective desire. So the stimulating is everywhere to be avoided in art.

There is also such a thing as the **negatively stimulating**, which is even more objectionable than the **positively stimulating** just discussed; and this is the **disgusting**. Just like what is positively¹ stimulating, it awakens the will in the beholder and thereby nullifies purely aesthetic contemplation. But

what it arouses is an active aversion and opposition; it awakens the will by presenting it with things it abhors. So it has always been recognised as altogether impermissible in art, though the merely *ugly*, when not disgusting, is allowable in its proper place as we shall see later.

41. Everything is beautiful in its own way

[AS opens this chapter with the remark that the sublime/beautiful distinction lies *within* the subjective side of aesthetic consideration; it's the distinction between two different ways in which someone's (subjective) experience of beauty can be free of contamination by the will. He continues:] With regard to their objects, there is no intrinsic difference between the sublime and the beautiful; for the object of aesthetic contemplation in each is not •the individual thing but •the idea—i.e. an adequate objectivisation of will at a particular level—trying to be revealed in it. Its necessary correlate, which like the idea itself is withdrawn from the GP, is the pure subject of knowledge; just as the correlate of the individual thing is the knowing individual, both of which lie within the domain of the GP.

In calling something x beautiful we mean that x is an object of our aesthetic contemplation, which has a double meaning: **(i)** that in contemplating it we are conscious of ourselves no longer as individuals but as pure will-less subjects of knowledge, and **(ii)** that we recognise in x not the particular thing but an idea, which can happen only if our attention to x is not governed by the GP—does not follow the relation of the object to anything outside it (which is always ultimately connected with relations to our own will)—but rests on the object itself.

¹ [*eigentlich*, which means 'actually' or 'genuinely', but this was presumably a slip.]

The idea and the pure subject of knowledge always enter consciousness together, as necessary correlates, and on their appearance all distinction of time vanishes, for they are both entirely foreign to the GP in all its forms. . . . If I contemplate a tree (for example) aesthetically, i.e. with the eyes of an artist—and thus recognise not it but its idea—it makes no difference whether it is this tree or its predecessor that flourished a thousand years ago, and whether the observer is this individual or any other who lived anywhere and at any time; the particular thing and the knowing individual are abolished along with the GP, and there remains only the idea and the pure subject of knowing, which jointly constitute the adequate objectivity of will at this level. They may be compared to the rainbow and the sun, which have no part in the constant movement and succession of the falling drops ·in a waterfall·. And the idea dispenses not only with time but also with space, for the idea is not this special form that appears before me but its expression, its pure significance, its innermost being, which discloses itself to me and calls on me, and which may be entirely the same though the spatial relations of its form are very different.

Since then, on the one hand, every existing thing can be regarded purely objectively and apart from all relations, and since on the other hand, in each thing will makes its appearance at some level of its objectivisation, and that thing is accordingly the expression of an idea, it also follows that every existing thing is beautiful.

That even the most insignificant thing can be viewed in a purely objective and will-less way and thereby prove itself to be beautiful is attested by the still life of the Dutch. But one thing *x* can be *more beautiful* than another thing *y* in the sense of being easier than *y* is to view in that way; and it can be *most beautiful* in the sense of almost compelling one to view it in that way. This sometimes happens because

relations among an individual thing's parts are so clear, determinate and significant that it gives pure expression to the idea of its species, completely unifying within itself all possible expression of its species, and thus making it much easier for the observer to pass from •the individual thing to •the idea and thereby to pass to •the state of pure contemplativeness. In other cases a thing has the advantage of particular beauty because the idea that speaks to us from within it is at a high level of the objectivisation of will and therefore highly significant and very eloquent. That is why human beings are above all other things beautiful, and the revelation of their essence is the highest goal of art. Human form and human expression are the most significant objects of the plastic and pictorial arts, just as human action is the most significant object of poetry.

But each thing has its own peculiar [see Glossary] beauty: not only everything organic, where beauty is shown by the unity of an individual, but also every formless inorganic thing, even every artifact. For all these reveal the ideas through which the will is objectified at the lowest levels; they provide (so to speak) the deepest, resonating bass tones of nature. Gravity, rigidity, fluidity, light, etc. are ideas that express themselves in cliffs, buildings, bodies of water, etc. Landscape gardening and architecture can only help them unfold their properties clearly, multifariously, and completely, giving them an opportunity to express themselves purely, thereby prompting aesthetic contemplation and making it easier. Inferior buildings and surroundings—neglected by nature or spoiled by art—accomplish this to little if any extent; yet the general fundamental ideas of nature can't entirely vanish even from these. They speak even here to the observer who looks for them, and even inferior buildings and the like can still be viewed aesthetically, [though AS adds that in their case what counts are their materials' general

properties, not the artificial form they have been given.]

·DISAGREEING WITH PLATO·

[AS here notes some disagreements between his view of ideas and Plato's. (i) Plato holds that 'a table and a chair express the ideas of table and chair', whereas AS holds that they 'express the ideas to which voice is already given in their mere materials as such'. It's not clear what this means, and it seems inconsistent with what comes next: (ii) Plato (or anyway the early platonists) denied that there are any ideas of artifacts. Also (iii) 'Plato teaches that the fine arts—painting and poetry—aim to depict not ideas but individual things. AS regards this as a serious error, but thinks it is not likely to lead anyone astray, because Plato clearly connects it with 'his denigration and dismissal of art, particularly of poetry', which is 'well recognised as one of that great man's greatest errors'.]

42. The two sides of the aesthetic experience

I return to my comparison of aesthetic impressions. Knowledge of the beautiful always presupposes—simultaneously and inseparably—a purely knowing **a** subject and the known idea as **b** object. But ·although both of these are always involved, their contributions can be different·. The aesthetic enjoyment will sometimes owe more to **b** the known idea, and sometimes more to **a** the blessedness and spiritual peace of pure knowledge, free of all willing and thus of all individuality and of the pain that comes from it. Which way this pendulum swings depends on whether the intuitively grasped idea is a higher or lower level of the objectivisation of will. In the aesthetic contemplation (in reality or through the medium of art) of

- natural beauty in inorganic and vegetative things, and of

- works of fine architecture,

the enjoyment of pure will-less knowledge will be predominant, because in such cases the ideas that are grasped don't have deep significance or richly expressive content, because they are only low levels of the objectivisation of will. By contrast, when •animals and human beings are the object of aesthetic contemplation or depiction, the enjoyment consists more in the objective apprehension of these ideas, which are the clearest revelations of will. For such things exhibit the greatest multiplicity of forms, the richness and deep significance of phenomena, and most completely reveal the essence of will to us, whether in its intensity, its terribleness, its satisfaction, or (in tragic depictions) its breaking, or even in its conversion or self-nullification, which is the particular theme of Christian painting, as it is in general the case that historical painting and drama have as their object the idea of will that has been illuminated by full knowledge.

I shall now go through the fine arts one by one, completing and clarifying the theory of the beautiful that I have advanced.

43. Architecture

Matter as such cannot be the display of an idea. For we found in Book I that matter is nothing but causality all through; its very existence consists in its causal action. But causality is a mode of the GP, whereas knowledge of ideas essentially excludes the content of the GP. We found in Book II that matter is the common substratum of all individual phenomena of ideas, making it the link connecting ideas with phenomena = individual things. So this is a second reason why matter cannot of itself display an idea. This is confirmed *a posteriori* by the fact that for matter as such no perceptual presentation is possible but only an abstract

concept. A perceptual presentation of it can display only the forms and qualities of which matter is the bearer, and in all of which ideas reveal themselves. This corresponds to the fact that causality (the entire essence of matter) cannot of itself be perceptually displayed, but only some particular causal connection.

On the other hand, every phenomenon of an idea, because as a phenomenon it has entered the form of the GP (or of the individuation-maker), must show up in matter as one of its qualities. So far then matter is the connecting link between the idea and the individuation-maker, which is the.

So Plato was right to propose in *Timaeus* that in addition to ideas and their phenomenon, individual things—the two of which otherwise take in all things in the world—there is also a third thing, *matter*, distinct from each of the others. Every individual is the phenomenon of an idea and is thus material. And every quality of matter is always a phenomenon of an idea, which makes it capable of being viewed aesthetically, i.e. makes possible knowledge of the idea displayed in it. This holds even for the most general qualities of matter without which it is nothing, and the ideas of which are the weakest objectivisation of will. These are: gravity, cohesion, rigidity, fluidity, reaction to light, etc.

Now, when we consider architecture purely as fine art, setting aside its practical goal—

in which it serves will, not pure knowledge, and thus is no longer *art* in my sense

—the only intention we can credit it with is that of making more clearly perceptible some of the ideas that are the lowest levels of the objectivisation of will: **(i)** gravity, cohesion, rigidity, hardness; the general properties of stone; the primary,

simplest, dullest cases of the visibility of will, the *basso continuo* of nature;¹ and then along with these **(ii)** *light*, which is in a number of respects their opposite. Even at this low level of the objectivisation of will we see its essence revealed in conflict. For the battle between gravity and rigidity is fine architecture's sole aesthetic material; architecture's task is to let the conflict show up with complete clarity in many different ways. It does this by depriving those ineradicable forces² of the shortest path to their satisfaction and detaining them by way of a detour; so that the battle is prolonged and the inexhaustible efforts of both forces are made visible in many different ways.

The entire mass of the building, left to its original tendency, would present a mere *heap*, bound as tightly as possible to the earth towards which •gravity incessantly presses, while •rigidity opposes it—each of •these being an objectivisation of will. But architecture blocks this tendency, this striving, from being immediately satisfied, and allows it only indirectly, by way of detours:

- the beams can press on the earth only through the columns;
- the dome has to be its own support and can satisfy its striving toward the earth only through the mediation of pillars; and so on.

[AS goes on to say that the goal of these blockages and consequent detours is to clearly display 'the innate forces of the bare mass of stone' in their interplay with one another, this being the whole of the purely aesthetic purpose of architecture. (A building's suitability to human needs is a matter of 'practical architecture', and has no aesthetic significance.) He adds:] The column is the simplest of all forms of support, determined purely by its purpose: twisted

¹ [This repeats a musical metaphor that is reported (not given in a detailed translation) early in chapter 28 above.]

² [Presumably AS is thinking of the qualities of gravity, cohesion etc. as forces.]

columns are tasteless; square pillars are less simple than round columns, though they happen to be easier to make. In just the same way, the forms of the frieze, beam, arch, dome are thoroughly determined by their immediate purpose and are thereby self-explanatory. Decoration of capitals etc. belongs to sculpture, not architecture. . . .

For the understanding and aesthetic enjoyment of a work of architecture, it is absolutely necessary to have immediate perceptual knowledge of the weight, rigidity and cohesion of its matter. Our pleasure in such a work would be greatly reduced if we learned that the building material was pumice; for then it would appear to us as a kind of sham building. The effect would be much the same if we learned that what we had taken to be stone was really wood, because that shifts the relation between •rigidity and •gravity, and thereby alters the significance of all the parts, since •those natural forces are revealed much more weakly in buildings of wood •than in buildings of stone•; so that no work of fine architecture can be made out of wood, however thoroughly it imitates the real thing—a fact which no theory but mine can explain. If we were told that a building the sight of which had given us pleasure was made of different kinds of material that •had very unequal weight and consistency but •couldn't be distinguished by the eye, the whole building would become as unenjoyable as a poem in a language we didn't know. This all shows that architecture affects us not just a mathematically but b dynamically, and that what speaks to us through it is not a mere form and symmetry but rather b those fundamental forces of nature, those primary ideas, those lowest levels of the objectivisation of will.

The proportionality of a building and its parts is produced (i) by the immediate purposiveness of every part with respect to the constitution of the whole; in addition (ii) it serves to facilitate a survey and understanding of the whole, and

(iii) finally, proportional figures contribute to its beauty by revealing the lawful character of space as such. All this, however, is only of subordinate value and necessity and in no way the main concern, since even symmetry is not strictly required; after all, ruins are still beautiful.

Works of architecture have a quite particular relation to light: they achieve a double beauty in full sunlight with the blue sky as background, and have an entirely different effect in moonlight. Therefore, when a beautiful work of architecture is to be erected, special attention is always paid to the effects of the light and to the climate. This is primarily because it takes a bright, strong light to make clearly visible all the parts of a structure and the relations amongst them; but I think that light comes into it in another way as well, namely that architecture reveals the nature of light—just as it reveals the nature of things that are as opposite to light as gravity and rigidity are. When it is captured, impeded, reflected by great, opaque, sharply delineated, and variously shaped masses, light most purely and clearly unfolds its own nature and properties; this brings great enjoyment to the beholder, for light is the most delightful of things, as the condition and objective correlate of the most perfect manner of perceptual knowledge.

Because the ideas that architecture brings to clear perception are the lowest levels of the objectivisation of will, and thus have little **objective** significance, one's aesthetic enjoyment of •the view of a beautiful and properly lit building will consist less in the intake of ideas than in the **subjective** correlate of that—introduced along with it—which consists predominantly in the fact that with •this view the beholder is raised from the level of

•the kind of knowledge that belongs to individuals, serves the will, and follows the GP
to the level of

•pure subject of knowing, free from will; so that it consists in that pure contemplation itself, liberated from all the suffering of willing and individuality. In this respect architecture's contrary—the other extreme in the series of fine arts—is *drama*, which brings to our knowledge the most significant ideas of all, so that in the aesthetic enjoyment of it the objective side is altogether predominant.

What distinguishes architecture from the plastic and pictorial arts and poetry is that what it gives us is not a copy but the thing itself. It does not replicate, as they do, the idea that the artist has taken in, so that he is lending his eyes to the beholder; rather, the architectural artist simply prepares the object for the beholder, makes it easier for him to grasp the idea by bringing the actual individual object to a clear and complete expression of its nature.

Unlike works of the other fine arts, works of architecture are seldom produced for purely **aesthetic** purposes. Such purposes are subordinated to **practical** ones that are foreign to art itself. The great merit of an architect consists in achieving purely aesthetic purposes despite their subordination to other purposes that are foreign to them. He does this by

- skilfully adapting them in a variety of ways to their other purposes, and
- rightly judging which form of aesthetic-architectonic beauty is compatible with a temple, which with a palace, which with an arsenal, and so on.

The more a harsh climate increases those demands of practicality—the more rigidly it determines and unavoidably prescribes them—the less leeway there is for the beautiful in architecture. In the mild climates of India, Egypt, Greece, and Rome, where the demands of necessity were less and more loosely determined, architecture could most freely pursue its aesthetic goals. Under northern skies it grew rather stunted in this respect; here where keeps, pointed roofs, and

towers were in demand, since it could unfold its own beauty only within the most narrow limits, architecture had the more need to embellish itself with ornament borrowed from sculpture, as can be seen in the case of beautiful Gothic architecture.

The demands of necessity and practicality that put considerable limitations on architecture also give it a powerful support. Because of the extent and costliness of its works and the narrow range of its aesthetic effectiveness, architecture couldn't possibly have survived as purely fine art if it didn't *also* have a firm and honorable place among human occupations as a practical and necessary profession. Lack of the latter is precisely what prevents another art from standing as a sister beside architecture, although in an aesthetic respect it would quite properly be regarded as its counterpart: I mean the fine art of water-conduction. [AS develops this remark, citing the ways in which lakes and fountains etc. 'reveal the ideas of fluid, weighty matter just as much as works of architecture unfold the ideas of rigid matter'. This a fine art, he says, gets no support from the b practical art of water-conduction, because the purposes of a the former usually can't be united with those of b the latter. He cites a fountain in Rome as a rare exception to this.]

44. Horticulture. Animals

What the two arts just mentioned accomplish for the lowest levels of the objectivisation of will is accomplished to a certain extent for the higher levels of vegetative nature by the fine art of horticulture. The scenic beauty of a place rests for the most part on •how many natural objects are to be found together in it, and then on •the fact that the objects are cleanly segregated, come to the fore clearly, and yet are displayed in a fitting combination and variety. These

two conditions are facilitated by the fine art of horticulture; however, it is far from being as great a master of its material as architecture is of *its* material, and thus its effect is limited. The beauty that it shows us belongs almost entirely to nature; art has added little. . . .

The plant world offers itself everywhere for aesthetic enjoyment without the mediation of art, but when it is an object of art, the art is usually landscape painting, the domain of which also takes in the rest of unknowing nature.

With still life and mere painting of architecture, ruins, church interiors and the like, the subjective side of aesthetic enjoyment predominates: our pleasure in it lies less in

- immediate grasp of the ideas displayed, than in
- the subjective correlate of this grasp, pure will-less knowledge;

for when the painter lets us see things through his eyes, we at once obtain a sense of empathy and resonance of the feeling of deep spiritual repose and complete silencing of will that were necessary for knowledge to become so entirely absorbed in those lifeless objects, and to grasp them with such love, i.e. with such a degree of objectivity.

The effect of true landscape painting is also mainly of this sort. But because the ideas displayed in it are more significant and more highly expressive (as higher levels of the objectivisation of will), the objective side of aesthetic satisfaction comes more to the fore and maintains equilibrium with the subjective. Pure knowledge is no longer the main concern; rather, we are equally strongly affected by the idea that the knowledge is knowledge *of*, i.e. by the world as presentation at a significant level of objectification of will.

But a higher level is revealed in animal paintings and sculptures, of which latter we have important ancient remains [of which he lists examples in Venice, Florence, London, and Rome]. In these depictions, the objective side of aesthetic

satisfaction has a marked predominance over the subjective. Each such case, like every case of aesthetic contemplation, involves the peace of the subject who knows these ideas and has quieted his own will; but its effect is not *felt*, for we are occupied by the unrest and intensity of the will that has been depicted. It is that willing, which also constitutes our own nature, that becomes evident to us here, in forms in which its phenomenon is not (as it is in us) governed and tempered by thoughtfulness, but is depicted with starker strokes and clarity that borders on the grotesque and monstrous, but without any dissimulation, innocently and openly, lying there for all to see. That is the source of our interest in animals. The character of species already came to the fore in the depiction of plants, yet showed itself only in the species' forms. With animals it becomes much more significant and is expressed not only in shapes but in action, posture, and bearing, but always only as the character of the species, not of the individual. This knowledge of ideas at higher levels, which painting gives us only indirectly, can be had directly through purely contemplative perception of plants and observation of animals, and especially of animals in their free, natural, and easy state. Objective contemplation of their manifold, wondrous forms and of their doings is an instructive lesson from the great book of nature. . . . We see in it the many levels and manners of manifestation of the will which—one and the same in all beings—wills everywhere the same thing which is objectified as life (as existence) in such endless variation, such diversity of forms, all of which are accommodations to a diversity of external conditions, like ·musical· variations on a single theme. But if we wanted to condense into one phrase an insight into that nature's inner essence, we should use the Sanskrit formula. . . . *Tat twam asi*, which means 'You are this living thing'.

45. Human beauty

The great task of historical painting and sculpture is to display in an immediately perceptual way the idea in which will achieves its highest degree of objectification. The objective side of pleasure in the beautiful predominates here, and the subjective moves into the background. One level down—in paintings of animals—the characteristic coincides with the beautiful: the most characteristic lion, wolf, horse, sheep, bull has always been the most beautiful as well; because an animal has only the character of its species, not an individual character. In the representation of human beings the **a** character of the species is distinct from **b** the character of the individual; the **a** former is now called beauty (entirely in the objective sense), but the **b** latter retains the label 'character'; and a new difficulty arises, namely the problem of how to represent both, at once and completely, in the same individual.

Human beauty is an objective expression that designates the most complete objectification of will at the highest level at which it can be known—the idea of *human being in general*, completely expressed in the perceived form. But much as the objective side of beauty comes to the fore here, the subjective side is still its constant companion. No object so quickly pulls us into pure aesthetic contemplation as does the most beautiful human face and form, at the sight of which we are at once gripped by an inexpressible satisfaction and raised above ourselves and all that troubles us; and for as long as the purely aesthetic pleasure is continued, we stay in this state of pure knowledge in which we are freed from our personality, our willing with its constant pain. As Goethe puts it: 'No evil can touch him who looks on human beauty; he feels himself at one with himself and with the world.'

When nature achieves a beautiful human form, that is

because will has—through fortunate circumstances and its own force—overcome all the obstacles and resistance put in its way by its phenomena at levels that are lower than that of the human. These obstacles include the natural forces from which will must always in the first place wrench the matter belonging to all its manifestations. Also, the higher the level occupied by a phenomenon of the will, the more complex is its form; even a tree is only a systematic aggregate of endlessly repeated sprouting fibres. And up at the top level the human body is a highly complex system of different parts each of which has •a life subordinate to the whole but also •its own individual life, its *vita propria*. The rare condition that leads to beauty—the completely expressed character of the species—occurs when all these parts are precisely adjusted to the whole and to one another, so that nothing is excessive, nothing stunted.

Thus nature. But what about art? It is commonly thought that art imitates nature. But if the artist doesn't come to nature with an already-formed view—arrived at *before experience*—about what is beautiful, what standard can he employ to pick out from among nature's mostly unsuccessful works the ones that are successful and deserve to be imitated? And besides this, has nature ever produced a human being perfectly beautiful in all his parts? This has led some to think that the artist must seek out the beautiful *parts* distributed among a number of different human beings, and out of them construct a beautiful whole—a perverse and foolish opinion!

For the question still arises: how can he recognise that these parts are beautiful and those are not? And we see how far the old German painters got with beauty by imitating nature. Just consider their naked figures!

No knowledge of the beautiful is possible purely *a posteriori*, solely on the basis of experience. Such knowledge is always at least partly *a priori*, but that phrase is ambiguous,

and should be handled with care.

- The modes of the GP that are known to us *a priori* concern the general **form** of phenomena as such, in its grounding of the possibility of knowledge in general—the general, exceptionless **How** of their appearance, from knowledge of which comes mathematics and pure natural science; whereas

- the *a priori* knowledge I am talking about here—the one that makes it possible to depict the beautiful—concerns the **content** of phenomena rather than the **form**, the **What** of their appearance rather than the **How**.

We all recognise human beauty when we see it, and the genuine artist does this with such clarity that he *shows* it as he has never *seen* it, and outdoes nature in his depiction of it. What makes this possible? Solely the fact that *we ourselves are* the will whose adequate objectification is to be judged and discovered here at its highest level. That alone enables us to anticipate—to know in advance—what nature... is trying to display. In the true genius this anticipation is accompanied by such a degree of thoughtfulness that

recognising the *idea* in an individual thing, understanding nature's half-spoken word (as it were) and now clearly pronouncing what nature only stammers forth,

he impresses upon hard marble the beauty of form that went wrong in a thousand of nature's own attempts, and holds it up to nature with the cry: 'That was what you wanted to say!' And the connoisseur echoes 'Yes, that was it!'

Only thus could the Greek genius discover the prototype of the human form and establish it as a canon for their school of sculpture; and only by virtue of such an anticipation is it possible for all of us to recognise the beautiful in individual cases where nature has actually been successful. This anticipation is the ideal: it is the idea so far as it is known *a*

priori, at least half, and it becomes practical for art because it corresponds to and completes what is given *a posteriori* through nature. The possibility of such an anticipation of the beautiful *a priori* in the artist, and of its recognition *a posteriori* by the connoisseur, lies in the fact that the artist and the connoisseur are themselves the 'in-itself' of nature, the will that objectifies itself. For, as Empedocles said, like can be known only by like; only nature can understand itself; only nature can fathom itself; but only spirit can understand spirit.

I have explained human beauty as the fullest objectification of will at the highest level at which it can be known. It is expressed through form; and this lies in *space* alone, and has no necessary relation to *time* (as, for instance, movement does). This lets us say that the adequate objectification of will by a purely spatial phenomenon is beauty in the objective sense. A plant is just such a purely spatial phenomenon of will, because no movement—and thus no relation to time (setting aside the plant's development)—belongs to the expression of its nature; its mere **form** expresses its whole essence and openly exhibits it. But animals and human beings need, for a completed revelation of the will making its appearance in them, a series of **actions**, giving the will's appearance in them an immediate relation to time. All this was discussed in Book II; and now I explain what makes it relevant to my present considerations.

·GRACE·

[AS now sets side by side two different polarities: **a** beautiful/ugly and **b** graceful/not-graceful. Of these, **a** concerns purely spatial phenomena of will, and depends on whether or not the given phenomenon **completely** objectifies it at its particular level; while **b** concerns temporal objectifications of will, and depends on whether or not the given phenomenon

completely and purely corresponds to the will that is objectified in it, exactly expressing it ‘with •no foreign admixture, •nothing superfluous, and •no deficiency.’ He continues:] Just as beauty is any adequate depiction of will through its purely spatial phenomenon, grace is correspondingly the adequate depiction of will through its temporal phenomenon, i.e. through movement and posture.¹ Since movement and posture presuppose the body, Winckelmann has it right when he says: ‘Grace is the peculiar relationship between the acting person and his action.’ So obviously plants can be credited with beauty but not with grace (except in a figurative sense); whereas animals and human beings can be credited with both beauty and grace. . . .

It is a distinctive feature of humanity that (as I said in Book II) [chapter 20] every individual human being displays not only the character of his species but also, separately, his individual character—thus to some extent displaying an idea that is exclusively his own. So the arts whose goal is to display the idea of humanity have to cope not only with

a beauty, as the character of the species, but also with something that is best referred to by the single word ‘character’, namely

b the character of the individual.

But b has to be not a merely accidental feature of this individual but rather an aspect of *the idea of humanity* that shows up especially in this individual in a way that contributes to the presentation of the idea. Thus, although character is as such something individual, it must nevertheless be grasped and depicted in *ideal* terms, i.e. bringing to the fore its significance with respect to the idea of humanity in general. . . . Apart from that, the depiction is a *portrait*, a replication of the individual as such with all his contingent

features. And, as Winckelmann says, even the portrait should be the ideal of the individual.

[AS says some complicated things about a beauty and b character: •how they interact with one another; •how they are variously expressed in the person’s physical appearance and conduct; and •that neither can be present without the other—a depiction with b and not a is caricature; one with a and not b is meaningless. He continues:] Sculpture primarily aims at a beauty, the character of the species, but its depiction always in some way modifies this by way of b the individual character; it always expresses the idea of humanity in a particular, individual manner that highlights one side of it. . . .

The beauty so clearly grasped by the ancients is expressed in several figures with different characters, always grasped from a different side (as it were), displayed in one way in Apollo, in another in Bacchus, in another in Hercules, in another in Antinous. Indeed, the b element of character can **limit a** the beautiful and even finally emerge as ugliness (in the drunken Silenus, in fauns, etc.). But if the element of ·individual· character goes so far as to **nullify** the character of the species, it becomes caricature. . . .

In sculpture, beauty and grace are the main concern. The true character of a mind, showing in emotions, passions, alternations of knowing and willing—something that can be depicted only by its expression in face and posture—is the special sphere of *painting*. For although the eyes and complexion, which lie outside the domain of sculpture, contribute much to a beauty, they are far more essential to b character. Also, beauty is more fully unfolded when regarded from several standpoints, whereas expression—character—can be completely grasped even from a single standpoint.

¹ [This translates *Stellung*, which seems mainly to refer to posture poised on the brink of movement, as in dressage exercises with horses.]

46. Why Laokoön does not scream

[AS includes here, admitting that it is irrelevant to his purposes, his account of why in a famous sculpture 'Laokoön does not scream'. His excuse for slotting this in here is that Lessing wrote a book that kicked off with this question, and answered it by saying that *screaming is incompatible with beauty*. At wearying length AS sifts through the post-Lessing scholarly debate (Winckelmann, Goethe) about the question, marvelling at the 'stupidity' of the answers to the question that have been given by 'such thoughtful and acute men'; and he presents what he rightly says is the 'obvious' right answer: screaming involves noise, and sculptures are silent. He seems unembarrassed by the triviality of this issue.]

47. Clothing in sculpture. 'Clothing' in language

Since beauty along with grace is the main topic of sculpture, it loves the nude, and allows clothing only so far as it doesn't conceal any forms. Sculpture uses drapery not as a covering but as an indirect depiction of form; this kind of depiction puts the understanding to work because it involves perceiving a cause through its effect—the form of the body through the immediately given folds of the garment. So drapery in sculpture is somewhat like foreshortening ·to provide perspective· in painting. Both are indications of something; not symbolic indications but rather ones which (when they are successful) force the understanding to perceive immediately what they indicate, just as if it were actually ·perceptually· given.

A note in passing about the rhetorical arts. Just as a beautiful bodily form is best seen with the lightest of clothing or none at all—

so that a very handsome man, if he had taste and

the courage to follow it, would prefer to walk around nearly naked, clothed only after the manner of the ancients

—in the same way, any ·owner of a· beautiful and well-stocked mind will express himself in the most natural, least involved, simplest manner, trying to communicate his thoughts to others in order to relieve the loneliness he is bound to feel in a world like this. And conversely, poverty of mind—confusion and perversity of thought—will clothe itself in the most far-fetched expressions and the obscurest forms of speech, in order to wrap up small, trifling, insipid, or commonplace thoughts in difficult and pompous phraseology; like a man who lacks ·physical· beauty's majesty and tries to compensate for this with clothing, seeking to hide the insignificance or ugliness of his person under barbaric finery. . . . If he had to go about naked, he would be as embarrassed as many an author would be were he compelled to translate his pompous, obscure book into its trivial, clear content.

48. Subjects of painting

Historical painting has character as a main subject (along with beauty and grace). By 'character' we are to understand the depiction of will at the highest level of its objectification, where the individual (giving prominence to a particular aspect of the idea of humanity) has special significance, and is recognised not through mere form alone but through all his conduct and through the events of knowing and willing (visible in facial expression and gesture) that generate and accompany it.

If the idea of humanity is to be displayed as widely as this, its many-sidedness must be brought before our eyes

through significant individuals, whose significance can be made visible only through a variety of scenes, events, and actions. This is the endless task of historical painting, which tackles it by presenting scenes from every sort of life, both of great and of minor significance. No individual or action can be without significance: in all of them, and through all of them, the idea of humanity unfolds itself more and more; so no event in human life is to be excluded from painting. It is a great injustice to the superb painters of the Dutch school to •prize their technical expertise and (taking only incidents from world history or biblical history to be significant) to •look down on them with disdain because they mostly depicted objects from common life. One should first stop to reflect that an action's inner significance is entirely distinct from its outer significance, and that the two often take separate paths.

- An action's outer significance is the importance it gets from its consequences in and for the actual world; thus •its importance• according to the GP.
- Its inner significance is the depth of insight it conveys into the idea of humanity, bringing to light sides of that idea that are less often brought to the fore, allowing distinctly and decidedly self-expressive individualities, by means of appropriately arranged circumstances, to unfold their unique qualities.

Only the inner significance matters in art; the outer matters in history. The two are utterly independent of one another—they can occur together or either can appear alone. An action that is highly significant for history can be very commonplace in its inner significance; and a scene from everyday life can have great inner significance if it throws a bright and clear light on human individuals and human doing and willing, right down to their most concealed layers. . . . The scenes

and events that constitute the lives of so many millions of people—all their doings, hardships and pleasures—are important enough to be subjects for art, and in their rich variety they are bound to provide enough material for unfolding the many-sided idea of humanity. Even the fleeting moment that art has fixed in such an image (today called *genre* painting) moves us in a special, gentle way. For to fix the fleeting, ever-changing world in the enduring picture of an event which—though single—represents the whole is an achievement of the art of painting by which it seems to bring time itself to a standstill, for it raises the individual to the idea of its species.

Finally, historical and outwardly significant topics of painting often have the disadvantage that what is significant about them cannot be depicted perceptually, but has to be brought in by thought, lest

the **a** nominal significance of the painting be too far removed from its **b** real significance.

The **a** former is the outer significance, which the picture has only as a concept; the **b** latter is the side of the idea of humanity that the picture reveals for perception. For example, let **a** the former be **Moses found by the Egyptian princess**, a highly important moment for history. By contrast, its **b** real significance—the one that is actually given to perception—is **a foundling rescued from its floating cradle by an aristocratic woman**, an occurrence that may be quite commonplace. [AS makes some remarks about •the role of costume in such paintings, •the best choice of historical subjects for them, and •the difference between this and the analogous issue regarding the choice of topics for plays. He then returns to paintings:] Historical subjects are distinctly disadvantageous only when they confine the painter to a field that has been chosen for reasons other than artistic ones, especially when this field is poor in picturesque and

significant objects; when for example it is the history of a people like the Jews—a people small, isolated, opinionated, hierarchical (i.e. ruled by error¹), and living in corners, despised by the great contemporary nations of the East and the West.

Since human migration now distances us from all ancient peoples—just as the earlier shifting of the seabed distances the surface of today's earth from that whose structures are now shown to us only in fossils—it is a great misfortune that the people whose past culture was to serve as the main foundation for our own was not (say) the Indians or the Greeks, or even the Romans, but precisely those Jews. But for the Italian geniuses of painting in the 15th and 16th centuries it was especially bad luck that the narrow circle to which they were arbitrarily restricted for a choice of subjects limited them to all manner of wretchedness. For the New Testament on its historical side is as unfavourable to painting as the Old, and the subsequent history of martyrs and of Church Fathers was a thoroughly unsatisfactory topic. But •paintings whose subject is the historical or mythological² part of Judaism or Christianity must be distinguished from •those in which the true (i.e. ethical) spirit of Christianity is made perceptible through the depiction of persons who are filled with that spirit. These depictions are in fact the highest and most admirable achievements of the art of painting, and only the greatest masters of the art—especially Raphael and Correggio—have achieved them. . . . Paintings of this sort are really not to be counted as historical, for they usually depict no event, no action, but are mere groupings of saints, of the redeemer himself (often still as a child) with his mother, angels, and so on. In their faces—especially their

eyes—we see the expression, the reflection, of knowledge that is directed not towards individual things but towards ideas, knowledge that has completely taken in the entire nature of the world and of life. The other sort of knowledge provides the knower's will with motives and is thus subservient to it, whereas *this* sort of knowledge acts on the knower's will, *quietens* it, creating that complete resignation that is the innermost spirit of Christianity as it is of the wisdom of India—**redemption** through the surrender of all willing, withdrawal, nullification of the will and of the entire being of this world. Thus through their works those eternally praiseworthy masters of art gave perceptual expression to the highest wisdom. And here is the pinnacle of all art, which, having pursued will through all its levels in its adequate objectivisation, i.e. through all the ideas—from

- the lowest level where it is moved by causes, then
- where it is moved by stimuli, and finally
- where motives move it and unfold its nature in so many ways

—it now ends with depiction of its free self-nullification through the one great *quieter*, which comes to it from the most complete knowledge of its own nature.

49. Concepts vs. ideas

All my discussions of art up to here are based on the fact that the artist's goal is to display an *idea* in Plato's sense. (His knowledge of this is the germ and origin of his work; so he must have it before the work is embarked on.) He doesn't aim to display anything else:

¹ [*Wahn*, which can mean 'illusion', 'frenzy' 'madness'.]

² [the shift from 'historical' to 'historical or mythological' is in the original.]

- not individual things, the objects of common apprehension, and
- not concepts, the objects of rational thought and science.

An idea is *a unity that represents a plurality of actual things*, and so is a concept; but despite this similarity, there's a great difference between the two, as will have been made clear enough by what I said in Book I about concepts and in this Book III about ideas. I don't claim that Plato himself was entirely clear about this difference: many things that he says about ideas (including many of his examples) are applicable only to concepts. I shan't pursue this. I'll go my own way, glad when I walk the path of a great and noble mind, but pursuing my own goal rather than following his footsteps.

A **concept** is

- a abstract, discursive, indeterminate within its own sphere and determinate only in its boundaries,
- b accessible and comprehensible to anyone who has reason,
- c communicable through words with no further help, and
- d entirely exhausted by its definition.

On the other hand, an **idea**—though best defined as an adequate representative of a concept—is altogether perceptual and (although representing countless individual things) is a thoroughly determinate. It is not known by the individual as such, but only by one who has raised himself to being a pure subject of [see Glossary] knowledge; something that is above all willing and all individuality. So it is b accessible only to a genius or to someone who (usually with help from works of genius) has raised his power of pure knowing to the state of mind characteristic of genius. So it is not c absolutely but only conditionally communicable, because

the idea contained and reproduced in a work of art speaks to each person only according to the measure of his own intellectual worth. That is why the most superb works of any form of art—the noblest offspring of genius—must remain eternally closed books to the dull-witted majority of human beings. . . . To be sure, even •the dullest acknowledge the works that authorities declare to be great, doing this so as not to reveal their own incompetence.

Yet •they always remain quietly ready to express their condemnation of those works, as soon as they can hope they that they might do so without exposing themselves as dullards. In this way they cheerfully give voice to their long-suppressed hatred of all that is great and beautiful, and of its authors—of that which never spoke to them and thus humiliated them. For a man must have some worth of his own if he is to freely and willingly acknowledge the worth of others. On this rests the necessity of *modesty* in all merit, and the disproportionately loud praise of this virtue, which alone of all its sisters is always included in the eulogy of anyone who ventures to praise a distinguished man, in order to appease and quiet the wrath of the unworthy. What then is modesty but hypocritical humility through which a man—in a world bursting with vindictive envy—apologises for his excellences and merits to those who don't have any? If someone attributes no merits to himself because he doesn't have any, that is not modesty but mere honesty.

An **idea** is a unity broken up into plurality through the temporal and spatial form of our intuitive apprehension; it is a *unitas ante rem* [Latin for 'unity before the fact']; whereas a **concept** is a unity restored from plurality by means of abstraction by reason; it is a *unitas post rem* ['unity after the fact'].

The difference between concepts and ideas can be expressed metaphorically as follows. A concept is like a dead

receptacle. . . .from which no more can be taken out (by analytic judgment) than has been placed in it (by synthetic reflection); whereas an idea develops in someone who has comprehended presentations that are new with respect to the concept that has the same name. It is like a living, self-developing organism endowed with procreative powers, which produces something that hadn't been lying packaged within it.

It follows from what I have been saying that concepts—though useful in **life** and serviceable, necessary, and productive in **science**—are always unfruitful for **art**; whereas a grasped idea is the true and single source of every genuine work of art. In its primal force it is drawn only from life itself, from nature, from the world, and indeed is drawn only by a true genius or by someone whose momentary inspiration has risen to the level of genius. Genuine works of art that bear eternal life within themselves arise only from this sort of immediate grasp. Just because the idea is and remains perceptual, the artist is not conscious *in abstracto* of the intention and goal of his work; what floats before him is not a concept but an idea. So he can't give any account of his actions; he works (as they say) from mere feeling, unconsciously, indeed instinctively. By contrast imitators—

imitatores, servum pecus [= 'imitators, servile herd!' quoted from the Latin poet Horace]

—proceed on the basis of *concepts* in art. They take note of what is pleasing and effective in genuine works of art, get themselves clear about it, capture it in a concept (thus abstractly), and then shrewdly imitate it, openly or disguisedly. They suck their nourishment from the works of others as parasitic plants do; and they take on the colour of their nourishment, as octopuses do. This comparison could be carried further:

•Imitators are like **machines** that chop stuff up finely and

mix it all together but can't digest it, so that the borrowed ingredients can always be found again, sifted and separated from the mix; whereas

•a genius is like a **living body** that assimilates and transforms what goes into it. He is indeed educated and cultivated by his predecessors and their works, but his only *immediate* intake is from life and the world itself, through perceptual impressions; so even the highest level of cultivation doesn't detract from his originality.

All imitators grasp *in concepts* the essence of others' exemplary output; but concepts can never impart inner life to a work. The age itself—i.e. the current stupid mob—knows only concepts and clings to them; so it takes up imitative works with quick and loud applause. But after a few years those same works are no longer enjoyable, because there has been a change in the spirit of the times, i.e. in what concepts are dominant, this being the only soil they can take root in. Whereas genuine works of art that are immediately drawn from nature, from life, remain—like nature itself—eternally young and enduringly powerful. For they belong to no age, but to *humanity*, and this has two effects. (i) Their own age, to which they didn't condescend to adjust themselves and whose defects they indirectly and negatively revealed, received them coolly and were slow and reluctant in recognising them. (ii) They can never grow old, but still speak ever fresh and ever new again in even the most distant times. Then they are no longer exposed to neglect and misunderstanding, for they stand crowned and sanctioned by the praise of the few people—appearing singly and rarely in the course of the ages—who are capable of making a judgment, and whose voice in support of these works gradually gives them standing, and is the tribunal that intelligent people are referring to when they

appeal to ‘posterity’. These individuals are the only court of appeal, because the great mob of posterity will always be and remain just as perverse and dull-witted as the great mob of contemporaries always was and always is. We read the laments of great minds in every century regarding their contemporaries: they always sound as if they related to the present age, for the human race is always the same. At every time and in every art, *manner* takes the place of *spirit*, which is always the possession only of individuals. But manner is old clothing, discarded by the most recent and recently recognised spiritual phenomenon. In accordance with all of this, the applause of posterity will usually be won only at the expense of the applause of one’s contemporaries. And conversely.

50. Allegories

If the goal of all art is to communicate apprehended ideas which—because the mind of the artist has isolated them and cleansed them of anything extraneous—can now be grasped by someone more weakly receptive and with no productive capacity; and if furthermore it is objectionable in art to start from concepts; then we can’t approve of a work of art that is intentionally and avowedly dedicated to expressing a concept—which is the case with *allegory*. An allegory is an art-work that **a** *signifies* something other than what it **b** *depicts*; but anything perceptual (and thus any idea) declares itself immediately and completely, and doesn’t need mediating help from something that it signifies. So this ‘something other’ is always a concept. Through allegory, a concept is therefore always supposed to be signified, and consequently the beholder’s mind is directed away from **b** the perceptually depicted presentation toward **a** an entirely different, abstract, non-perceptual presentation that lies

right outside the work of art. In this a painting or sculpture would achieve what writing achieves, except that writing does it much more completely. What I take to be the goal of art, the display of an idea that can only be grasped perceptually, is not the goal here, ·i.e. not the goal in allegory·. For what is intended here is not the sort of great perfection required in a work of art; all that is wanted is for the beholder to see what the point is; when that happens, the goal is reached—the mind is led away from the perceived work to an abstract concept that was the goal from the start. [AS develops this line of thought, saying that in a beautiful allegorical painting or sculpture, the beauty is one thing and the allegory another; and that what it achieves as allegory could be done as well or even better by writing. He continues:] When an allegorical painting also has artistic value, this is entirely separate and independent from what it achieves as an allegory. Such an art-work pursues two goals at once: **a** the expression of a concept and **b** the expression of an idea. Only **b** the latter can be an artistic goal; **a** the other is an extraneous goal, playfully aiming to have a painting serve also as an inscription, aiming to win favour from those to whom *real art* can never speak. It is like a work of art that is at the same time a practical tool, serving two purposes, e.g. a statue that is also a candelabra or a caryatid, or a bas relief that is also Achilles’ shield. Pure friends of art will approve of neither the one nor the other. To be sure, an allegorical painting can have a lively effect on one’s mind; but the same result would also be brought about under similar circumstances by an inscription. For example, if the desire for fame is permanently and firmly rooted in a man’s nature, and he views fame as indeed his rightful possession, withheld from him only because he has not yet produced the documents of possession, and he confronts *The Genius*

of Fame with his crown of laurels,¹ then his whole spirit will be aroused by it and his forces summoned to action; but the same thing would happen if he suddenly saw the word 'Fame' written clearly and in large print on a wall. Or if a man has announced an important truth which he can't get anyone to believe, a powerful effect would be made on him by an allegorical painting that depicts Time removing her veil and finally revealing the naked truth; but the same thing would be accomplished by the motto: *Le tems découvre la vérité* [French for 'Time reveals the truth'.] For what is really effectual here is always only the abstract thought, not what is perceived. In any case, the move from *idea* to *concept* is always a move downwards.

If I'm right in saying that allegory is a flawed endeavour in the plastic and pictorial arts, serving a purpose entirely foreign to art, it becomes downright intolerable when it gets carried so far that the depiction of contrived and forcibly deployed subtleties sinks to the level of absurdity. Such, for example, are

- a turtle to indicate female seclusion,
- Nemesis looking down into the breast of her robe, indicating that she can see even into what is concealed, and
- Bellori's interpretation of a painting by Annibale Carracci as clothing Lust in a yellow robe because he wanted to indicate that her pleasures will soon fade and turn as yellow as straw.

Now, when between **a** what is depicted and **b** the concept indicated by it

there is no connection grounded in **a**'s falling under **b**
or in an association of ideas between them

but rather

- the signs and what they designate are connected in an entirely conventional manner, through man-made and contingently occasioned rules,

I call this degenerate form of allegory a *symbol*. Thus the rose is a symbol of secrecy, the laurel a symbol of fame, the palm a symbol of victory, the scallop shell a symbol of pilgrims, the cross a symbol of the Christian religion; and I classify with these all cases where something is indicated directly by mere colours, as with yellow as the colour of falsity and blue as the colour of loyalty. Such symbols may often be useful in life, but their value has nothing to do with art. They are to be viewed as just like hieroglyphs, or even like writing in Chinese characters, and really stand in the same class as coats of arms, as the bush that indicates a tavern, the key by which the chamberlain is recognised. . . . Finally, if certain historical or mythical persons, or personified concepts, are once and for all made identifiable by firmly established symbols, then these symbols should really be called *emblems*. Such are the animals of the Evangelists, the owl of Minerva, the apple of Paris, the anchor of hope, etc. In any case, one usually means by 'emblems' simple pictorial depictions, elucidated by a motto, that are meant to lend visibility to a moral truth. The big collections of these by J. Camerarius, Alciatus and others pave the way to poetical allegory, of which I'll say more later.

Greek sculpture is oriented toward perception, thus it is aesthetic; that of the Hindus is oriented toward concepts, therefore it is merely symbolic.

This judgment about allegory—based on my earlier discussion of the inner essence of art—is directly opposed to Winckelmann's view: rather than describing allegory as extraneous to art and often interfering with it, he always speaks

¹ [This refers to a famous painting by Annibale Carracci.]

up for it and regards the 'depiction of general concepts and of non-sensory things' as art's supreme goal. . . . His views concerning what is properly metaphysical about the beautiful have convinced me that someone can have great receptivity and sound judgment regarding artistic beauty yet not be able to provide an abstract and strictly philosophical account of the essence of the beautiful and of art; just as someone can be noble and virtuous and have a tender conscience, deciding individual cases with great precision, without this enabling him to fathom the ethical significance of conduct in philosophical terms and display it *in abstracto*.

Whereas allegory is objectionable in the plastic and pictorial arts, it is most permissible and serviceable in poetry. In the former, allegory leads one towards abstract thoughts and away from the perceptually given things that are the real topic of all art; while in poetry the relationship is reversed: words immediately give concepts, and the main purpose is always to be directed away from concepts and towards perceptual things that must be provided by the listener's ·or reader's· imagination. If, in the plastic and pictorial arts, allegory leads from the immediately given to something else, the latter must always be a concept; but a work of art can't arise from a concept, and communicating a concept can't be its purpose. In poetry, on the other hand, concepts are the immediately given, and we may very well leave them, in order to call up something quite distinct from them, something perceptual in which the poem reaches its goal. It can happen that many concepts or abstract thoughts are indispensable to a poem's hanging together, while the connection amongst them can't be made perceptible; it is then often brought to perceptibility through some example that falls under it. This sort of thing happens with every figurative expression, and with every metaphor, simile, parable, and allegory, which are all ·essentially the same thing·, distinguished

only by how long and elaborate their depictions are. On account of this, similes and allegories work to superb effect in the rhetorical arts. [AS praises a number of examples, including ones from Cervantes, Kleist, Homer, Plato (the cave), Goethe and Swift. He remarks that the allegorical content of a poem can be illustrated by a painting, but the latter has value not as a painting—a figurative work of art—but only as an aid to the poem. He gives examples, and concludes:] Allegories of this sort are always to be classified as poetical rather than pictorial, and to be justified in just those terms. Here too the pictorial execution always remains a secondary affair: all it has to do is to depict its subject in a recognisable way. But just as in the plastic and pictorial arts, so also in poetry, allegory passes over into symbol when there is only an arbitrary connection between •what is presented to perception and •the abstract significance of it. Just because everything symbolic fundamentally rests on convention, symbols have among their other disadvantages that their meaning is forgotten with time, and they then go mute. Who would guess after all, if it were not known, why the fish is a symbol of Christianity? . . .

51. More on the literary arts

If we now turn from pictorial arts to poetry—bearing in mind what I have said up to here about art in general—we will have no doubt that poetry also intends to reveal ideas. . . .and to communicate them to the listener ·or reader· with the clarity and liveliness with which the poet's mind grasped them ·in the first place·. Ideas are essentially perceptual; so if a poem's words immediately communicate only abstract concepts, the intention is still obviously to have the listener perceive life's ideas in the representatives of these concepts, which can only happen with the help of his own imagination.

But if the imagination is to be set in motion towards this goal, the abstract concepts—which are as much the immediate material of poetry as of the driest prose—have to be assembled. . . in such a way that a perceptual representative comes before the imagination, and the poet's words further modify this in accordance with his intention. Just as the chemist obtains solid precipitates from perfectly clear and transparent fluids by uniting them, so the poet knows how to combine concepts in such a way as to get from their abstract, transparent generality a precipitate (so to speak) that is concrete, individual, a perceptual presentation. . . . This is achieved in poetry by the many epithets through which the generality of any concept is more and more limited until we reach the perceptible. [AS illustrates this with examples from Homer and Goethe. And then writes a paragraph about 'the incredibly powerful effect of rhythm and rhyme'. He rather tentatively offers to explain this in terms of the basic place of *time* in our experience, but does not address the implausibility of this as applied to rhyme.]

Because of the generality of the material poetry uses to communicate ideas—i.e. the generality of concepts—it has an enormous range. The whole of nature, the ideas of all its levels, can be depicted by poetry as it proceeds sometimes descriptively, sometimes narratively, sometimes in an immediately dramatic way, according to the idea it has to impart. The plastic and pictorial arts usually surpass it in the depiction of lower levels of the objectivisation of will, because unthinking nature and even merely-animal nature reveals most of its being in a single well-captured moment; whereas human beings—

expressing themselves not through their mere form and facial expression, but through a chain of actions and the accompanying thoughts and feelings

—are the main subject of poetry, and no other art can match

its treatment of this subject, because it can avail itself of *process*, which the plastic and pictorial arts cannot. So revelation of the idea that is the highest level of the objectivisation of will—depiction of humanity in the interconnected series of its endeavours and actions—is the grand subject matter of poetry.

To be sure, experience also teaches us about human beings, as does their history. Yet **more often** about **a** human beings than about **b** humanity, i.e. they do more **a** to provide empirical observations on human interaction, on which we can base rules for our own conduct, than **b** to help us toward a look deep into the inner essence of man. Still, what we get from history or our experience is **sometimes b** a view of the essence of humanity; and when that happens, we have looked at history with an historian's eyes or at ourselves with artistic eyes, in fact poetically—i.e. grasped the idea (not the phenomenon) according to its inner essence (not its relations to other things). One's own experience is absolutely required for understanding of the literary arts, as it is for an understanding of history; for it is, so to speak, the dictionary of the language spoken by both.

History is related to poetry as portrait painting is to historical painting: the former gives what is true in the individual, the latter what is true in general; the former has truth with respect to the phenomenon and can authenticate it on that basis, the latter has truth with respect to ideas, which are not to be found in any single phenomenon but speak out from all of them. The poet *chooses* to depict significant characters in significant situations; the historian has no choice about this, but takes both characters and situations as they come. Indeed, he must view and select events and persons not

•according to their inner, genuine significance, as it is expressive of ideas, but

- according to their outer, seeming, relative significance, with reference to connections, to consequences.

He must consider nothing in and for itself, according to its essential character and expression, but everything according to its relations, in its concatenations, in its influence on what follows, and indeed particularly on his own times. So he won't pass over an intrinsically commonplace action on the part of a king, if it has consequences and influence. On the other hand, he makes no mention of intrinsically significant actions on the part of exceptional individuals, if they have no consequences, no influence. For his treatment of a topic follows the GP, and fixes on **the phenomenon** of which the GP is the form. But the poet grasps the **idea**, the essence of humanity, beyond all relations, outside of all time, the highest-level objectivisation of the thing in itself.

Even in the treatment that historians have to adopt, someone who is looking for it can find and recognise

- the inner essence,
- the significance of phenomena,
- the kernel within all those shells.

But that which is significant in itself and not in its relations—the real unfolding of the idea—is far more accurately and clearly present in poetry than in history. Paradoxical as it sounds, much more real, genuine, inner truth is to be attributed to poetry than to history. The historian is supposed to track individual events exactly according to life, as they unfold in time in many intertwined chains of causes and effects; but he can't have all the facts needed for this; he can't have seen everything or inquired into everything. . . . In all of history, there is more falsehood than truth. The poet, on the other hand, has taken up the idea of humanity from the particular side from which it is to be displayed: what is objectified for him in it is *the essence of his own self*. His knowledge of it is—as I

explained earlier in connection with sculpture—half-way *a priori*; his paradigm stands before his mind firm, distinct, brightly illuminated, and cannot abandon him. Thus he shows us the idea purely and distinctly in the mirror of his mind, and his portrayal is, down to the last particular, as true as life itself. The great ancient historians are poets in particular matters where the facts abandon them, e.g. in the speeches of their heroes. Indeed, their entire mode of treatment of the material approaches the epic. This gives unity to their depictions, and enables them to retain inner truth even where the outer was inaccessible to them or was quite falsified. . . . [AS goes on to say that despite the poetical aspects of good history-writing, we get more of the essential truth about humanity from poets than we do from historians, because even the best historians are only second-rate poets and because as historians they 'have their hands tied'. He continues:] This difference between history and poetry can be elucidated by the following comparison:

- The mere pure historian, steering by the facts alone, is like someone who—without any knowledge of mathematics—studies geometrical figures that happen to come his way, studies their relations by measuring them, and empirically reaches a conclusion that is infected with all the defects of the figures as drawn.
- The poet is like the mathematician, who constructs those relations *a priori*, in pure perception, and expresses them not as they are actually contained in the figure as drawn, but as they are in the *idea* that the drawing is meant to make sensibly perceptible. . . .

For knowledge of the essence of humanity, I must concede a greater value to a biographies (especially autobiographies) than to b history proper, at least as usually managed. There are two reasons for this. (i) The facts can be gathered more

accurately and completely in **a** the former than in **b** the latter. **(ii)** In **b** history proper it is not so much human beings as nations and armies that are engaged in the action; and the individuals who come on the scene appear at so great a distance, with so much pomp and circumstance—as well as being hidden in stiff garments of state or heavy, inflexible armour—that it is really hard to see through all this to the human movement. In contrast with this, a true account of the life of an individual shows within some narrow sphere the conduct of human beings in all its nuances and forms; the excellence, virtue, even the saintliness of particular individuals; the perversity, meanness and knavery of most; the malignity of many. For the inner significance of what is presented, it doesn't matter whether the objects the action revolves around are trivial or momentous, farmhouses or kingdoms. For all these things that in themselves have no significance acquire it only if—and to the extent that—the will is moved by them; a motive has significance only through its **relation to will**; whereas things' **relation to other things** doesn't enter consideration. Just as a circle with a diameter of an inch and one with a diameter of 40 million miles have exactly the same geometrical properties, so also the events and history of a village and those of a kingdom are essentially the same; and one can study and learn about humanity in one as much as in the other. [AS rejects the view that 'autobiographies are full of deception and dissimulation', for intricate and implausible reasons that he sums up thus: 'The person who writes his life story sits for confession before himself, and does this voluntarily. A lying spirit cannot so easily take hold of him here.']

Depicting the idea of humanity, which is the poet's task, can be accomplished in either of two ways. **(i)** The one who is depicted is also the one who is doing the depicting. That's what happens in lyric poetry, in true *song*, where the poet

is only perceiving and describing his own state in a lively manner; so that this genre—on account of its object—has a certain subjectivity built into it. **(ii)** The one who is to be depicted is entirely distinct from the one doing the depicting; as is the case in all the other genres, where the depicter is more or less hidden behind what is depicted, and eventually disappears entirely. [AS develops this theme of poetry as self-portrait, where the 'self' is *men in general*. He concludes:] So no-one may prescribe to the poet that he should be noble and sublime, moral, pious, Christian, or this or that, still less rebuke him for being this and not that. He is the mirror of humanity, and makes us aware of what *it* feels and does.

If we now look more closely into the essence of *song proper*, taking as our examples excellent songs that are pure—

not ones that come close to belonging to some other genre such as romance, elegy, hymn, epigram, etc.

—we will find that the special essence of *song* in the narrowest sense is as follows. The consciousness of the singer is filled with will, i.e. his own willing, often as a released, satisfied willing (joy), but more often as thwarted willing (sorrow), and always as emotion, passion, a shifting state of mind. In addition to this, the singer is led by the sight of nature surrounding him to become aware of himself as a subject of [see Glossary] pure will-less knowing, whose unshakable, blessed repose now enters into contrast with the press of always limited, always needy, *will*. The sense of this contrast, of this interplay, is what is expressed in the song as a whole and what constitutes the lyric state in general. [AS develops this theme in increasingly rapturous terms, citing examples that include 'the immortal songs of Goethe', and concluding that young people are suited for lyric poetry and older ones for dramatic poetry. He then switches away from lyric poetry:]

In the more objective varieties of poetry—especially romance, epic and drama—the goal of revealing the idea of humanity is mainly achieved by two means: **a** an accurate and deeply conceived depiction of **significant characters**, and **b** the invention of **significant situations** in which they unfold. Just as it is the chemist's task not only

a to display simple substances and their main compounds in their pure and authentic state, but also

b to expose them to the influence of reagents so as to make clear and obvious what their special properties are,

so also it is the poet's task not only

a to present significant characters in a way that's as true and faithful as nature itself, but also

b to enable us to know them by bringing them into significant situations, i.e. ones where their special features are completely unfolded and clearly displayed in sharp contours.

In real life and in history, situations of this **significant** kind are rarely brought about by chance, and when they *do* occur they stand alone, lost and concealed in the multitude of **insignificant** ones. The thoroughgoing significance of situations should do as much to distinguish the romance, the epic, the drama from real life as the combination and selection of significant characters. [AS goes on to stress that for their literary work to be effective, characters must square with essential humanity and situations must be credible. He moves (through a very obscure statement about why seemingly very dissimilar works of art can illuminate one another) into an account of the different ways water can behave, including being made to shoot upwards in a fountain, insisting that *all* of these are natural to water, 'true to its character', and concluding:] Human life as it usually shows itself in reality is like water in pools and rivers. But

in the epic, romance, and tragedy, selected characters are brought into circumstances where all their special features are unfolded, where the depths of the human spirit are opened up and made visible in exceptional and significant conduct. Thus poetry objectifies the idea of humanity, a special property of which is that it reveals itself in the most highly individual characters.

Tragedy is rightly regarded as the summit of the poetic arts, both for the magnitude of its effect and for the difficulty of achieving it. For all my treatment of these matters it is very significant—and worth bearing in mind—that the goal of this highest kind of poetry is to depict the frightful side of life, that it brings before us

- the nameless pain and misery of humanity,
- the triumph of malice,
- the mocking mastery of chance, and
- the hopeless fall of the just and innocent;

for this provides a significant hint as to the nature of the world and of existence. It is **the conflict of will with itself** that is here, on the highest level of its objectivisation, most completely unfolded and comes frighteningly to the fore. It is made visible in the suffering of humanity, which is now introduced •partly by chance and error appearing as rulers of the world, personified as Fate, because of their insidiousness which comes close to looking purposive, and •partly by humanity itself, through the cross-purposes of willful endeavour on the part of individuals and through the wickedness and perversity of most of them. It is one and the same will that lives and makes its appearance in all of them, but whose phenomena fight and lacerate one another. In this individual it appears powerfully, in that one more weakly; brought (in some people more, in others less) to reflection and softened by the light of knowledge; until eventually in individual cases, purified and heightened by suffering itself,

this knowledge reaches the point where the phenomenon, the veil of Maya, no longer deceives it. It sees through the form of the phenomenon, the individuation-maker, and the egoism resting on it dies out; so that from now on one's previously so-powerful motives lose their force, and are replaced by complete knowledge of the essence of the world, working as a quieter of the will and bringing forth resignation, abandonment not merely of life but of the entire will to life itself. Thus we see in tragedy the most noble individuals in the end, after lengthy battle and suffering, renouncing forever the goals they had so intensely pursued until then and all life's pleasures, or willingly and joyfully abandoning life itself. [He gives examples from Calderon, Schiller, Shakespeare, and Voltaire. Then:] By contrast, the demand for so-called 'poetic justice' rests on a complete misunderstanding of the nature of tragedy, indeed of the nature of the world. In all its banality, that demand makes a brazen appearance in the individual critiques of Shakespeare's plays that Dr. Samuel Johnson has provided, naively complaining of their complete neglect of it. The neglect, to be sure, is there; for what were the Ophelias, the Desdemonas, the Cordelias guilty of? But only the banal, optimistic, protestant-rationalistic, or (strictly speaking) Jewish view of the world will demand poetic justice. . . . The true sense of tragic drama is the deeper insight that what the hero atones for is not his own particular sins, but original sin, i.e. the guilt of existence itself. . . . As Calderon wrote: 'The greatest offence of a human being is to have been born.'

. . . .Depiction of a great misfortune is all that is essential to tragedy, and the many paths by which the poet brings about this misfortune fall into three groups. (i) It can happen through the extraordinary malice—bordering on the extreme limits of possibility—of the character who is the author of the misfortune: for example Richard III, Iago in *Othello*, Shylock

in *The Merchant of Venice*, Franz Moor in Schiller's *The Highwayman*, Phaedra as depicted by Euripides, Creon in *Antigone*, and the like. (ii) It can also happen through blind fate, i.e. chance or error: a true paradigm of this species is Sophocles' *Oedipus the King* or *The Women of Trachis*, and in general most of the tragedies of the ancients belong in this category; modern examples include *Romeo and Juliet*, Voltaire's *Tancred*, Schiller's *The Bride of Messina*. (iii) The misfortune can be brought about merely through interpersonal situations, through relationships, so that there is no need for any (iii) monstrous error or unheard-of coincidence, or for any (i) character approaching the limits of humanity in his evil. Rather, morally ordinary characters in quite common circumstances are set against one another in such a way that their situation compels them, knowingly and with their eyes open, to inflict the greatest injury on one another without either of them being entirely in the wrong. This third species seems to me much preferable to the other two; because it shows us the greatest misfortune not as an exception—not as something brought about by (iii) rare circumstances or (i) monstrous characters—but as something coming easily and unaided from the conduct and characters of human beings, as almost *essential* to them, and just by that fact brings misfortune frighteningly close to us. And if in the other two species we get a glimpse of (iii) monstrous fate and (i) horrific malice as terrifying powers, but only threatening us from afar, so that we ought to be able to escape without flight into renunciation, the third species shows us those powers, destructive of happiness and life, as something we are vulnerable to at any moment, with the greatest suffering coming from •entanglements that could in their essentials be in store for us, and from •acts that we might well perform and so wouldn't be a basis for us to complain of injustice; then, shuddering, we feel as if we

were already in hell. This third species, however, is the hardest to bring off successfully, because in it one has to produce the greatest effects with the least deployment of means and moving causes, merely through their position and distribution; so in many of the best tragedies the poet finds some way around this difficulty. . . .

52. The special case of music

Having considered all the fine arts in the general way that is suitable to my point of view,

- starting with the fine art of architecture, whose goal is to make clear the objectification of the will at the lowest level of its visibility, where it shows itself as the dull, unknowing striving of masses in conformity to law, yet even at that level reveals will's internal division and battle, namely between gravity and rigidity, and
- concluding with tragedy, which at the highest level of the objectification of the will makes its conflict with itself evident with frightful magnitude and clarity,

we find that one of the fine arts has inevitably been left out because there was no suitable place for it in the structure of my account. It is *music*, which stands entirely apart from all the others. We don't see in it the copying or replication of any ideas of beings in the world; yet it is such a grand and altogether noble art, has such a powerful effect on our innermost being, is so entirely and deeply understood by us as a perfectly universal language whose clarity surpasses even that of the perceptual world, that we certainly have more to seek in it than 'an unconscious arithmetical activity in which the mind is unaware that it is counting' [AS quotes this in Latin], which is how Leibniz regarded it. He was right about that insofar as he was considering only its immediate

and external significance, its shell; but if that were all there is to it, the satisfaction it provides would have to be like what we feel when we solve a mathematical problem; it couldn't be—as it is—that inner pleasure with which we see a voice given to the deepest recesses of our nature. From my standpoint, therefore, looking to the aesthetic effect, music must be credited with a much deeper and more serious significance, referring to the innermost essence of the world and of ourselves. . . . Music relates to the world as a depiction to what is depicted, as a copy to the original; that this must be so is something we can infer by comparison with the other arts, all of which have this character and have an effect on us that is on the whole like music's, except that music's is stronger, quicker, more imperative, more infallible. Its relation as a copy to the world must also be a most inner one, infinitely true and accurately hitting its mark, because it is understood at once by everyone and displays a certain infallibility by virtue of the reducibility of its form to entirely determinate, numerically expressible rules, from which it can't deviate without ceasing to be music.

Nonetheless, this point of comparison between music and the world, the respect in which music relates to the world by imitating or replicating it, is very obscure. Music has been practised throughout the ages without anyone's being able to account for it [i.e. to explain how music can imitate the world]: content to understand it in an immediate way, we have forgone any abstract comprehension of this immediate understanding.

Having immersed my mind in the impression music makes in its many forms, and then returned to reflection and the system of thought expressed in the present work, an insight came to me regarding its inner essence and its copy-relation to the world. The account I arrived at is entirely satisfying for me personally and satisfactory with respect

to my inquiry, and will surely be just as illuminating for anyone who has agreed with my view of the world up to here. But I recognise that it is essentially impossible to prove that it is true, because it •takes as a premise that music is a presentation of something that can never itself be a presentation, and •views music as a copy of an original that can never itself be immediately presented. So all I can do here at the conclusion of this third Book devoted mainly to a consideration of the arts is to expound what is to me a satisfactory insight regarding the marvelous art of tones, and must place acceptance or rejection of my view at the mercy of how the reader is affected on the one hand by music, on the other hand by the entire and single thought communicated by me in this work. Beyond this, I take it to be necessary, for the possibility of genuine agreement with the account of the significance of music that I am going to give, that one be familiar with the entirety of the thought set forth in that account, and that one often reflect on it while listening to music.

Adequate objectification of will is to be found in (platonic) ideas. The goal of all the arts other than music is to arouse knowledge of those ideas through display of individual things (i.e. individual works of art), which is possible only through a corresponding alteration in the knowing subject. So they all objectify the will only in a mediated way, namely, through ideas. [AS now gives us an obscure sentence the gist of which is that music, alone among the arts, 'by-passes ideas' and thus ignores the phenomenal world and could exist if there were no such world. He continues:] Thus music is not (as the other arts are) an image of ideas; rather, it is *an image of the will itself*, the will of which ideas are the objectivisation. Just for this reason, music has a much more powerful and penetrating effect than any of the other arts, for the others speak only of shadows, whereas music

speaks of the essence of things. Since it is the same will that is objectified both in ideas and in music—though in two entirely different ways—there must be a parallelism, an analogy between •music and •the ideas of which the visible world is the appearance; a parallelism, not of course an immediate similarity. This is an obscure topic; so my exposition of it is obscure. It will be made easier to grasp by a proof of the analogy (or parallelism) I have spoken of.

In the deepest tones of harmony, in the bass, I recognise •the lowest levels of the objectification of will, •inorganic nature, •the mass of the planet. It is well known that all the upper tones—freely moving and more quickly fading—arise through secondary vibrations of the deep bass with whose resonance they always lightly co-resonate, and it is a law of harmony that along with a bass note only the upper tones should be sounded that actually sound of themselves along with it (its *sons harmoniques*) through secondary vibrations. This is analogous to the fact that the totality of bodies and the organisation of nature must be regarded as having arisen through a step-by-step development out of the mass of the planet. . . .

There is a limit to how far down the scale tones are audible. This corresponds to •the fact that no matter is perceptible without form and quality, i.e. without the manifestation of some ultimately inexplicable force in which an idea is expressed, and more generally to •the fact that no matter can be entirely without will; so that just as any tone must have a certain level of pitch, any portion of matter must have a certain degree of expression of will.

So that in harmony the bass notes are for us what inorganic nature is in the world, the crudest mass that all things rest on and arise and develop from.

Then further, in the totality of the voices of the ripieno producing the harmony—between the bass and the leading

voice performing the melody—I recognise the total sequence of levels of the ideas in which will is objectified. Those standing nearer to the bass are the lower of these levels, bodies that are still inorganic but already expressing themselves in many ways; those lying higher represent to me the plant and animal worlds.

The particular intervals of the scale are parallel to the particular levels of the objectification of will, ·i.e.· to the particular species in nature. Deviation from arithmetical exactness in an interval. . . .is analogous to individuals deviating from the type of their species. Indeed, impure discords, which yield no particular interval, may be compared to the monstrously malformed offspring of animals of two species, or of a human being and an animal.

These bass and ripieno parts that make up the harmony don't have the connected way of moving possessed by the high voice singing the melody; it moves quickly and lightly in modulations and runs, while the other two have a slower movement and are not connected in themselves. The deep bass moves most slowly, the representative of the crudest mass. Its rising and falling occurs only by large intervals—in thirds, fourths, fifths—never by a single tone, unless it is a bass inverted by double counterpoint. This slow movement is essential to it ·not only ·for representative reasons but· also ·physically: a fast run or trill in the low notes ·is so far from physically possible that it· cannot even be imagined. The upper voices of the ripieno, which are parallel to the animal world, move more quickly but still without melodic connection and meaningful progression. The disconnected movement and law-governed determination of all the voices of the ripieno are analogous to the fact that in the whole reasonless world, from the crystal to the most complete

animal, no being

- has a truly inter-connected consciousness making its life a meaningful whole,
- undergoes a succession of mental developments, or
- perfects itself by culture.

Rather, everything ·in the reasonless world· exists always in the same way according to its kind, determined by fixed law.

Finally in the melody—that is

in the high, singing main voice that directs the whole and with unrestrained freedom displays *one* thought from beginning to end. . . .

—I recognise the highest level of the objectification of will, the intellectual life and striving of the human being. Just as

- the human being alone, because he is gifted with reason, looks constantly forward and back on the of his reality and of countless possibilities, and so achieves a thoughtfully aware and thereby interconnected course of life as a whole, so also, correspondingly,
- melody alone has a significant, intentional interconnection from beginning to end.

It records, therefore, the history of the intellectually enlightened will. This will expresses itself in the actual world as the series of its deeds; but melody says more, it records the most secret history of this will, pictures every excitement, every effort, every movement of it, everything that reason collects under the wide and negative concept of *feeling*,¹ and that it cannot pin down any more narrowly through its abstract concepts. Therefore it has always been said that music is the language of feeling and of passion, as words are the language of reason. . . . [AS quotes Plato and Aristotle saying things to that effect.]

Now just as

¹ [For the negativeness of the concept of feeling, see chapter 11.]

•the essence of a human being consists in the fact that his will strives, is satisfied and strives anew, and so on for ever; so that his happiness consists only in the rapid movement from desire to satisfaction and from that to new desire (because the absence of satisfaction is suffering, and the absence of a new desire is empty longing, languor, boredom), so also, correspondingly

•the essence of melody is a constant deviating, digressing from the keynote by a thousand paths, moving not only to the harmonic intervals, to the third and the dominant, but to every tone, to the dissonant seventh and the augmented intervals, but always pursuing an eventual return to the keynote.

On all of these paths the melody expresses the different *efforts* of will and also—by eventually finding its way back to a harmonic interval, and especially to the keynote—expresses its *satisfaction*. The invention of melody, the revelation in it of all the deepest secrets of human willing and feeling, is the work of genius, whose operation lies more open to sight here than elsewhere; *here* it is far from any reflection and conscious intention, and could be called ‘inspiration’. Concepts are unfruitful here, as they are everywhere in art. The composer reveals the innermost being of the world, and speaks the deepest wisdom, in a language that his reason does not understand; just as a hypnotised person reveals things that he has no concept of while awake. So with the composer more than with any other artist, the human being and the artist are entirely separate and distinct. Concepts show their poverty and their limits not only in composing but even in explaining music; but I will nonetheless try to develop my analogy-based account of this wonderful art.

Just as the quick passage from desire to satisfaction and from that to new desire is happiness and well-being, so quick

melodies with no big digressions are cheerful; slow melodies that lead into painful dissonances and meander back to the keynote only after several measures are sad, this being analogous to the sadness of delayed, impeded satisfaction. The only analogue of *languor*—the delay of a new stirring of the will—would be a sustained unvarying keynote, the effect of which would soon be unbearable; monotonous and inexpressive melodies come close to this. The short, comprehensible phrases of quick dance music seem to speak only of easily achievable common happiness. By contrast, the *allegro maestoso*, with grand phrases, long passages, broad digressions, speaks of a grander, nobler striving after a distant goal and its eventual achievement. The *adagio* in a minor key speaks of the suffering that belongs to grand and noble striving that scorns all petty happiness. But how wonderful is the effect of *minor* and *major*! How amazing that the change of a semitone—the entry of the minor third instead of the major—at once and inevitably forces on us an anxious, painful feeling from which the major then just as quickly releases us. . . .

The inexhaustibility of possible melodies corresponds to the nature’s inexhaustibility in the diversity of its individuals, physiognomies, and ways of life. The switch from one key to an entirely different one, entirely destroying the connection with what has gone before, resembles *death*, because with death the individual comes to an end. But the will that appeared in this individual lives after him as before him, appearing in other individuals, though their consciousness has no connection with his.

In expounding all these analogues of music, however, one should remember that music has no direct but only a mediated relation to them, since it never gives voice to the phenomenon, but only the inner essence, the in-itself of all phenomena, will itself. Music does not express this or that

individual and particular pleasure, this or that instance of sorrow or pain or outrage or joy or merriment or peace of mind, but pleasure itself, sorrow itself, pain itself, outrage itself, joy itself, merriment itself, spiritual repose itself. . . . That is why our imagination is so easily excited by music and now tries to give form to that invisible yet lively and mobile spirit-world—one that speaks to us so directly—and to invest it with flesh and bone by embodying it in an analogue. This is the origin of song with words and eventually of opera—the text of which should never leave its subordinate position and become the main concern, with the music a mere means for expressing it. Treating words and music in that way would be a major blunder, a terrible perversity. For music everywhere expresses only the quintessence of life and its events; it never pays attention to the individual events themselves. This generality is what gives it its great value as a panacea for all our sufferings. Thus, when music too greatly seeks to attach itself to words and model itself on events, it is trying to speak a language that is not its own. No-one has kept himself so free of this fault as *Rossini*: his music so clearly and purely speaks *its own* language that it does not need words and has its full effect when performed with instruments alone.

In accordance with all of this we can regard •the phenomenal world (or nature) and •music as two different expressions of the same thing, which is thus itself the only thing mediating the analogy between the two. . . . So when music is viewed as an expression of the world, it is a language with the highest degree of generality, relating to the generality of concepts in much the same way as concepts relate to individual things. But its generality is of a quite different kind from the empty generality of abstraction, and is united with thorough and distinct definiteness. In this it is like geometrical figures and numbers, which, as general forms of all possible objects of experience and applicable *a priori*

to all of them, are not •abstract but are •perceptual and thoroughly determinate. All possible endeavours, excitations, and expressions of will—all those internal human processes that reason gathers under the broad negative concept of *feeling*—are expressible by the countless possible melodies, but always

- with the generality of mere form, without the substance,
- with respect to the *in-itself*, not with respect to the phenomenon,
- as it were, the innermost soul of the phenomenon, without the body.

This inner relationship between music and the true essence of all things enables us to explain

- the fact that when music is suited to some scene, action, event or environment, it seems to reveal to us the latter's most secret meaning, presenting itself as the clearest and most accurate commentary on it; and
- the fact that to someone completely absorbed in listening to a symphony it's as though he were seeing all the possible events of life and the world passing by; yet when he thinks about it he can't specify any similarity between the play of tones and the things that passed through his mind as he listened to them.

For music (I repeat) differs from all the other arts in not being a copy of the phenomenon—or (more accurately) of an adequate objectivisation of will—but a direct copy of the will itself, and therefore exhibits itself as the metaphysical to everything physical in the world, and as the thing-in-itself to every phenomenon. So we could just as well call the world embodied music as embodied will. That is why music makes every scene of real life and of the world appear with higher significance in proportion as its inner spirit is captured by

the melody. It is also why music can be used to turn

- a poem into a song,
- acting on stage into a pantomime, or
- both into an opera.

Such particular pictures of human life, set to the universal language of music, are never tied to it or correspond to it with stringent necessity; rather, they relate to it only as an arbitrarily chosen example relates to a general concept. In the determinateness of the real, they represent what music expresses in the universality of mere form. For melodies are to some extent like general concepts, an abstraction from the actual. So this actual world of particular things provides the object of perception, the special and individual, the particular case, both to **a** the universality of the concepts and to **b** the universality of the melodies. But these two universalities are in a certain way opposed to each other; for

- a** concepts contain particulars only as the first forms abstracted from perception—as it were the outer shell of things—so that they are, strictly speaking, abstracta; whereas
- b** music gives the inner kernel that precedes all forms, i.e. the heart of things.

This relation can be expressed in the language of the schoolmen by saying the concepts are the *universalia post rem*, music gives the *universalia ante rem* and the real world the *universalia in re* [Latin for ‘universals after the thing’, ‘before the thing’, ‘in the thing’.] To the universal significance of a melody to which a poem has been set, it is quite possible to set other equally arbitrarily selected examples of the universal expressed in that poem. . . . That’s why the same composition is suitable to many verses, which is what makes street-songs possible. But (I repeat) a relation is possible between a com-

position and a perceptible representation because the two are simply different expressions of the same inner essence of the world. . . . The composer’s ability to link them must have come from the direct knowledge of the essence of the world, unknown to his reason; if instead it comes from his consciously trying to imitate features of the world of which he has conceptions, his music won’t express the inner essence of the will¹ itself but will merely give a poor imitation of its phenomenon. The latter is what happens in all openly representational music, such as Haydn’s ‘The Seasons’ and many passages in his ‘The Creation’, where phenomena of the external world are directly imitated; also all battle-pieces. Such music is to be entirely rejected.

The inexpressible inwardness of all music—by virtue of which its passage is to us like an entirely familiar yet eternally distant paradise, entirely intelligible yet so inexplicable—rests on the fact that it reproduces all the stirrings of our innermost essence, but entirely apart from reality and far from its torments. Similarly, its essential seriousness, which entirely excludes anything comic from its immediately proper domain, is to be explained by the fact that music’s object is not presentations, the only things in relation to which deception and absurdity are possible; rather, its immediate object is *will*, which is in its essence the most serious thing of all, as that on which everything depends.

Even the repetition signs, along with the *da capo* [= ‘start again from the beginning’], attest to how contentful music’s language is. These repetitions would be unbearable in works in the language of words, but are most beneficial in music; for to grasp music fully one has to hear it twice.

If in this account of music I have succeeded in making

¹ [The shift from ‘inner essence of the world’ to ‘inner essence of the will’ is AS’s.]

clear the fact that music pronounces in a highly general language the inner essence, the in-itself of the world (which with reference to its clearest manifestation we think of in terms of the concept of will), doing this with the greatest determinateness and truth, and using only mere tones as its material; and if I am right in my view that philosophy is a complete and accurate repetition and expression of the nature of the world in the most general concepts. . . . then anyone who has entered into my way of thinking will not find it so very paradoxical if I say that if someone succeeded in providing a perfectly accurate, complete and detailed explanation of music, thus a detailed conceptual repetition of what it expresses, this would at once also be a satisfactory conceptual repetition and explanation of the world. . . . and thus would be true philosophy. . . . And if we finally connect this view with my earlier account of harmony and melody, we'll find a mere **moral philosophy with no explanation of nature** (such as Socrates would introduce) to be analogous to **melody without harmony** (which Rousseau desired); whereas a mere **physics and metaphysics without ethics** will correspond to mere **harmony without melody**.

Allow me to offer some further remarks about the analogy between music and the phenomenal world. We found in Book II that the highest level of the objectification of will, namely the human being, could not make its appearance alone and out of context, but presupposed the levels just below it, and which presuppose others still deeper; in just the same way, music—which, like the world, immediately objectifies will—is complete only in full harmony. The high leading voice of the melody can make its full impression only if accompanied by all the other voices, right down to the deepest bass, which is

to be viewed as the origin of them all. The melody even enters into the harmony as an integral part of it, and vice versa. And just as music pronounces what it aims to pronounce only in the complete whole of its voices, so does the will¹ find its complete objectification only in the unification of all the levels revealing its nature in countless degrees of increasing distinctness.

[AS now presents a further 'most remarkable' analogy. He says that the world's being 'a constant battleground' among individuals corresponds to something in music, namely the fact that a certain conflict is intrinsic to music because 'a completely pure, harmonic system of tones is not even arithmetically possible'. We can spare ourselves his technical reasons for this.]

I would like to say more, regarding how music is perceived—namely, simply and solely in and through time, to the entire exclusion of space and with no input from any knowledge of causality or, therefore, from the understanding; for tones make their aesthetic impression just as effects, without our reverting to their causes as we do in the case of perception. But I shan't go on about this, because I may already have gone into too much detail in this third Book. [AS goes on to justify this possible excess, saying that it won't be objected to by anyone who has grasped and accepted his views about the value of art, summed up in this:] If the entire world as presentation is only the visible aspect of the will, then art is the clarification of this visibility, the *camera obscura*, showing us objects more purely and giving us a better grasp of them. The play within the play, the stage upon the stage in *Hamlet*.

•The pleasure we get from everything beautiful, •the

¹ [AS here characterizes the will as *eine und außerzeitliche* = 'one and extratemporal'; this is an often-repeated part of his doctrine; it's not clear why he chooses to repeat it here.]

consolation that art provides, and •the enthusiasm of the artist that enables him to forget the cares of life—

this being the advantage of the genius over others, which alone compensates for •the suffering that has increased in proportion as his consciousness has gained in clarity, and for •his desolate loneliness among men of a different race

—all of this rests on two facts. **(i)** As I'll show in chapters 57–59, the *in-itself* of life, will, existence itself, is constant suffering, partly pitiful and partly terrifying. **(ii)** As presentation alone—purely contemplated, or copied by art, free from pain—it confronts us with a drama full of significance. This purely knowable side of the world, and its replication in any sort of art, is the artist's element. Contemplation of the ·theatrical· play of will's objectification holds him captive. He dwells in it, does not tire of contemplating it and replicating it in his depictions, and in so doing he himself bears the costs of staging the play, i.e. he is himself the will that is thus objectified and remains in constant suffering. This pure, true, and deep knowledge of the nature of the world now becomes a goal *in itself* for him; he stops at it. So it does not become for him—as we'll see in the Book IV [chapter 68] that it does for the saint who has reached a state of resignation—a quieter of the will; it does not permanently but only momentarily redeems him from life, so it is not for him a path out of life but only a temporary consolation within it; until his forces, strengthened by this and finally tired of the play, come to grips with harsh *Realität*. The St. Cecilia of Raphael may be regarded as a representation of this transition. To the real, then, I now turn in the following Book.

Book IV: The world as will. Second consideration: With the achievement of self-knowledge, affirmation and denial of the will for life

53. What the ethical part of this work will be

This last part of my work promises to be the most serious, since it concerns the actions of human beings, a topic that concerns everyone immediately and can't be a matter of indifference to anyone, . . . so that people can be expected to give serious attention to this part, even if to no other.

What lies ahead would usually be called *practical* philosophy, in contrast with the label *theoretical* philosophy for what I have done up to here. But I hold that all philosophy is theoretical: it is essential to philosophy that it retains a purely contemplative attitude to any topic it turns itself to, investigating rather than prescribing. As for

- becoming practical,
- directing action,
- transforming character,

these are old pretensions that philosophy should, with matured insight, finally abandon. For *here*, where the issue is the worth or worthlessness of an existence, salvation or damnation, it is settled not by philosophy's dead concepts but by the innermost essence of the person himself. . . .—what Kant calls his 'intelligible character'. Virtue can't be taught, any more than genius can; indeed, concepts are as unfruitful for virtue as they are for art, and are useful only as tools. Thus, for us to expect our moral systems and ethics to awaken the virtuous, noble, and saintly would be as absurd as to expect our aesthetic systems to awaken poets, sculptors, and musicians.

Philosophy can never do more than to interpret and explain what exists, to bring to clear, abstract, knowledge-through-reason the nature of the world which expresses itself intelligibly to everyone *in concreto*, i.e. as feeling; but it can do this in every possible respect and from every point of view. Just as my first three Books sought to accomplish this from **other points of view**, with the generality that is proper to philosophy, so the present Book will tackle **human action** in the same manner. . . . In doing this I will really only be developing for human action the one thought that is the content of this entire work. . . .

So, obviously, no prescriptions or doctrine of duties can be expected from this ethical Book. Still less will there be a general moral principle, a universal recipe for the production of all the virtues! Also, I shan't speak of any 'unconditioned *ought*' because that involves a contradiction, as I explain in the Appendix, or of a 'law for freedom', which has the same fault. I shall simply not speak of *ought* at all. For that is how we speak to children; and to peoples still in their infancy, but not to ones that have reached the stage of cultural maturity. It is surely a blatant contradiction to call the will free and yet prescribe it laws by which it ought to will: 'ought to will'—square circle!¹ It follows from my doctrine that will is not only *free* but *omnipotent*: it is the source not only of its action but also of its world; and just as it is, so appears its action, so appears its world. From it proceeds not only its action, but also its world; and as the will is, so do its action and its world become. Both are the self-knowledge of

¹ [The German is 'hölzernes Eisen'; literally 'wooden iron', but the rhetorical use of the phrase in German makes 'square circle' fit it pretty well.]

the will and nothing more. The will determines itself, and at the same time both its action and its world; for besides it there is nothing, and these—its action and its world—*are* the will itself. So ·on my view· the will is autonomous [= self-governing], whereas on every other view it is heteronomous [= governed] by something other than itself. My philosophical efforts can only aim to clarify and explain human conduct in its innermost nature, . . . in accordance with what I have said up to here in this work, seeking to provide abstract knowledge of the innermost nature of the world's appearances. My philosophy will count as *immanent* in this Book, as in each of the other three. Despite Kant's great doctrine, it won't use the *forms* of phenomena as a vaulting-pole by which to •leap over the phenomena from which they get their meaning, and •land in the boundless domain of empty fictions. But this actual world of experience—in which we are, and which is in us—remains both the material and the limits of our consideration; it's a world so rich in content that even the deepest inquiry the human mind is capable of couldn't exhaust it. Since the real world of experience will never fail to provide material and *Realität* to my ethical investigations, any more than to the previous ones, there won't be the slightest need for us to take refuge in empty negative conceptions, and then somehow make ourselves believe that we are *saying something* when with eyebrows raised we speak of such bare negations as 'the absolute', 'the infinite', 'the supersensible' or the like. . . .

Finally, I shan't in this Book—any more than I have in the others—relate histories and give them out as philosophy. For I hold that anyone who thinks he can understand the world's nature *historically*—however finely decked out the history may be—is vastly far from philosophical knowledge of the world. But that's what someone is guilty of if he

- sees the *essence in itself* of the world as involving any

sort of becoming, or of having become, or of being about to become; or

- sees it as involving any sort of earlier or later that has the least significance; and thus
- whether openly or covertly seeks and ·(he thinks)· finds a beginning and an endpoint of the world, along with a path between the two, and is confident of his own position on that path.

Such *historical philosophising* provides a cosmogony [the varieties of which AS mockingly describes, dismissing them as 'nonsense'. He continues:] All such historical philosophy, however elegantly it is carried out, regards time as a determination of things in themselves (as if Kant had never existed!), and therefore remains with

- what Kant calls the phenomenon as opposed to the thing in itself, and
- what Plato calls the becoming, never being, as opposed to the being that never becomes, or
- what the Indians called the veil of Maya.

One never attains to the inner essence of things in that way; one gets only knowledge subject to the GP, pursuing phenomena *ad infinitum* like a squirrel in a treadmill, until one stops, exhausted, at some arbitrary point, and wants to be respected for having come that far. The genuinely philosophical way of regarding the world, i.e. the one that teaches us to recognise its inner essence and so leads us beyond phenomena, doesn't inquire into the *Whence?* and *Whither?* and *Why?* of the world, but only into its *What?*, regarding things

- not with respect to any relation,
 - not as becoming and passing away, and thus
 - not according to any of the four modes of the GP,
- but rather considers •what remains after separating off everything governed by the GP, •the essence of the world

that makes its appearance in all relations but is never itself subject to them, •their ideas. Such knowledge generates not only art but also philosophy and (as we'll find in this Book, [chapter 68]) also the disposition of mind which alone leads to true saintliness and redemption from the world.

54. Procreation and death

It is hoped that the first three Books will have conveyed clear and certain knowledge that in the world as presentation a mirror of the will has arisen in which the world knows itself with increasing degrees of clarity and completeness, the highest of which is the human being, whose nature receives its complete expression only through the interconnected series of its actions, which the human being is aware of through reason, which always permits him to survey the whole *in abstracto*.

The will—

which, **considered purely in itself**, lacks knowledge and is only a blind ceaseless impulse such as we see also appearing in inorganic and vegetable nature and its laws, as well as in the vegetative part of our own life

—receives **through the addition of the world as presentation**, which is developed in subjection to it, the knowledge of its own willing and of *what* it wills, namely that there shall be nothing other than this world, this life, precisely as it stands before it. That is why I called the phenomenal world its mirror, its objectivisation. And since what the will always wills is *life*—because life is nothing more than a display of that willing with respect to presentation—it makes no difference if instead of simply saying ‘will’ we say ‘will for life’.

Since will is *the thing in itself*, the inner content or essence of the world, while life—the visible world, the phenomenon—

is only the mirror of the will, life must accompany will as inseparably as a body is accompanied by its shadow; and if will exists, so too does life, the world. To the will for life, life is thus certain, and so long as we are filled with the will for life we shouldn't be concerned for our existence, even at the sight of death. We of course see individuals arise and pass away. But the individual is only a phenomenon, only exists for knowledge caught up in the GP, the individuation-maker. With respect to this kind of knowledge the individual receives its life as a gift and comes from nothing, loses that gift through death and returns to nothing. But we want to regard life philosophically, i.e. in accordance with its ideas, and looking at it in that way we shan't find that either

•will, the thing in itself in all phenomena, or

•the subject of knowledge, spectator of all phenomena,

is in any way touched by birth or death. Birth and death belong to the *phenomenon* of will, thus to life, and it is essential to life to be displayed fleetingly in individuals that arise and pass away, time-bound phenomena of something that knows no time in itself but must be displayed in this way so as to objectify its true essence. Birth and death equally belong to life, and counterbalance one another as reciprocal conditions, or, if one likes the expression, as •opposite• poles of the whole phenomenon of life. [AS goes on to say that this thesis is a doctrine in ‘the wisest of all mythologies, the Indian’, which expresses it by the different roles it assigns to different gods, and by decorating **a** the penis with a necklace of **b** skulls, ‘thus signifying that **a** generation and **b** death are essentially correlatives, which reciprocally neutralise and cancel each other’. He then turns to ancient Greek and Roman coffins, which were elaborately decorated with depictions of festivals etc., of which he says:] The purpose was obviously to direct people's attention away from the death of the mourned individual and onto the immortal life

of nature, and to indicate—without any call on abstract knowledge—that the whole of nature is the phenomenon of the will for life and indeed its fulfillment. The form of this phenomenon is •time, •space, and •causality, and by means of these •individuation, which brings with it that individuals must arise and pass away; but this doesn't disturb the will for life—of whose phenomenon the individual is only a single example or specimen—any more than the whole of nature is harmed by the death of an individual. What matters to nature is not the individual but only **the species**, for whose maintenance it presses with all seriousness, lavishly providing for it through •a huge over-abundance of seeds and •the great power of the drive to impregnate. Whereas **the individual** doesn't and can't have any value for nature, whose realm is infinite time and infinite space, and within these an infinite number of possible individuals; so that nature is constantly prepared to let the individual fall. Thus the individual is not only •exposed to destruction in a thousand ways through the most insignificant accident, but is •destined for it from the outset and led to it by nature itself just as soon as it—the individual—has done its work for the maintenance of the species. In this way nature openly expresses the great truth that only ideas, not individuals, have true realness, i.e. are complete objectivisations of will. Now, since man is nature itself—and indeed nature at its highest degree of self-consciousness—and nature is only the objectified will to live, the man who has grasped and held onto this point of view may well console himself over his own death and that of his friends by turning his eyes to the immortal life of nature, which he himself is. That's how we are to understand the decorated penis, and the ancient sarcophagi with their images of the most fervent life, calling to those who regard them in a state of lamentation 'Nature is not saddened'.

That procreation and death should be regarded as essential to life (this phenomenon of will) also emerges from the fact that they are both displayed to us only as more powerful expressions of something that all the rest of life consists in. Namely: life is nothing but a constant **a** exchange of matter in the fixed **b** permanence of form, and this is exactly the **a** transitory condition of individuals in relation to the **b** permanence of species. **Constant nourishment differs only in degree from reproduction and procreation.** Nourishment shows itself most simply and distinctly in the plant. Reproduction is through and through only a constant replication of the same drive, with the plant's simplest fibers grouped together into leaves and branches, making a systematic aggregate of homogeneous, mutually supporting plants, the constant regeneration of which is their single drive. It rises to a more complete satisfaction of that drive by climbing the ladder of metamorphosis, finally arriving at blossoms and fruit—at that compendium of its existence and striving—in which it now takes a shorter path to its single goal, and now with a single stroke accomplishes a thousand-fold what until then it had brought about only within the individual: self-replication. Its earlier growth and development stands in the same relation to its fruit as ·hand-·writing stands to printing. It is obviously just the same with animals. The nutritive process is one of constant generation, the process of procreation a more highly potentiated process of nourishment; the sensual pleasure in procreation a more highly potentiated enjoyment of the feeling of life.

Constant excretion differs only in degree from death. The constant exhalation and casting off of matter is the same thing as—though less highly potentiated than—death, the opposite of procreation. So just as we are always content to preserve the form without mourning the cast-off matter, we should conduct ourselves in the same way with regard

to death, which is just a more highly potentiated and more comprehensive equivalent of what occurs daily and hourly in the individual with excretion: just as we are indifferent in the first case, we should not recoil from the second. From this standpoint, it therefore appears just as perverse to demand continuation of one's individual case, which is replaced by other individuals, as to demand permanence of the matter of one's body, which is constantly replaced by new matter. It appears just as foolish to embalm corpses as it would be to conscientiously preserve one's excrement. As for the individual consciousness bound to the individual body, it is entirely interrupted by sleep every day. Deep sleep, with respect to its present duration, is not at all different from death, into which it often smoothly passes, e.g. in freezing to death, but only with respect to the future, namely, so far as waking is concerned. Death is a sleep in which individuality is forgotten; everything else reawakens, or rather has remained awake.

Above all, we must clearly recognise that the form of the will's phenomenon—thus the form of life or of *Realität*—is really only the *present*, not the future or the past, which exist only in concepts, only in the context of knowledge that follows the GP. No human being has lived in the past, nor will any live in the future; rather the present is the only form of all life—it is life's sure possession which can never be torn from it. The present always exists, together with its content; both stand firm, without wavering, like the rainbow over the waterfall. . . .

Of course, when we think back on the millennia that have passed and on the millions of people who have lived in them, we ask: what were they? what has become of them? But we need only to recall the past of our own life and revive its

scenes vividly in imagination, and then again ask: what was all this? what has become of it?¹ As it is with this, so it is with the life of those millions. Or should we suppose that the past, being sealed by death, gains a new existence? Our own past, even the closest—*yesterday*—is only an empty imaginary dream, and the past of all those millions is the same. What was? What is? ·The answer is:·

•The will of which life is the mirror, and •the will-free knowledge that gets a clear distinct glimpse of the will in that mirror.

Anyone who hasn't yet recognised this, or refuses to recognise it, should add to the previous question about the fate of past generations this further one:

Why is precisely *he*, the questioner, so fortunate as to have this precious, fleeting present, which alone is real, while those hundreds of human generations—including heroes and sages—of those ·past· times have sunk into the night of the past and thereby become nothing, whereas he, his insignificant *I*, actually exists?

Or more briefly, though strangely:

Why is this now, *his* now, in fact precisely *now* and not *long ago*?

In asking such strange questions, he is viewing his existence and his time as mutually independent, and the former as having been projected into the latter; he really assumes two *Nows*, one for the object, the other for the subject, and marvels over the lucky chance that they coincide. But in truth the present—as I showed in my treatise on the GP—is only the point of contact between the object (whose form is time) and the subject (which has none of the modes of the GP for its form). All objects are *will* that has become

¹ [The switch from two plural questions to two singular ones is in the original.]

presentation, and the subject is the necessary correlate of all objects. But there are real objects only in the present; past and future contain mere concepts and mental images; therefore the present is the essential form pertaining to will's phenomenon and is inseparable from it. The present alone is that which always exists and stands immovably firm. Empirically apprehended it is the most fleeting of all things; but to a metaphysical view that looks beyond empirical perception's forms it comes across as that which alone persists, the *Nunc stans* [Latin = 'standing now'] of the scholastics. The source and bearer of its content is the will for life, or the thing in itself—which is what we are. That which evermore becomes and passes away. . . . pertains to the phenomenon as such, whose forms make arising and passing away possible. Therefore one should think:

•Quid fuit? Quod est.

•Quid erit? Quod fuit.

Or, replacing the Latin by English,

•What has been? What is.

•What will be? What has been.

—taking this in the strict sense of the terms, thus meaning not *simile* but *idem* [= 'not similar but the very same']. For life is certain for will, and the present 'is certain' for life. So everyone can say: 'I am once and forever lord of the present, and it will accompany me through all eternity as my shadow; accordingly, I do not wonder where it came from and how it happens to be precisely *now*.'

We can compare time to an endlessly turning circle: the constantly falling half would be the past, the constantly rising one the future; and the indivisible point at the top—touched by the tangent—would be the unextended present. Just as the tangent does not rotate with the circle, neither does the present 'move with time'. . . . Or time is like a ceaseless stream, and the present like a rock which the

stream breaks on but does not sweep along with it.

Will, as *thing in itself*, is no more subject to the GP than is the knowing subject. . . ., and just as •life, which is will's own phenomenon, is certain for it, so too is •the present, which is the only form of actual life. So we need not inquire into the past before life or the future after death; rather, we have only to recognise the single form in which the will manifests itself, *the present*; it won't escape from will, and will won't escape from it. So anyone who is satisfied by life as it is, and affirms it in every way, can confidently regard it as endless, and banish the fear of death as a deception that would •give him the absurd fear that he could ever be deprived of the present, and •delude him with the idea of a time with no present in it; the same deception with respect to time as that other 'deception' with respect to space, by virtue of which everyone in his imagination views his present position on our globe as *above* and all others as *below*. . . . Essential to the objectification of will is the form of the present, which, as an unextended point, intersects the time that is infinite on either side and stands immovably firm, like an everlasting noon without a cooling evening: like the actual sun that burns without halt, while it only seemingly sinks into the lap of night. So if someone fears death as his annihilation, it is like thinking that the sun might lament in the evening: 'Woe to me! I go down into eternal night.'

Quite to the contrary: if life's burdens press on someone who •wants to have life and affirms it but •abhors its torments and •would no longer bear the hard lot that has befallen him—such a one cannot hope to be liberated by death and can't rescue himself by suicide. Only with false illusion does cool dark Orcus—the god of the underworld—lure him as a haven of peace. The earth rolls on from day into night; the individual dies; but the sun itself burns without remission in an eternal noon. Life is certain for the will

for life: life's form is a present without end, no matter how individuals—phenomena of ideas—arise and pass away in time, like fleeting dreams. So suicide appears to me here as a futile and therefore foolish act. When I have carried my considerations further, it will be displayed in an even more unfavourable light.

Dogmas change and our knowledge is deceptive, but nature does not err; its course is sure and it doesn't conceal it. Everything is entirely within nature, and it is entirely within everything. It has its centre in every animal. The animal found its way surely into existence, as it will surely find its way out, in the meantime living without fear or anxiety over the prospect of annihilation, supported by the consciousness that it (the animal) is nature itself and is imperishable as nature is.

Only the human being carries about with him in abstract concepts the certainty of his death; yet this troubles him only on the rare occasions when for a single moment something calls it up to his imagination. Against the powerful voice of nature, ·concept-using· reflection can do little. In man as in animals, that assurance ·of imperishability· holds sway as a permanent condition—originating from the innermost consciousness that he is nature, that he is the world itself. Because of this, a human being is not much disturbed by thought of certain and never-distant death, and everyone goes on living as if he must live forever. This is carried so far that it can be said that nobody has a truly living conviction of the certainty of his death, for otherwise his state of mind wouldn't differ much from that of a condemned criminal. Everyone acknowledges this certainty *in abstracto* and theoretically, but sets it aside without taking it up into his living consciousness, as he does with other theoretical truths that have no practical application. Anyone who carefully considers this unique feature of the human

disposition will see that psychological explanations of it in terms of habit and acceptance of the inevitable are far from sufficient, and that its basis is the deeper-lying one that I have presented. That basis also explains why dogmas of some sort of survival of the individual after death are in good repute at all times and among all peoples, though proofs of it must always be highly inadequate and proofs against it are strong and numerous. Indeed, this really needs no proof, but is recognised by sound understanding as a fact and fortified as such by the confidence that nature lies as little as it errs, but rather exhibits its doings and essence openly, even innocently pronounces them, while it is only we who obscure them with our delusions, seeking to infer from them only what appeals to our limited viewpoint.

But what I have now brought to clear consciousness, namely the fact

- that, although the individual phenomenon of the will begins in time and ends in time, the will itself (as *thing in itself*) is not touched by this, nor is the correlate of all objects, the knowing but never known subject; and that
- life is always certain for the will for life,

is not to be counted among those doctrines of survival. For **permanence** has no more to do with the will or with the pure subject of knowing (the eternal eye of the world) than **transitoriness** does, for both are predicates that are valid only in time, and the will and the pure subject of knowing lie outside time. Therefore the egoism of the individual (this particular phenomenon of the will enlightened by the subject of knowing) can extract as little nourishment and consolation for his wish to endure through endless time from the view I have expressed, as he could from the knowledge that after his death the rest of the eternal world would continue to exist, which is just the expression of the same view ·as

mine-, considered objectively and therefore temporally. For each human being is transitory only as phenomenon, while as thing in itself he is timeless and so endless; but it is only as phenomenon that he is distinct from other things in the world, as thing in itself he is the will that appears in all of them, and death destroys the illusion that separates his consciousness from that of the others. This is survival.¹ His being untouched by death, which pertains to him only as thing in itself, coincides for the phenomenon with the rest of the external world's survival.

From this too comes the fact that the inner and merely *felt* consciousness of that which we have just raised to the level of clear knowledge prevents the thought of death from poisoning the life of rational beings—such consciousness being the basis of the vital spirit that sustains all living things and lets them live cheerfully as though there were no death, as long as they have their eye on life and are directed towards it. But it doesn't prevent it from being the case that when death approaches the individual in a particular case—in reality, or only in imagination—and he must now look it in the eye, he is gripped by a fear of death and tries in every way to escape it. For just as

when his knowledge was directed toward life as such,
he had to recognise what was imperishable in it,

so also

when death confronts him, he has to recognise it for
what it is, the temporal end of an individual temporal
phenomenon.

What we fear in death is not at all pain: **(i)** pain obviously lies on this side of death; also **(ii)** we often flee pain into death, as well as **(iii)** sometimes taking on the most horrific pain so as to escape death for a while longer, even when death

would be quick and easy. So we distinguish pain from death as two entirely distinct evils. What we fear in death is the destruction of the individual that it openly announces itself as being; and since the individual is the will for life itself in a particular objectification, its whole nature struggles against death.

Where feeling leaves us as helpless as this, reason can still enter in and mostly counteract feeling's adverse influence, because reason sets us on a higher **standpoint**, from which we look not at the individual but at the whole. [AS goes on to say that this may be enough to 'overcome the terrors of death' for someone who has come this far with AS's line of thought but has not yet come to recognise lasting suffering as essential to all life. Such a person, he says,] would face with indifference the death that is rushing toward him on the wings of time, regarding it as a false illusion, an impotent spectre to frighten the weak but with no power over •someone who knows that he himself *is* the will whose objectification or image is the entire world,. . . •someone who can't be frightened by any infinite past or future in which he fails to exist,. . . •someone who has to fear death as little as the sun fears the night.

[AS decorates this line of thought with quotations from the Bhagavad Gita and Goethe, and adds:] The philosophy of Bruno and that of Spinoza could also lead someone to this **standpoint** if his conviction is not disturbed or weakened by their mistakes and imperfections. Bruno's philosophy has no real ethics; and ethics in the philosophy of Spinoza doesn't come from the core of his doctrine but—though in itself praiseworthy and fine—is tacked onto it only by means of weak and blatant sophisms. Indeed, many people would be at the **standpoint** in question if their knowledge kept pace

¹ [*die Fortdauer*; it could mean 'immortality'.]

with their will, i.e. if they were in a position to become—free from all delusion—clear and distinct to themselves. For this is. . . the standpoint of *affirmation of the will for life*.

[What follows is an obscure passage the gist of which is: at a certain stage will operated as ‘a blind effort without knowledge’, but now the point is reached where it operates ‘with knowledge, consciously and deliberately’; and AS emphasizes that this knowledge does not hinder the will’s willing. He continues:] The opposite of this, the *denial of the will for life*, shows itself when that knowledge brings willing to an end because the individual known phenomena no longer act as motives for willing, and what happens instead is that one’s whole knowledge of the world’s nature (the mirror of the will) that has grown up through the grasp of ideas becomes a *quieter* of the will; so that the will freely nullifies itself. It is to be hoped that these concepts—unfamiliar and in this general statement of them barely intelligible—will soon become clear, when I describe the actions of phenomena that express (on the one hand) *affirmation* of the will in its various degrees and (on the other hand) its *denial*. Both of these come from knowledge, to be sure, though not from an abstract sort of knowledge that expresses itself in words, but rather from a living knowledge that expresses itself only through one’s deeds and way of life and is independent of the dogmas which, as abstract knowledge, occupy reason. My only goal can be to depict both sorts of knowledge and bring them to the level of clear knowledge involving reason; I shan’t try to prescribe or recommend either of them, which would be as foolish as it would be useless, because *will in itself* is absolutely free and uniquely self-determining, and there is no law for it.

But before proceeding to that exposition, I must first **(i)** explain and more exactly determine this freedom and its relation to necessity, and then **(ii)** with reference to will and

its objects, offer some further general considerations regarding that life whose affirmation and denial is our problem; through all of which I’ll make it easier for us to recognise the ethical significance of those ways of behaving according to their innermost nature.

Because this whole work is only the unfolding of a single thought, its parts are all intimately interconnected, with every part related to and presupposing all the others. In a philosophy consisting merely of a series of inferences, each part is necessarily related only to the immediately preceding one, thus requiring the reader to remember only that; but the present work requires him to remember also all the earlier parts—so as to connect them with what he is reading at the moment. Plato made that same demand on his readers with the convoluted meanderings of his dialogues, returning to the main thought only after long digressions that clarify it. In my case the demand is necessary. I have had to divide my one and only thought into several considerations because otherwise I couldn’t have communicated it; but that division is not essential to the thought but only an artificial form.

The division into four Books, from four main points of view, and the most painstaking connection of things that are related or alike, helps the exposition and make it easier to grasp. Yet the material itself entirely rules out advancing in a straight line, as one can with historical material, and requires a more convoluted account which in turn requires a repeated study of the work, this being the only way for the interconnection of all the parts to be clarified, and all of them together finally to illuminate one another and be made perfectly clear.

55. Freedom and determinism

That will as such is *free* follows from its being (according to my view) the thing in itself, the content of all phenomena, whereas we know phenomena as altogether subject to the GP in its four forms; and because we know that

- necessity and
- following from a given ground

are interchangeable concepts, everything that belongs to the phenomenon—i.e. that is object for the individual knowing subject—is on the one hand ground and on the other hand consequence, and as a consequence is determined with complete necessity and so can't be in any respect other than it is. The entire content of nature—the totality of its phenomena—is thus throughout necessary; and the necessity of every part, every phenomenon, every event, can be shown in every case, because it must *always* be possible to discover the ground of which it is a consequence. This follows from the unlimited validity of the GP. On the other hand, this same world in all of its phenomena is the objectivisation of *will*, which—

since it is not itself a phenomenon, not a presentation or an object but *thing in itself*, is also not subject to the GP, the form of all objects

—is thus not determined as consequence by a ground, and thus knows no necessity, i.e. is free. So the concept of freedom is thus really a negative one, in that its content is merely the denial of necessity, i.e. of the ground-to-consequence relation according to the GP.

Here we have at its clearest •the solution¹ of that great opposition, •the reconciliation of freedom with necessity of which there has recently been much talk, though none of it

(so far as I am aware) has been clear and adequate. Each thing *as phenomenon*, as object, is absolutely necessary; the same thing *in itself* is will, which is perfectly free for all eternity. [AS now embarks on an account of how freedom, though confined to the thing in itself, nevertheless also 'comes to the fore' in the phenomenon, so that there's a self-contradiction *within* the phenomenon. This complicated discussion brings in art, ideas, self-denial, and saintliness; AS says that he can't make it entirely intelligible until he reaches chapter 70, until when he will entirely set it aside. Let us follow suit!].

All I have been doing here is to indicate in a general way how the human being is distinguished from all other phenomena of will by the fact that freedom, i.e. independence of the GP, which pertains only to will as thing in itself and is contrary to phenomena, can *possibly* enter into the phenomenon, although it is then necessarily displayed there as a self-contradiction within the phenomenon. In this sense, not only will in itself, but even the human being can indeed be called 'free' and be distinguished by that from all other beings. But how this is to be understood can be made clear only on the basis of everything to follow, and for now we must continue to abstract from it entirely.

First off, we must avoid the error of supposing that the conduct of an individual human being is not subject to necessity, i.e. that the power of motives is less certain than the power of causes or the drawing of conclusions from premises. Freedom of will as thing in itself. . . .in no way transfers immediately to its phenomenon, not even where the latter has achieved the highest level of visibility, and thus not to rational animals with individual characters, i.e. persons. These are never free, although they are the phenomenon of

¹ [*Einheitspunkt*, literally meaning 'point of unity'.]

a free will. [In an astonishingly difficult passage, AS goes on to say that **(i)** a person's actions are law-governed because they are appearances of a non-temporally unified will, but that **(ii)** each of those actions is ascribable to free will and immediately announces itself to consciousness as such, and so **(iii)** everyone is led by his natural feeling to think that **a** he is free in his individual actions, in the sense that in any given case any action would be possible for him, and only recognises from experience and reflection on it that **b** his action comes with complete necessity from the conjunction of character and motives. He describes **a** as *a priori* and **b** as *a posteriori*. He continues:] That is why those with the crudest minds, following their feeling, passionately defend complete freedom in individual actions, while the great thinkers of all ages have denied it, as have indeed the more profound systems of religion. But to anyone to whom it has become clear that a person's entire nature is will, of which he is himself only a phenomenon, and that such a phenomenon falls under the GP and so obeys the law of motivation, any doubt as to the inevitability of an action, given the character and motives at hand, would strike him as like doubting the equivalence of the three angles of a triangle to two right angles.

·INTELLIGIBLE CHARACTER AND EMPIRICAL CHARACTER·

The necessity of individual actions has been most satisfactorily shown by Priestly in his *Doctrine of Philosophical Necessity*. But the compatibility of this necessity with the freedom of *will in itself*, i.e. beyond the phenomenon, was first shown by Kant, whose achievement is particularly great here because he presents the distinction between **a** intelligible character and **b** empirical character. I retain this distinction in its entirety, since **a** the former is will as thing in itself making its appearance in a particular individual, to a

particular degree, while **b** the latter is this appearance itself, as displayed in ways of behaving (with respect to time, and even in one's corporeal form with respect to space). The best way to make the relation between the two comprehensible is the one I used in the introductory treatise *·On the fourfold root of the GP·*, namely:

Any person's **a** intelligible character is to be regarded as an act of *will*, outside time and thus indivisible and unalterable; and the phenomenon of that, developed and elaborated within time and space and all the forms belonging to the GP, is his **b** empirical character, exhibited for experience in his whole conduct and way of life.

Just as a whole tree is only the constantly repeated phenomenon of one and the same drive, which is most simply displayed in its fibers and repeated in the process of assemblage into leaf, stem, branch, trunk, and is easily recognisable in them, so all of a person's actions are only the constantly repeated expression (somewhat changing in their form) of his **a** intelligible character, and the induction based on the sum of these yields his **b** empirical character. I shan't replicate Kant's masterful account by reworking it here, but shall presuppose it as already known.

[AS now talks about earlier works of his in which free will is discussed, notably one which in 1840 was awarded a prize in Norway. Out of the tangle of these, he selects a topic that was treated in one of them, namely the common belief in 'absolute freedom of will' such that at a given moment a person's conduct could go either way. He continues with that here:]

The illusion of an empirical freedom of the will (instead of the transcendental, which is the only freedom attributable to it), thus of a freedom of individual deeds, arises from the separate and subordinated position of intellect with respect

to will. . . . Intellect learns of the resolutions of the will only *a posteriori* and empirically. So when it looks to a choice that has not yet been made, it has no information about how the will is going to decide. The intellect has no knowledge of the *intelligible* character by virtue of which (when motives are given) only *one* decision is possible (so that this is a necessary one); all it knows is the *empirical* character, made known to it successively through the person's individual acts. So it seems to the intellect that when someone confronts a choice, two contrary decisions are equally possible for the will. But this is like saying, of a vertically standing pole which has begun to wobble, 'It can fall to the right side or to the left', where *can* has a merely subjective meaning and really means 'with respect to the data known to us'; for objectively the direction of the fall is already necessarily determined as soon as the wobbling begins. So too the decision of one's own will is merely undetermined with respect to its spectator, one's own intellect, thus only relatively and subjectively; whereas in itself and objectively, with every choice set before us, the decision is at once determined and necessary. But this determination enters consciousness only with the ensuing decision. [AS talks now about how sometimes when we know that a difficult decision will have to be made we think hard and elaborately about the forces that might drive us to decide it in one way or the other, trying to see each in its best light. But, he continues:] this clear unfolding of the motives on both sides is all that the intellect can do when a choice is to be made. It awaits the real decision just as passively and with the same intense curiosity as it does the decision of someone else's will. So from its standpoint each decision must appear equally possible; and this is the illusion of empirical freedom of the will. The decision enters the sphere of intellect in an entirely empirical way, as the final upshot of the matter; but it came from the inner nature, the intelligible

character, of the individual will in its conflict with given motives, and therefore came with complete necessity. All the intellect can do here is to illuminate the nature of the motives sharply and from all sides; it can't determine the will itself, because the will is entirely inaccessible to it and can't be investigated.

If someone could in the same circumstances act now in one way and at another time in another, then between the two times his will would have to have *changed* and thus would have to lie within time, because that's the only way change is possible; but that would require •the will to be a mere phenomenon or or else •time to be a determination of the thing in itself. So the dispute over the freedom of individual actions, over the *liberum arbitrium indifferentiae* [see Glossary], really turns on the question of whether the will lies within time. If it is—as Kant's doctrine and the whole of my account require—as *thing in itself* beyond time and every form of the GP, then not only •must the individual person act constantly in the same way in the same situation, and not only •does his every evil deed provide a solid guarantee of countless others that he *must* perform and *can't* omit, but •if his empirical character and motives were completely given, it would also be possible (as Kant says) to calculate his future behaviour like an eclipse of the sun or moon. Just as nature is consistent, so is character: every action must happen in accord with it, just as every phenomenon must turn out in accord with natural law. . . . The will of which a person's entire being and life is the phenomenon cannot be renounced in an individual case, and what he wills on the whole he will constantly will in the individual case.

The assertion of an empirical freedom of will, of a *liberum arbitrium indifferentiae*, fits exactly with the view that the essence of a human being consists in a *soul* that is basically a knowing (indeed an abstractly thinking) being and only in

consequence of that a willing being; this treats will as something of a secondary nature, whereas really it is knowledge that is secondary. (Descartes and Spinoza even regarded will as an act of thought, and identified it with judgment.) According to this view, every human being becomes what he is only as a consequence of his knowledge: he entered the world as a moral blank, acquired knowledge of the things in it, and drew conclusions from it. On that basis he resolved to be this or that person, to act in this or that way; new knowledge could lead him to adopt a new way of acting and so become a different person. The view in question also implies that a person first recognises something as good and is led by that to will it, instead of first willing it and being led by that to call it *good*. My own fundamental viewpoint implies that all this is a reversal of the true relationship. Will is the first and basic thing, knowledge merely added onto it, serving will's phenomenon as a tool. So every person is what he is by his will, and his character is fundamental; for willing is the basis of his being. Through the addition of knowledge he learns in the course of experience *what he is*, i.e. he comes to know his character. He thus knows himself in consequence of and according to the make-up of his will, instead of, as on the old view, willing in consequence of and according to his knowledge. According to the old view, he needs only to think about how he would most like to be and he'll be like that; that is his freedom of the will. So it consists in a person's being his own work, by the light of knowledge. Whereas I say that he is his own work in advance of all knowledge, which is merely added on to illuminate the work. For this reason, he cannot decide to be such or such a person, nor can he become someone else; but he *is*, once and for all, and after that recognises what he is. For the others, he wills what he recognises; for me, he recognises what he wills.

[After a learnedly documented paragraph about the words the ancient Greeks used for 'character' and 'custom', which AS says shows that 'they expressed constancy of character metaphorically in terms of constancy of habit', he turns to Christianity:] In Christian theology we find the dogma of *predestination in consequence of election and non-election by grace* [Romans 9:11-24], obviously originating from the insight that a human being does not change himself; rather, his life and conduct—i.e. his empirical character—is only the unfolding of the intelligible character; . . . so a child's way of life is already determined at his birth (so to speak). I agree with this, though I don't undertake to speak for the consequences of combining this entirely correct insight with dogmas that were available in the doctrine of Jewish faith, and that then provided the supreme difficulty—the eternally irresolvable Gordian knot—around which revolve the great majority of disputes within the ·Christian· church. Even the apostle Paul was hardly successful here, with the metaphor of the potter that he put to the purpose [Romans 9:21]. . . . But considerations of this sort are strictly foreign to our subject. Much more to the point now will be some discussion of the relation between character and the knowledge in which all of its motives lie.

The motives that determine how character appears, or determines conduct, affect it through the medium of knowledge; and knowledge is changeable, often shifting back and forth between error and truth; though it usually tends towards truth as the person gets older—admittedly to very different degrees. Someone's conduct can noticeably alter without this justifying an inference to an alteration in his character. We can never act on him through teaching in a way that alters •what he really over-all wills, •what his innermost being strives for, •the goal that he pursues; otherwise we could re-model him! Seneca says it superbly: *Velle non discitur*

[Latin for 'Willing is not learned'], in which he prefers truth to his Stoics who said 'Virtue can be taught'. The will can be acted on from outside only through motives. But these can never alter the will itself; for they have power over it only on the presupposition that it is precisely such as it is. Motives can only change the *direction* of its striving, i.e. make it seek *on a different path* that which it has been unalterably seeking up to now. [AS develops this thought, with talk about means to ends, including such means as 'shrewdness, force and deception, abstinence, righteousness, alms, pilgrimages to Mecca'. He insists:] Such changes make no change in the person's striving, still less in the person himself. So even if his conduct is very differently displayed at different times, his willing has remained entirely the same. *Velle non discitur*.

For motives to have any effect, they must not only exist but also be known; for, according to the excellent formulation of the scholastics, 'The final cause acts not according to what is really the case but according to what is known'. [AS gives this in Latin. He goes on to say, through a cloudy example, that changes in someone's knowledge can lead to changes in his behaviour in what seem to be the same circumstances (but are not really so, because his knowledge-gain changes the internal circumstances). Although this passage begins by talking about knowledge of one's *motives*, the quoted scholastic thesis speaks only of 'what is known' with no restriction to 'of one's motives'; the example AS gives is about someone's knowledge not of his motives but of his external circumstances; and the passage ends with a phrase meaning 'his knowledge of his circumstances'. That notion is visibly at work at the start of the next paragraph, but before it is ended, AS reverts to talking about what happens when someone's *motives* 'enter his knowledge'.]

Just as ignorance of actually existing circumstances robs them of their influence, so (on the other hand) entirely

imaginary circumstances can have effects as though they were real, not only in an individual deception but also on a large scale and over a period of time. If someone is firmly convinced that each of his good deeds will be rewarded a hundredfold in a future life, this belief comes into play and is effective as a good bill of exchange at a very long date; and he can *give* out of egoism just as he would *take* out of egoism if he saw things differently. He has not changed himself: *Velle non discitur*. By virtue of this great influence of knowledge on action while the will remains unalterable, one's character is unfolded and its various traits come to the fore. So it shows up differently at different periods of life, and an intense, wild youth can be followed by a composed, moderate age of manhood. What is bad in a character will come out more strongly with time; but sometimes passions that a person indulged in as a youth are voluntarily reined in later on, simply because the opposing motives have entered his knowledge. Therefore we are all guiltless at the outset, which merely means that neither we nor others know the evil in our own nature; it shows up only in connection with motives, and it takes time for motives to enter one's knowledge. In the end, we come to know ourselves as something entirely different from what we took ourselves to be *a priori*, and then we are often terrified by ourselves.

Repentance arises from a change in knowledge, never from a change in the will, which is impossible. I must continue to will that which is essential and true in what I have ever willed, for I myself *am* this will, which lies beyond time and alteration. So I can never repent of what I have *willed*, but I can repent of what I have *done*, if I have—misled by mistaken concepts—done something that was not in accord with my will. The insight that this has happened—an insight produced by more accurate knowledge—is repentance. This extends not merely to

- worldly wisdom,
- the choice of means, and
- assessing whether my goals conform to my true will,

but also to the truly ethical. Thus, for example, I may have acted more egoistically than fits with my character, led astray •by exaggerated presentations of the hardship I was undergoing, or of the cunning, falsehood, malice of others, or •by acting too hastily, i.e. without deliberation, determined not by motives that I clearly knew *in abstracto* but by merely perceptual ones, by the present impression and the emotion it aroused, which was so strong that I wasn't really in possession of my reason. The return of reflection is in this case only a correction of knowledge. Repentance can come from this, and always presents itself as setting things right as far as possible. . . .

The contrary of that case can also occur: I may have been misled into acting *less* egoistically than fits with my character •by too much trust in others, •by ignorance of the relative values of worldly goods, or •by some abstract dogma that I have since lost faith in, and this can provide me with repentance of a different sort. [The different sort is mere *regret*, which was a possible translation of the word *Reue* throughout.] So *Reue*—repentance or regret—is always corrected knowledge about how an action was related to one's true intention.

When the will reveals its ideas in space alone, i.e. through mere form, it is opposed by the matter in which other ideas (in this case natural forces) already hold sway, and it is seldom able to get the form that is striving after visibility to appear in perfect purity and clarity. i.e. in perfect beauty. And there's an analogous hindrance to the will that reveals itself in time alone, i.e. through actions, the hindrance coming from knowledge that seldom gives it the data quite correctly, so that an action doesn't exactly correspond to the will—which leads to repentance. So repentance always

comes from corrected knowledge, not from the change of the will, which is impossible. Anguish of conscience over past deeds is nothing like repentance. It is pain at the knowledge of what one is in oneself, i.e. as will. It rests precisely on the certainty that one does always have the same will. [AS's explanation of this is defeatingly obscure. He says he will go into it in detail later on.]

The influence that knowledge (as the medium for motives) has—not indeed on will itself but on how it shows in conduct—is also the source of the main difference between the conduct of human beings and that of animals, because their ways of knowing are different. An animal has only perceptual knowledge, whereas a human being also has knowledge through reason, abstract presentations, concepts. Thus, while both are determined with equal necessity by motives, the human being has (and the animal lacks) the advantage of full *decision-making*. This has often been viewed as a freedom of the will in individual deeds, though it is really nothing but the possibility of a full-scale battle among several motives, the strongest of which then determines the will with necessity. For this to happen, motives have to take the form of abstract thoughts; for only through these can there be any real deliberation, i.e. any weighing of opposing grounds for action. For an animal the choice has to be between motives that are perceptually available, which limits it to the narrow sphere of its present perceptual intake. So the necessity in the determination of the will by motives—which is the same as the necessity in the determination of effects by causes—can be perceptually and immediately displayed only in animals, and in this case the motives are as immediately evident to the spectator as are their effects; whereas with human beings the motives are almost always abstract presentations to which the spectator has no access; and even for the agent himself the necessity of the motives'

effect is hidden behind their conflict. For only *in abstracto* can several presentations, such as judgments and chains of inferences, lie side by side in consciousness and—free from all temporal determination—interact until the strongest overpowers the others and determines the will. This is full *decision-making*—or capacity for deliberation—which is an advantage that human beings have over animals. It's on account of this that freedom of the will has been attributed to humans, on the supposition that their willing is a mere result of the operation of •the intellect, with no determinate drive serving as •its basis; whereas really motivation is effectual on the basis of the will's determinate drive, which with a human being is something individual, i.e. a character. [AS says that this matter gets 'a more detailed account' in his earlier *The Two Fundamental Problems of Ethics*, which he advises us to read. Then:] Humans' capacity for deliberation is one of the things that make their existence so much more of a torment than that of animals, just as in general our greatest pains lie not •in the present, as perceptual presentations or immediate feelings, but •in reason, as abstract concepts, tormenting thoughts, from which animals—living only in the present, and thus with enviable unconcern—are utterly free.

This dependence of the human capacity for deliberation on the faculty for thinking *in abstracto*—and thus for judging and inferring as well—seems to have been what misled both Descartes and Spinoza into identifying decisions of the will with the capacity for affirming and denying (the faculty of judgment), from which Descartes concluded that will—which he regarded as indifferently free—had some responsibility for all theoretical error. Spinoza, on the other hand, held that will is necessarily determined by motives, as judgments are necessitated by their grounds. The latter opinion has something right about it, but it shows up ·in his work· as a true conclusion from false premises.

The difference between how animals are moved by motives and how and humans are has a far-reaching influence on the nature of both, and is the main source of the pervasive and evident difference in the existence of both. Namely:

- Animals are never motivated by anything but perceptual presentations, whereas
- humans try to exclude this sort of motivation entirely, and to be determined only by abstract presentations. In this they are making the best possible use of their prerogative of *reason*: independently of the present, they don't choose passing enjoyments or evade passing pains, but give thought to the consequences of both.

In most cases—apart from entirely insignificant actions—we are determined by abstract, thought-out motives, not by present impressions. So every individual **a** *sacrifice* made for the moment is relatively light, but every **b** *renunciation* is terribly hard; because **a** the former concerns only the fleeting present, while **b** the latter bears on the future and therefore incorporates countless sacrifices as its equivalent. The cause of our pain, as of our pleasure, therefore lies mostly not in the real present but merely in abstract thoughts. These are often unbearable to us, inflicting torments compared with which all the sufferings of the animal world are minute. Even our physical pains are often not worse than such ·mental· torments; indeed, we ·sometimes· cause ourselves physical pains so as to direct our attention away from intense mental ones. . . .

Just because mental pain, as by far the greater, makes one insensible to physical pain, suicide becomes very easy for someone who is in despair or consumed by morbid depression, even if he had recoiled from thoughts about it at earlier times in pleasant circumstances. Similarly, the play of someone's *thoughts* wears out his body more often and more

strongly than *physical* hardships do. [AS elaborates this line of thought with •quotations from Epictetus and Seneca, •reference to an early German folk tale about someone who is ‘a superb caricature of human nature, laughing on his way uphill but crying on the way down’, and •an implausible explanation of the supposed fact that when a child has hurt himself he doesn’t start crying until someone commiserates with him.]

Such great differences in conduct and in suffering flow from the difference between animal and human ways of knowing. Further, the emergence of the distinct and decisive *individual* character that especially distinguishes human beings from animals (which have hardly any character except that of their species) is conditioned by choice among several motives, which is possible only by means of abstract concepts. For only after a choice has been made are the resolutions (which vary in different individuals) an indication of the individual character, which is different in each; whereas the actions of animals depends only on the presence or absence of impressions, supposing this impression to be in general a motive for its species.

And a final point: for a human being it is only a •decision—not a mere •desire—that is a valid sign of his character, for himself as for others; and only his action can reliably show him and others what decision he has made. The desire is merely a necessary consequence of a present impression, whether from an external stimulus or from a transient inner mood, and is therefore as devoid of deliberation as the action of animals, and so merely expresses the character of the •human• species, not the individual character, i.e. merely indicates what *man in general*, not the *individual* who has the desire, would be capable of doing. The deed alone—

because as human action it always needs a certain deliberation, and because humans are as a rule in

control of their reason, and. . .so make decisions in accordance with thought-out, abstract motives
—expresses the intelligible maxims of the person’s action, the result of his innermost willing, and occupies a position as a *letter* in relation to the *word* that designates his empirical character, which itself is only the temporal expression of his intelligible character. In a healthy mind, therefore, only deeds weigh on the conscience, not desires or thoughts. For only our deeds hold up to us the mirror of our will. . . .

[AS now briefly repeats most of what he has said about the necessity that governs the conduct of men and of animals, despite the differences he has discussed, and then moves to a new difference, attributing to human beings something that he regards as incomparably unlike anything animals are capable of. It involves ‘true freedom of will as *thing in itself*’, self-renunciation, and other strangenesses. He can’t present this clearly here, he says, but he’ll get to it ‘at the very end’, which seems to refer to chapter 68. He then turns to a falsehood that might be inferred from what he has said up to here, namely:]

It would be wasted effort to work at improving one’s character or at resisting the power of evil inclinations; it would be wiser to submit to the inevitable and go along with every inclination, including bad ones.

But this would be altogether the same sort of thing as we get with the doctrine of unavoidable fate. . . . Although everything can be viewed as irrevocably predetermined by fate, it is so only by means of the chain of causes. So it can never be determined that an effect will occur without its cause. So what is predetermined is not the event plain and simple, but the event as an effect of a previous cause; so what is decided by fate is not the result alone but also the means by which the result is determined to occur. Accordingly, should the means not occur, then surely neither will the result: both of

them always occur in accordance with the determination of fate—which, however, we never know until afterwards.

Just as events always turn out according to fate, i.e. according to the endless chain of causes, so our actions will always turn out according to our intelligible character. But just as we don't know events in advance, so too we are given no insight *a priori* into our actions; we come to know others only *a posteriori*, through experience, and that's our only way of knowing ourselves. If it were an upshot of the intelligible character that we could make a good decision only after long battle against an evil inclination, then the battle would have to come first and its outcome waited for. Reflection on the unalterability of character, on the unity of the source all of our actions, shouldn't mislead us into anticipating the character's decision in favour of one side over the other; the eventual decision will show us what sort of person we are; we'll be mirrored in our deeds. That explains the •satisfaction or •anguish of soul with which we look back on the path of the life we have laid behind us. Neither of them comes from the past actions' still having an existence; they are past, have been, and now are no more. Their great importance for us comes from their meaning, comes from the fact that these actions are the imprint of character, the mirror of the will, into which we look and recognise our innermost self, the kernel of our will. Because we learn this only after the fact, we have to strive and do battle over time so that the picture we produce by our actions may be one we can view with calm rather than anxiety. Later on I'll inquire into the significance of this consolation or anguish of soul. . . .

•ACQUIRED CHARACTER•

Besides the intelligible and empirical characters, there's a third one, the **acquired** character. A person acquires this in the course of his life, through practice in worldly affairs; it's

what people are speaking of when they praise someone for having character or censure him for lacking it.

One might think that since the empirical character (as the phenomenon of the intelligible character) is unalterable and—like every natural phenomenon—internally consistent, a human being must always appear self-consistent and therefore have no need to *construct* a character through experience and reflection. But that is not how things stand. Although he is always the same, he does not always understand himself, and often mistakes himself until he has **acquired** some degree of genuine self-knowledge. The empirical character is, as a mere natural drive, in itself irrational; indeed its expressions are even disturbed by reason, more so if the person is better endowed with thoughtful awareness and power of thinking. For these keep him fixated on what is fitting for *a human being in general* as the character of the species, and what is possible for him in that role to will and to achieve. This makes it harder for him to see what *he alone*—by virtue of his individuality—is willing and able to do. He finds in himself dispositions for all the various human endeavours and powers; but without experience he won't be clear about their various strengths in his individual case. And if he now applies himself to the only pursuits that fit his character, at certain moments and in certain moods he feels an inclination to take up flatly opposite pursuits that can't be combined with the others and must be entirely suppressed if he wants to follow the others undisturbed. For, just as our physical path on earth is always only a line, not a surface, so in life, if we want to grasp and possess one thing, we must leave countless others scattered on all sides, renouncing them. If we can't decide to do that, but (like children at a fair) grab at everything that stimulates us in passing, this is a perverse attempt to transform the line of our path into a surface; we then run a zigzag course, flit here and there like

a will-o'-the-wisp, and achieve nothing.

Or, to use another comparison, just as according to Hobbes's doctrine of right

everyone has an original right to everything but an exclusive right to nothing; though someone can obtain an exclusive right to particular things by renouncing his right to everything else, while others renounce their right to whatever he has chosen,

so is it in life, in which

some definite pursuit, whether it be aimed at pleasure, honour, wealth, science, art, or virtue, can be followed with seriousness and success only when all claims that are foreign to it are given up, when everything else is renounced.

Accordingly, the mere will and the mere ability are not sufficient; a man must also *know* what he wills, and *know* what he can do; only then will he show character, and only then can he accomplish something right. Until he achieves this, he is without character, despite the natural consistency of his empirical character. And although he must on the whole stay true to himself and run his course to the end, drawn by his guiding spirit [the German is *Dämon*], the path he'll follow won't be a perfectly straight line, but a wavering and uneven one. He'll vacillate, deviate, reverse direction, allow himself regret and pain; all of this because, in matters great and small, he sees so many things that he could achieve as a human being but doesn't yet know which of them are suitable for him in particular, can be done by him or enjoyed by him. So he will envy many persons for situations and relations that are suited to their characters but not to his, and in which he would •feel unhappy and perhaps even •be unable to survive. Just as fish thrive only in water, birds only in air, moles only under the earth, so every human being thrives only in the atmosphere suited to him; the air of

court life, for example, can't be breathed by everyone. From a lack of sufficient insight into all of this, many a person will engage in all sorts of failed attempts, will force •his character in individual matters but on the whole will have to yield to •it; and what he so laboriously achieves contrary to his nature—i.e. by his forcings—will give him no enjoyment; what he learns in this way will remain dead. This applies even to ethical matters. A deed too noble for the person's character—stemming not from pure immediate impulse, but from a concept, from a dogma—will through subsequent egoistic regret lose all merit even in his own eyes. *Velle non discitur*. Just as experience teaches us of the inflexibility of **others'** characters, before which we childishly believe that

by presenting things in a rational way, by begging and pleading, by example and generosity, we might bring someone to abandon his ways, to change his manner of action, to depart from his way of thinking, or even widen his abilities,

so it goes with **ourselves** as well. We must first learn from experience what we want and what we are capable of; until that happens, we don't know these things, are without character, and are often forced by hard blows from without to retrace our steps.

When we finally learn these things, we have acquired what is commonly called 'character', *acquired character*. So this is nothing but the most complete knowledge possible of our own individuality: it is abstract—and thus clear—knowledge of the unalterable properties of our own empirical character and of the measure and direction of our mental and physical forces, and thus of the totality of the strengths and weaknesses of our own individuality. This enables us to carry out—now with thoughtful awareness and methodically—the inherently unalterable role of our own person, which we had previously regarded as a kind of citizen without strict

norms for naturalisation; and to fill the gaps that whims or weaknesses cause in it under the guidance of fixed conceptions. We'll abide by these as though the role were something we had learned. We shall no longer fall into error through passing moods or impressions; we won't be distracted by the bitterness or sweetness of odd things we find along our path; we'll act without delay, without hesitation, without inconsistency. We will now no longer, as novices, wait, attempt, feel our way around, to see what we really want and really can do; we know this once and for all, and by applying general principles to individual cases in any matter of choice we'll arrive at once at a decision. We know our will in general, and don't allow moods or external demands to mislead us into individual decisions that are wholly opposed to it. Similarly, we know the nature and the measure of our strengths and weaknesses, and will thereby spare ourselves many pains. (For really the only pleasure is that of feeling that one is employing one's own strengths, and the greatest pain is a perceived lack of strengths where one needs them.) Having examined where our strengths and weaknesses lie, we will try to develop and make use of our conspicuous natural dispositions, always occupying ourselves where these are appropriate and useful, and avoiding pursuits that we have little natural aptitude for and that won't work for us. Only someone who has succeeded in this will—with constancy and complete thoughtful awareness—*be entirely himself*, and will never be left in the lurch by himself, because he will always have known what he could expect from himself. He will then often experience the pleasure of feeling his strengths, and seldom the pain of being reminded of his weaknesses. The latter reminder is a humiliation that causes the greatest mental pain; so it is easier to endure clear evidence of one's misfortune than of one's ineptitude.

Now that we are completely familiar with our strengths

and weaknesses, we won't try to display powers that we don't have—won't gamble with counterfeit coin—because such trickery eventually misses its target. For since the entire person is only the phenomenon of his will, nothing could be more perverse than to be led by reflection to want to be something other than what one is, for that is a direct contradiction of the will with itself. Imitating someone else's qualities and individual features is much more disgraceful than wearing someone else's clothes; for that is the judgment of one's own worthlessness pronounced by oneself. Knowledge of one's own disposition and abilities, and of their unalterable limits, is the surest way to achieve the greatest possible self-content; for it applies to inner circumstances as well as to outer ones that the only real consolation for us is the certainty that something was unalterably necessary. An ill that has befallen us doesn't torment us as much as the thought of the circumstances by which it could have been averted. So nothing comforts us more effectively than seeing events in terms of a necessity through which all contingencies appear as tools in the hand of a prevailing fate. . . .

Really, we wail or rage only for as long as we hope this will affect others or rouse ourselves to unprecedented exertion. But children and adults know very well to remain content, once they see clearly that there is no alternative. . . . We are like captured elephants that rage and struggle for many days, until they see that this is useless, and then suddenly offer their necks quietly to the yoke, forever tamed. We are like King David, who while his son was still alive besieged Jehovah with entreaties, and conducted himself as if in despair, but as soon as his son was dead gave him no further thought. [See 2 Samuel, 12:15–23.] That is how it comes about that persistent ills

such as being crippled, poor, low in status, ugly,

having a disgusting home are borne with indifference by countless people—and indeed, like healed wounds, are no longer felt—simply because those people know that inner or outer necessity permits no change in their condition; while more fortunate folk don't see how anyone can bear this. Now with inner necessity as with outer, nothing reconciles one so firmly as clear knowledge of it. If we have once and for all •clearly recognised our good qualities and strengths as well as our failings and weaknesses, •set our goal accordingly, and •come to be at peace over things that can't be achieved, this will give us the most secure escape that our individuality permits from the most bitter of all sorrows, *discontent with ourselves*, which is the inevitable result of •a lack of knowledge of one's own individuality, of •false conceit, and of •the over-reaching that arises from that. As Ovid wonderfully wrote: 'That is of the greatest help to the spirit, once and for all to break the bonds that entangle and torment one's breast.' [AS quotes this in Latin.]

So much for **acquired character**. It is indeed less important for ethics proper than for everyday life, but I needed to discuss it at length so as to fit it into its place as the third kind of character alongside intelligible character and empirical character. I have had to allow myself a somewhat detailed consideration of intelligible character, to make clear to us how will is subject to necessity *in all its phenomena*, although it can *in itself* be called free—indeed omnipotent.

56. Suffering and satisfaction

The whole visible world is the phenomenon of this freedom, this omnipotence, expressing it and progressively developing it in accordance with the laws that come with the form of knowledge; and now that in its most perfect manifestation it has reached the completely adequate knowledge of its own

nature, it can express itself in two new ways. Either

a it also wills here at the pinnacle of reflection and self-consciousness the same thing that it had been willing blindly and without self-knowledge; in which case knowledge is still a motive for it, on the whole as in matters of detail;

or the opposite of that:

b this knowledge becomes a *quieter* for it, stilling and nullifying all willing.

This is the **a** affirmation and **b** denial of the will for life that I have introduced in general terms above. . . . Which side of the **a/b** line someone is on doesn't affect the development of his character or show up in individual actions. Its only upshot is that the maxims the will has freely adopted (according to the knowledge now attained) vividly express themselves either in **a** ever stronger emergence of the individual's entire manner of action or—the opposite upshot of that—in **b** its nullification.

I have paved the way for a clearer development of all this—the main topic of this final Book—by inserting discussions of freedom, necessity, and character. Further help with the main topic will be given by another insertion, namely a consideration of life itself, the willing or non-willing of which is the great question. We should try to recognise in general terms •what this affirmation of life really means for will itself, which is after all life's innermost essence, •how and how far this ·affirmation· does or indeed *can* satisfy the will, in short, •what, in general and essential terms, is to be viewed as its [= will's] condition in this its own world, one in every respect belonging to it.

Firstly, I ask the reader to recall the considerations that I ended Book II with, arising from the question posed there concerning the goal and purpose of will. Instead of the answer to that question, it became clear to us that

will—on all the levels of its phenomenon from the lowest to the highest—is entirely devoid of any ultimate goal, is always striving because striving is its sole essence. It is not brought to a halt by the achievement of any goal: it is not capable of any final satisfaction; it can only be held up by impediments, but in itself goes on for ever. We saw this in the simplest of all natural phenomena, gravity, which doesn't cease to strive and press toward a mathematical centre, to reach which would be the annihilation of gravity and of matter, and wouldn't cease if the entire universe were already compressed into a ball. We see it in other simple natural phenomena. Anything solid strives, by melting or dissolving, towards a fluidity in which alone all its chemical forces will be liberated; rigidity is the imprisonment they are held in by cold. And fluid strives for the form of a vapour, which it passes into the moment it is freed from all pressure. No body is without. . . .striving, or without longing and desire, as Jakob Böhm would say. Electricity endlessly transmits its inner conflict, even if the mass of the earth absorbs its effect. Electromagnetism is likewise, so long as the battery lasts, a goal-less endlessly renewed act of conflict and reconciliation. The existence of plants is just the same sort of unresting, never satisfied striving, a ceaseless driving through ever higher forms until the •endpoint, the seed, becomes the •starting point again. This is repeated endlessly: never a goal, never final satisfaction, never a point of repose. At the same time you'll recall from Book II [chapter 26] that the multitude of natural forces and organic forms fight one another for the matter in which they would come to the fore, each possessing only what it has torn from another, so that a constant battle over life and death is maintained. . . .

We have long since recognised •this striving that constitutes the core and *in-itself* of every thing as identical with •that which in us—where it manifests itself most clearly in

the light of fullest consciousness—is called *will*. We then label as *suffering* a blockage of it that comes between it and its momentary goal, and as *satisfaction*, well-being, happiness, its achievement of the goal. We can carry these labels over to the phenomena of the insentient world, weaker in degree but identical in essence. We see these gripped by constant suffering, with no lasting happiness. For all striving arises from a lack, from discontent with one's state, and this is suffering so long as it is not satisfied. But no satisfaction is lasting; it is never anything but the starting point for some new striving. We see striving everywhere impeded, everywhere in battle, and thus always as suffering; no ultimate goal for the striving, so no measure and goal of suffering.

What we thus discover in insentient nature only through sharpened attention and effort confronts us clearly in sentient nature, in the life of the animal world, the constant suffering of which is easily demonstrable. But rather than lingering on this middle level, I prefer to turn to where everything—illuminated by the clearest knowledge—comes out most clearly, in the life of the human being. •Why most clearly there?• Because as the phenomenon of will becomes more complete, the suffering becomes more obvious. In plants there is no sensibility, and thus no pain. A very low degree of both is possessed by the lowest animals, infusoria and radiata; even in insects the capacity for feeling and suffering is still limited. Only with the complete nervous system of vertebrates do they occur to a high degree, and in higher degree as intelligence is more highly developed. In equal measure, then, as knowledge acquires clarity, as consciousness rises higher, there also grows that torment which consequently reaches its highest degree in human beings. The more clearly a man knows, and the more intelligent he is, the more he suffers; and the one in whom

genius lives suffers the most. . . .

This exact proportion between level of consciousness and level of suffering has been beautifully expressed. . . . in a drawing by the philosophical painter, or painting philosopher, Tischbein. The upper half of the picture depicts *women* whose children are being abducted and who in various groups and postures express deep maternal pain, anxiety, despair. The lower half of the picture shows, in entirely the same order and grouping, *sheep* from whom their lambs are being taken; so that every human head, every human posture, in the upper half of the picture corresponds to an animal analogue below; so that one sees clearly how the pain that is possible within a dull animal consciousness relates to the intense torment that becomes possible only through clarity of knowledge, vividness of consciousness.

For these reasons, I want to consider the inner and essential fate of will *within human existence*. Everyone will easily find the same thing expressed in the life of animals. . . ., and will gather even from their case how essential suffering is to all life.

57. Life, death, suffering, boredom

At every level illuminated by knowledge, *will* appears as an individual. The human individual finds himself launched into infinite space and infinite time as a finite quantity, and compared with them a vanishingly small one. Because of *their* unlimitedness, he always has only a relative and never an absolute *When* and *Where* for his existence; for his place and his duration are finite parts of something infinite and limitless.

His real existence is only in the present, whose unimpeded flight into the past is a steady passage into death, a constant dying, since his past life is already utterly done

with, dead, no longer existent—apart from any consequences it may have for the present, and apart from the witness it bears to his will. So from a rational point of view it can't matter to him whether the content of that past was torments or pleasures. But the present is constantly passing through his hands into the past; the future is quite uncertain and always brief. Thus his existence, just viewed from the **formal** side, is a constant plunging of the present into the dead past, a constant dying. But if we see it from the **physical** side as well, it's obvious that just as **(i)** our walking is known to be a constantly prevented falling, so also **(ii)** the life of our body is only a continually prevented dying, an ever-postponed death, and **(iii)** the mobility of our mind is a continually deferred boredom. Every breath wards off the constant intrusion of death, with which we do battle in this way every second, and then again at greater intervals with every meal, every sleep, every warming, etc. It must win eventually, for we became subject to it by being born, and it merely plays with its prey for a while before devouring it! Yet we go on with our life with considerable engagement and much care, for as long as possible—like making a soap-bubble as long-lasting and as large as possible, although we know for sure that it will burst.

We have seen the inner being of insentient nature as a constant striving, without a goal and without rest; and we see the same thing even more clearly when we consider the animal and the human being. [In what follows, the use of 'his' and 'he' suggests that the topic is the human being, not the (non-human) animal. The German pronouns in the original don't carry that suggestion; but the passage as a whole is more plausible when read as focussed on humans.] Willing and striving is his whole nature, strictly comparable with an unquenchable thirst. But the basis of all willing is need, deficiency, and thus pain, to which the human has fallen subject—in his origin and through his very

being. If he lacks objects of desire because the desires he had were too easily satisfied, then a frightful emptiness and boredom befalls him—i.e. his nature and his very existence become an unbearable burden to him. His life thus swings like a pendulum between pain and boredom, both of which are in fact ultimate constituents of it. This is expressed oddly in the saying that after man had transferred all sufferings and torments into hell, nothing then remained for heaven but boredom.

The constant striving that constitutes the essence of every phenomenon of will obtains its primary and most general foundation at the higher levels of objectification from the fact that here the will manifests itself as a living body, with the iron command **(i) to nourish this body**; and what gives force to this command is the fact that this body is nothing but the objectified *will to live* itself. The human being, as the most complete objectification of that will, is accordingly the neediest of all beings: he is through and through willing and needing, a concretion of a thousand needs. With these he stands on the earth, left to himself, uncertain about everything except his need and his hardship. Accordingly, concern for maintenance of his existence—amid such heavy and daily-renewed demands—fills as a rule the whole of his life. A second demand is immediately joined to this: the demand **(ii) to propagate the species**. At the same time the most diverse dangers threaten him from all sides, and to escape them he needs to be constantly on the alert. He follows his path with cautious steps, anxiously looking around, because a thousand risks and a thousand enemies lie in wait for him. Thus he went as a savage; thus he goes in civilised life. There is no security for him:

In what shadows of life, in what great dangers,
Is this lifetime lived, as long as it lasts!

[From Lucretius's *De rerum natura*, quoted by AS in Latin.]

For the great majority, life is a constant battle for this existence itself, with the certainty of its eventually being lost. What enables them to endure in this so-arduous battle is not so much *love of life* as *fear of death*, which, however, stands inexorably in the background and can at any moment step forward.

Life itself is a sea full of reefs and whirlpools that a person avoids with great caution and care, although he knows that even if his efforts and skill succeed in getting him through it, every step brings him closer to the greatest, the total, the unavoidable and unsalvageable shipwreck—death. This is for him the final goal of that arduous journey, and worse for him than all the reefs he has avoided.

It is very noteworthy, though, that •on the one hand the sufferings and torments of someone's life can easily increase to the point where even the death that his entire life consists in a flight from becomes desirable, and he voluntarily rushes towards it; and •on the other hand, as soon as someone gets a respite from hardship and suffering, boredom is at once so near at hand that he is in dire need of something to pass the time. What occupies all living things and keeps them going is striving for existence. But when existence is assured to them, they don't know what to do with it. So the second thing that gets them going is striving to be rid of the burden of existence, becoming insensible to it, 'killing time', i.e. escaping boredom. . . .

But boredom is not at all a minor evil; it eventually paints one's face with real despair. It is responsible for the fact that beings who have no love for one another seek each other out, so that it becomes the source of ·their· sociability. Governmental precautions against a boredom are adopted everywhere, as against other general calamities, because this evil—as much its opposite extreme, ь starvation—can drive people to the greatest excesses. The people need *Panem*

et Circenses [Latin for ‘bread and circuses’]. The strict penitentiary system of Philadelphia uses solitary confinement and inactivity to make sheer boredom an instrument of punishment; and it’s such a frightful one that it has led inmates to suicide. Just as bread is the constant scourge of the common people, so a boredom is that of the fashionable world. . . .

Every human life flows on always between desiring and achieving. Desire is by its nature pain; its achievement quickly gives birth to satiety. The goal was only illusory; achievement of it stops it from tickling; the desire, the need, starts again in a new form. Where it doesn’t, there follows desolation, emptiness, boredom, the battle against which is just as tormenting as that against hardship.

When desire and satisfaction alternate without too short or too long an interval between them, that reduces to its lowest degree the suffering that both provide, and makes for the happiest course of life. For what one might otherwise call the finest part of life, its purest joy (if only because it lifts us out of real existence and transforms us into disengaged spectators of it)—namely the pure knowledge that remains foreign to all willing, pleasure from the beautiful, genuine delight in art, is granted to only a few because it demands rare talents, and even to these it is granted only as a passing dream. These few, on account of their higher intellectual power, are susceptible to far greater suffering than duller minds can ever feel, and are placed in lonely isolation among a variety of beings markedly different from them. . . . For the vast majority of people, purely intellectual pleasures are not accessible. They are almost entirely incapable of the joys of pure knowledge; they are wholly given up to willing. So if something is to win their sympathy—to be *interesting* to them—it must. . . . somehow arouse their will. It may do this only through a distant and merely problematic reference

to it, but the will can never remain entirely out of play, because such people’s existence lies far more in willing than in knowing; action and reaction are their single element. [AS gives examples of trivial activities that ordinary folk are led to by this, rising to a climax:] This need for arousal of the will shows itself in the invention and preservation of card games, which is quite truly an expression of the pitiful side of humanity.

But whatever a nature, whatever a fortune may have done, whoever one is and whatever one possesses, the pain essential to life cannot be cast off. [This is decorated with short quotations from *Iliad* and *Odyssey*.]

The ceaseless efforts to get rid of suffering accomplish nothing beyond altering its form. Its basic form is

•deficiency, need, concern for the maintenance of life. If one has the good fortune (which probably won’t last long) to suppress pain in this form, it immediately starts up in a thousand other forms, varying according to age and circumstances, such as

- the sex drive,
- passionate love,
- jealousy,
- envy,
- hatred,
- anxiety,
- ambition,
- avarice,
- illness,

etc., etc. If pain can’t find entry in any other form, it arrives in the sad gray raiment of surfeit and boredom, against which all sorts of things are then tried. If one finally succeeds in driving these off, that will probably readmit pain in one of its earlier forms, and so re-starting the dance; for every human life is tossed back and forth between pain and boredom.

Depressing as this view of life is, I call attention in passing to an aspect of it from which consolation may be drawn—perhaps, indeed, giving one a Stoic indifference towards threatening evils. The main reason we don't patiently put up with these is that we see them as having been avoidable, brought about by a causal chain that could easily have been different. For we don't let ourselves be troubled by ills that are perfectly general and are immediately necessary in the way that aging, death, and many daily discomforts are. What gives a suffering its sting is viewing as avoidable the circumstances that brought it to us. But when we have recognised that

pain as such is essential to life and unavoidable; nothing beyond its bare shape—the form in which it is displayed—depends on chance; so that our present suffering fills a place into which, without it, some other evil that is now excluded from it would at once enter;

so that fate can do little to us in essentials, such a reflection, if it became a living conviction, might produce a high degree of Stoic equanimity, and lessen our concern for our own welfare. But in fact such a powerful control of reason over directly felt suffering seldom if ever occurs.

·A STRANGE BUT NOT ABSURD HYPOTHESIS·

This thought...might lead one to the hypothesis—paradoxical but not absurd—that every individual's measure of pain is determined by his nature once and for all, a measure that could neither remain empty nor grow overfull, however much the *form* of suffering varies. So his suffering and well-being would be settled not by external factors but only by that predetermined measure, that disposition. He might indeed experience occasional ups and downs on account of his physical condition, but ·his welfare-level·

would on the whole remain the same and be nothing other than what one calls his temperament or, more exactly, the degree to which he is, as Plato expresses it in the *Republic*, 'easily or with difficulty contented'.

This hypothesis is supported by **(i)** the familiar experience that •great suffering makes us entirely unable to feel all lesser suffering, and conversely that •in the absence of great suffering even the slightest discomforts torment us and foul our mood. And by **(ii)** the experience that •when a great misfortune occurs—one that we had previously shuddered at the mere thought of—as soon as we overcome the initial pain our mood is on the whole quite unaltered; and conversely that •after the occurrence of something good that we had for some time longed for, we don't enduringly feel significantly better off or more contented than before. [AS goes on to explain that our joy at hoped-for goods and sorrow at feared evils] soon vanish, because they rested on a deception. For they arise not from the immediately present pleasure or pain but only from the prospect of a new future that is anticipated in them. Only by virtue of the fact that pain and pleasure are borrowed from the future could they get so abnormally heightened, and consequently not last long.

Further confirmation of the hypothesis I am examining—namely that

feelings of suffering or well-being are largely determined subjectively and *a priori*, as is knowledge—is found in **(iii)** the fact that human cheerfulness and gloom are obviously not determined by external circumstances, by wealth or class, since we encounter at least as many happy faces among the poor as among the wealthy, and in **(iv)** the diversity of the motives that lead people to suicide. We can cite no misfortune great enough to lead—or even be likely to lead—every character to suicide, and few so slight that no-one has ever been led to suicide by something like

them. So changes in our level of cheerfulness and gloom are due to changes not in our external circumstances but rather in our inner state, our physical condition. When our cheerfulness increases (never for long!), even to the point of joy, it usually appears without any external occasion. We do indeed often see our pain as coming solely from our relation to •something outside ourselves, and are visibly oppressed and troubled only by •that; we think that if only •it were removed, the greatest contentment would surely occur. But this is illusion. . . .

Without that particular external cause, the pain—grounded in our being for this period of time, and thus unshakable—would make its appearance in the form of a hundred little annoyances and cares over things we now entirely overlook because our capacity for pain is already filled with that main evil, which has concentrated in one point all the sufferings that would otherwise be scattered. This also squares with (♥) the observation that when a great and pressing care is lifted from our breast by a fortunate outcome, another care immediately takes its place. The entire material for it was already there, but could not enter consciousness as a care because consciousness had no capacity left for it. . . . Now that a place has been made for it, this ready-in-waiting material at once steps forth and takes the throne as the ruling concern of the day. Even if it is much lighter than the material of the concern that has just vanished, it can inflate itself enough to equal the other in apparent magnitude; and so, as the main concern of the day, it completely fills the throne.

Excessive pleasure and very intense pain always occur in the same person; for the two condition one another and are also jointly conditioned by great activity of mind. Both are produced, as we have just found, not by what is purely present but by anticipation of the future. But since pain is

essential to life and its degree [= level of intensity] is determined by the nature of the subject, its degree can't be caused by *sudden* changes because they are always external. It follows that error and delusion always lie at the foundation of excessive joy or pain; so that these two strains on the mind can be avoided through insight. Every excessive joy rests on the delusion that one has found in life something that it flatly doesn't contain, namely, lasting satisfaction of the harassing desires and cares which ·in fact· constantly breed new ones. One must inevitably be brought away from *each* delusion of this sort; and when it vanishes one must pay for it with pains as bitter as the pleasure of its arrival was keen. It is just like a height from which one can come down only by falling, and which therefore ought to have been avoided. And every sudden, excessive pain is only a fall from such a height, the vanishing of such a delusion and so conditioned by it. So someone could avoid both ·excesses· if he had enough self-control always to survey things with utter clarity both globally and in detail, and to guard steadfastly against thinking that they actually have the colours that he would like them to have. Stoic ethics was above all concerned with freeing one's mind from all such delusion and its consequences, replacing it with unshakable equanimity. This insight inspires Horace in the familiar verse:

Keep it in mind in arduous affairs
To preserve equanimity, and in good fortune
To refrain from excessive joy.

Usually, however, we shut ourselves off from knowledge of the fact that, comparable to a bitter medicine, suffering is essential to life and therefore does not come flowing to us from outside, but everyone carries about its indomitable source in his own inner being. For the pain that never leaves us we seek always an external individual cause, like

a pretext, just as a free man fashions an idol for himself in order to have a master. For we work tirelessly from desire to desire; and

although every satisfaction that we attain, however much it had promised, fails to satisfy us and usually soon stands before us as a humiliating error,

we still don't see that we are drawing water with the leaking vessel of the Danaïds, but hurry on to ever new desires. [AS here quotes three lines from Lucretius, saying the same thing, and then continues:] So it goes on, either endlessly or—what is rarer, and indeed presupposes a certain strength of character—until we reach a desire that can't be satisfied yet can't be given up. When that happens, we have in a way found what we were seeking, namely something that we can blame (instead of our own nature) as the source of our sufferings; this puts us at variance with our fate, but reconciles us with our existence, for it distances us from the knowledge that suffering is essential to that very existence and true satisfaction is impossible. This final development results in a somewhat melancholy mood, the constant endurance of a single great pain and the resultant minimising of all lesser sufferings or pleasures. It is a worthier phenomenon than the more usual constant snatching after ever new phantoms.

58. Each person's life is a tragedy

All satisfaction, or what is commonly called 'happiness', is always really and essentially negative, never positive. It is not a gratification that comes to us originally and of itself, but must always be the satisfaction of a desire. For desire, i.e. lack, is the antecedent condition of every enjoyment. But when satisfaction comes, the desire and thus the pleasure cease. So satisfaction or gratification can never be more than liberation from a pain, from a hardship. For pain goes not

only with •every actual visible suffering but also with •every desire, the nagging of which disturbs our calm, and indeed even with •the deadening boredom that makes our existence a burden.

But it is so difficult to achieve anything and carry it through; every project runs up against endless difficulties and troubles, and with every step the obstacles increase. And when everything is finally overcome and attained, all that can be achieved is •being freed from some suffering, or some desire and •reverting the state one was in before this suffering or desire happened.

What is directly given is always only a lack, i.e. a pain. We can be aware of satisfaction and pleasure only indirectly, through recollection of the preceding suffering and want that ended with the arrival of the satisfaction. Because of this, we are never properly aware of the goods and advantages we actually possess, and don't prize them, but think of them merely as a matter of course, for they gratify us only negatively by holding suffering at bay. Only after we have lost them do we feel their value; for the positive thing that communicates itself directly to us is the want, the privation, the sorrow; so that we are pleased at the recollection of some hardship, sickness, lack, etc. that we have overcome, because that's our only way of enjoying present goods. And it can't be denied that in this respect and from this standpoint of egoism—which is the form of the will for life—the sight or description of the sufferings of others gives us satisfaction and pleasure in precisely the way that Lucretius finely and openly pronounces it in his *De rerum natura*:

Pleasant, when the stormy seas are raging,
To view another's mighty labours from land;
Not because viewing another's vexations is a happy
pleasure,

But because it is pleasant to think of oneself as having avoided those ills.

However, we'll see in chapter 65 that this sort of pleasure from awareness of well-being mediated in this way lies very close to the source of real positive malice.

·The thesis I have been discussing, namely·

That all happiness is only of a negative, not of a positive nature, that it can just for that reason not be lasting satisfaction and gratification, but always only redeems one from some pain or lack—upon which either a new pain, or even languor, empty longing and boredom, must follow

finds confirmation in that true mirror of the nature of the world and of life, namely in art, especially poetry. An epic or dramatic poem can depict only a wrestling, striving, and battling for happiness, but never lasting and complete happiness. It conducts its hero to his goal through a thousand difficulties and dangers; once the goal is reached, the poem quickly lets the curtain fall. ·Why?· Because the only thing left for it to show is that the dazzling goal in which the hero had dreamed of finding happiness had only mocked him, and he was no better off after achieving it than he had been before. Because real lasting happiness is impossible, it can't be a subject for art. Certainly the aim of the idyll is to describe such happiness; but we see that the idyll as such cannot be sustained. It always becomes in the poet's hands either **(i)** a would-be heroic narrative, and is then a most insignificant 'epic' assembled from trivial sufferings, trivial pleasures, and trivial endeavours (this being the most usual case) or **(ii)** merely descriptive poetry, portraying the beauty

of nature, i.e. pure knowing free from will.¹ This is indeed the only pure happiness, not preceded by suffering or need, and not necessarily followed by regret, suffering, emptiness, surfeit; but this happiness can't fill one's entire life—only moments of it.

What we see in poetry we find again in music, in the melody of which I have recognised [chapter 52] the innermost history of self-conscious will expressed in general terms—the human heart's most secret life, longing, suffering and joy, ebbing and flowing. Melody is always deviation from the tonic,² through a thousand whimsical meanderings up to the point of the most painful dissonance, after which it finally rediscovers the tonic, which expresses satisfaction and calming of the will. Nothing more can be done with that, and a prolonged continuation of it would be a burdensome and unexpressive monotone, corresponding to boredom.

Everything that these considerations should make clear—the unachievability of lasting satisfaction and the negative character of all happiness—finds its explanation in what is shown at the conclusion of Book II, namely that will—of which human life (just like any phenomenon) is an objectification—is a striving without goal and without end.

We find the stamp of this endlessness on all parts of its phenomenon, from •the phenomenon's most general form, endless time and space, to •the most accomplished of all phenomena, the life and striving of the human being.

We can theoretically identify three extremes of human life and regard them as elements of actual human life. [AS gives them names drawn from Hindu and Sikh philosophy, without explaining

¹ [Perhaps he means that *the focussed enjoyment of* this kind of poetry is pure knowing etc.]

² [*Grundton*; it could be translated as 'keynote'.]

that that's what they are.] **(i)** (Radscha-Guna). Powerful will, great passions. This shows up in great historical characters; it is depicted in epic and drama. But it can also appear in the little world, because the size of objects is measured here only by how greatly they move the will, not by their external relations. **(ii)** (Satwa-Guna). Pure knowing, the grasp of ideas, brought about by freeing knowledge from service to the will; the life of genius. **(iii)** (Tama-Guna). The greatest lethargy of the will and of the knowledge bound to it, empty longing, life-benumbing boredom. The life of the individual, far from remaining in any of these extremes, seldom touches any of them, and is usually only a weak and vacillating approximation to this or that side, a needy willing of trivial objects, constantly recurring and so escaping from boredom.

It's really incredible how

- unexpressive¹ and insignificant, viewed from the outside, and how
- dull and unreflective, felt from within,

is the course of life of the vast majority of human beings. It is a weary longing and torment, a dreamlike stumble toward death through the four stages of life, in the company of a series of trivial thoughts. They are like clockworks that have been wound up and are running, without knowing why; and every time a human being is begotten and born, the clock of human life is wound up again so as to repeat—measure for measure and beat for beat, with insignificant variations—the music-box tune it has already played right through countless times. . . .

The life of every individual, surveyed on the whole and in general, with emphasis only on its most significant features, is really always a tragedy; but when gone through in detail,

it has the character of a comedy.² For

the doings and troubles of the day, the restless irritation of the moment, the desires and fears of the week, the misfortunes of every hour

all come about through chance, which is always bent on its tricks, and are sheer scenes from a comedy. But the desires never fulfilled, the frustrated efforts, the hopes mercilessly trampled by fate, the unhappy errors of a lifetime, with increasing suffering and death at the end, always amount to a tragedy. Thus, as if fate wanted to add *mockery* to the sorrows of our existence, our lives contain all the woes of a tragedy though we can't maintain the dignity of tragic figures; rather, the details of our lives are those of inescapably foolish comic characters.

Troubles great and small fill every human life, keeping it in constant unrest and movement; but they can't conceal •life's inability to satisfy the mind, •the emptiness and shallowness of existence; and they can't exclude boredom, which is always ready to fill every gap left by the absence of concern. That's how it has come about that the human mind, still not content with the concerns, worries, and occupations that the actual world lays on it, creates for itself an imaginary world in the shape of a thousand different superstitions, and busies itself with this in all sorts of ways, wasting time and energy on it, whenever the actual world would grant it the rest that it is absolutely unable to have. This is most often the case with peoples for whom life is made easy by the mildness of climate and earth—especially the Hindus, then the Greeks, the Romans, and later the Italians, Spanish, etc.

Man creates guiding spirits, gods, and saints in his own image. To these he must constantly offer sacrifices, prayers,

¹ [*nichtsagend*, 'saying nothing']

² [In this sentence, 'tragedy' and 'comedy' translate the German *Trauerspiel* and *Lustspiel*: the topic in each case is a tragic or comical *play* (*spiel*).]

temple adornments, oaths and their fulfillment, pilgrimages, salutations, decoration of images, etc. Service to them is everywhere interwoven with reality, indeed darkens it; every event in life is then interpreted as a response of those beings to something humans have done. Engagement with them occupies half one's time, constantly supports one's hopes, and often—through the charm of the deception—becomes more interesting than engagement with real beings. It is the expression and the symptom of humanity's double need, **a** for help and support and **b** for occupation and amusement; and even if it often works directly against **a** the first need—when confronted by misfortunes and dangers, wasting precious time and energy on prayers and sacrifices instead of averting the dangers—it serves **b** the second need all the better by these imaginary dealings with a dreamed-up spirit-world. And this is the gain—a not inconsiderable one—from all superstitions.

59. More on the misery of life

Having convinced ourselves. . . *a priori* that the entire make-up of human life makes it incapable of true happiness and a scene of suffering and thorough misery, we could now awaken this conviction to a greater liveliness within ourselves by proceeding in a more *a posteriori* manner, turning to more definite instances, calling up pictures to the imagination, and illustrating by examples the unspeakable misery which experience and history present, wherever we look and in whatever direction we explore. But there would be no end to that, and it would distance us from the universal standpoint that is essential to philosophy. [Another drawback of that procedure, AS adds, is that it might be accused of being biased in its selection of examples, a charge that can't be brought against his *a priori* demonstration because *it* is

wholly universal and doesn't rely on particular examples. He says that there's no shortage of particulars that could nourish the *a posteriori* approach, and he goes on about them almost rapturously. He winds up this passage with something that might be self-referential:] Excellence of any sort is always only an exception, one case out of millions. So if it becomes known in a lasting work, once that has survived the animosity of its contemporaries, it stands isolated, stored away like a meteorite originating from an order of things other than the one that holds sway here.

As concerns the life of the individual, however, every story of a life is a story of suffering. For the course of each life is, as a rule, a continuing series of great and small misfortunes, which indeed everyone does his best to conceal because he knows that others won't often feel sympathy or compassion but almost always satisfaction over woes that they are spared at that moment. But perhaps no-one at the end of his life, if he is thoughtful and honest, will want to go through it again, and will rather choose complete annihilation. The essential content of the world-famous soliloquy in *Hamlet* boils down to this: *Our state is such a miserable one that complete nonexistence would be preferable to it.* And if suicide actually offered this—so that the alternatives 'to be or not to be' (in the full sense of those words) lay before us—then it would be absolutely the choice to make, as a 'consummation devoutly to be wish'd' [AS quotes this in English]. But something in us says that this is not so; suicide is not the end; death is not absolute annihilation. Likewise, what the father of history [Herodotus] in fact says has surely not since been refuted, namely, that there has never been anyone who didn't more than once wish not to experience the next day. Accordingly, the so often lamented brevity of life might perhaps be precisely the best thing about it!

If someone had a clear view of the horrific pains and

torments that his life is constantly open to, he would be gripped by dread. And if the most stubborn optimist were taken through

- hospitals, infirmaries and surgical operating-rooms, through
- prisons, torture-chambers and slaves' quarters, over
- battlefields and scenes of execution, then
- all the dark dwellings of misery where it evades the glances of cool curiosity, and finally
- looking into the starving dungeon of Ugolino,¹

then surely he too would in the end see what sort of *meilleur des mondes possibles*² this is. After all, where did Dante get the material for his hell if not from this actual world of ours? And his is a thoroughly well-done hell! Whereas, when he came to the task of depicting heaven and its pleasures, Dante encountered an insuperable difficulty; for our world offers absolutely no materials for such a thing. So all he could do was to use—instead of the pleasures of paradise—the instruction he received there from his ancestor, his Beatrice, and various saints. But from this it is made clear enough what sort of world this is. Of course, with human life as with any bad commodity, the exterior is coated with false glitter; the suffering part is always kept concealed. Everyone makes a show of whatever pomp and splendour he can manage; and the more he lacks inner contentment, the more anxious he is to strike others as a fortunate man. That's how far folly stretches; and the opinion of others is a major goal of everyone's striving, although its entire nullity is already expressed through the fact that in almost all languages 'vanity', *vanitas*, originally meant emptiness and nullity.

But even beneath all this deception, life's torments can

easily become so great—and it happens daily—that the death that is otherwise feared above all is eagerly grasped at. Indeed, when fate shows its whole malice, even this refuge of death can be barred to the sufferer, leaving him—in the hands of angry enemies—subjected to cruel, slow tortures without rescue. In vain does this victim of torment call to his gods for help; he remains at the mercy of his fate, without reprieve. But his hopelessness in this situation is an exact mirror of the unstoppable will, of which his person is the objectivisation. Little as an external power can change or nullify this will, just as little can any outside force free it from the torments that come from the life that is the will's phenomenon. In the principal matter, as in everything else, a man is always thrown back upon himself. In vain does he make gods for himself in order to get from them by prayers and flattery what can only be accomplished by his own will-power. The Old Testament made the world and man the work of a god, while the New Testament, so as to teach that salvation and redemption from the sorrow of this world can only come from itself, was forced to have that god become man. Fanatics, martyrs, saints of every faith and name, have voluntarily and gladly endured every torture, because in them the will to live had suppressed itself; and then even the slow destruction of its phenomenon was welcome to them. But I do not wish to anticipate the later exposition.

I can't refrain from declaring here that *optimism* seems to me—where it is not the mindless talk of those whose low foreheads house nothing but words—to be not merely an absurd way of thinking but even a downright *wicked* one, a bitter mockery of mankind's unspeakable sufferings.—Don't think

¹ [A reference to an episode in Dante's *Inferno* in which an aristocrat and his sons are all starved to death.]

² ['best of [all] possible worlds'; a phrase used by Voltaire, satirising a supposedly optimistic doctrine of Leibniz's]

that the doctrine of Christian faith favours optimism; for in the Gospels *world* and *evil* are used as nearly synonymous expressions.

60. Mainly about the sex drive

I have finished discussing two issues that I had to insert, **(i)** regarding freedom of the *will in itself* along with the necessity of its phenomenon, and **(ii)** regarding its lot in the world that mirrors its nature, and through the knowledge of which it has to affirm or deny itself. With that done, I can deal more clearly with this affirmation and denial; up to here I have stated and explained them only in general terms, but now I can •depict in more detail• the ways of behaving that express them, and •consider them with respect to their inner significance.

Affirmation of will is constant willing, undisturbed by any knowledge, as it occupies the life of humans in general. Since the human body is the objectivisation of will, as it appears on this level and in this individual, the will's unfolding through time is •a paraphrase (so to speak) of the body, an elucidation of its meaning in the whole and its parts, and is •another way of displaying the *thing in itself* of which the body is a phenomenon. So instead of saying 'affirmation of will' we can say 'affirmation of the body'. The fundamental theme of all the various acts of will is the satisfaction of the needs that are inseparable from the body's health, . . . and come down to •maintenance of the individual and •propagation of the species. The most diverse motives •other than those two• gain power over the will and bring about the vast range of acts of will. Each of these is only a particular sample of the will that is here manifesting itself generally. The

details of the sample—the particular shape that the motive gives to it—is not essential; what matters here is only that •something or other is willed and •how intensely. Will can become visible only in motives, just as the eye manifests its power of vision only in in the light. Motives confront the will as a many-shaped Proteus¹; they constantly promise utter satisfaction, a quenching of the will's thirst, but as soon as a motive is satisfied it at once appears in another shape and renews its influence on the will. . . .

A human being finds himself—from the start of his consciousness on—engaged in willing; and usually his knowledge remains in a constant relation to his will. He seeks first to become completely familiar with the objects of his willing, then with the means to them. Now he knows what he has to do, and he usually doesn't try to get any other knowledge. He acts and keeps going; consciousness keeps him up and busy, always working toward the goal of his willing; his thinking concerns the choice of means. That's how life goes for almost all humans: they will, know what they will, and use that knowledge to labour with enough success to save them from despair and enough failure to save them from boredom and its consequences. This produces a certain

the next phrase: *Heiterkeit, wenigstens Gelassenheit*

rendered by one previous translator as: serenity, or at least indifference

and by another as cheerfulness, or at least composure,

to which wealth or poverty really make no difference. For the rich and the poor don't enjoy what they *have*, since this (I repeat) is only negatively effective, but rather enjoy what they *hope to get* by their doings. They forge ahead with much seriousness, indeed with an air of importance; children do

¹ [A god in Greek mythology who could change his shape at will.]

the same with their games.

It is always an exception when the course of such a life is interrupted by an aesthetic demand for contemplation or an ethical demand for renunciation, coming from knowledge that is •independent of service to the will and •directed toward the nature of the world in general. Hardship pursues most people throughout life, without giving them a chance for reflection. By contrast, the will is often inflamed to a degree that far exceeds affirmation of the body; and then violent emotions and powerful passions show themselves, in which the individual doesn't merely affirm his own existence but denies and tries to eliminate the existence of others where it stands in his way.

Maintenance of the body by its own forces is such a low level of affirmation of will that if it were voluntarily left at that level we might assume that with the death of this body the will appearing in it is also extinguished. But even satisfaction of the sex drive goes beyond affirmation of one's own so-brief existence, affirming life for an indefinite time beyond the death of the individual. Nature—always true and consistent, and here downright innocent—quite openly exhibits to us the inner significance of the act of procreation. One's own consciousness of the intensity of this drive teaches us that this act expresses the most decisive *affirmation of the will for life*, pure and without any further addition (such as a denial of other individuals). And then—within time and the causal series, i.e. within nature—a new life appears as a consequence of the act; the begotten appears to the begetter, distinct from him in the phenomenon but identical with him *in himself* or with respect to the idea. . . . As thing in itself, the will of the begetter and that of the begotten are not distinct; for only the phenomenon, not the thing in itself, is subject to the individuation-maker. This affirmation ·of the will for life· extends beyond one's own body and out to

the production of a new one; and with the new one suffering and death—as belonging to the phenomenon of life—have also been asserted anew; and the possibility of redemption through the most perfect capacity for knowledge is for the time being declared fruitless. Here lies the deep ground for shame over the business of procreation.

This view is presented mythically in the dogma of Christian doctrine, according to which we all partake of Adam's original sin (which is obviously only the satisfaction of sexual desire), and are obliged to pay for this with suffering and death. That doctrine goes beyond considering things in accordance with the GP, and recognises the idea of humanity, whose unity—from its fall into countless individuals—is reconstituted through the all-embracing bond of procreation. In consequence of this, **(i)** the doctrine views every individual as identical with Adam, representative of the affirmation of life, and to that extent as having fallen subject to sin (original sin), suffering, and death; but also **(ii)** its recognition of the *idea* shows it that every individual is also identical with the Redeemer—representing the denial of the will for life—and to that extent •participates in his self-sacrifice, •is redeemed by his merit, and •is rescued from the bonds of sin and death, i.e. of the world (*Romans* 5, 12–21).

[AS cites 'the Greek myth of Proserpine' as going along with his view about sexual satisfaction, and quotes Goethe on this. He also quotes Clement of Alexandria: 'Those who have castrated themselves away from all sin, on account of the kingdom of heaven, are blessed and are cleansed of the world.' He continues:] That the sex drive is the decisive, strongest affirmation of life is confirmed by the fact that for man in the state of nature—as for animals—it is the ultimate goal, the highest aim of his life. His first endeavour is self-maintenance; and as soon as he has provided for that, he strives only for propagation of the species; that's

all he can work for, as a merely natural being. Nature itself, whose inner being is the will for life itself, drives human beings with all its force to propagate, as it does animals. When that is done, nature has achieved its purpose with the individual and is quite indifferent to its destruction because it—as the will for life—is concerned only with maintenance of the species, so the individual is nothing to it.

[AS reports, with quotations in Greek and Latin from Hesiod, Parmenides and Aristotle, that ancient poets and philosophers said that ‘Eros is the driver of all things’; and something similar in Hindu philosophy.]

The genitals—much more than any other external body-part—are subject merely to will and not at all to knowledge. Indeed, will shows itself here to be almost as independent of knowledge as it is in the parts that serve vegetative life, reproduction, in response to mere stimuli, where will works blindly as it does in unconscious nature. For procreation is only reproduction that goes on into a new individual, reproduction raised to the second power as it were, just as death is only excretion raised to the second power.

So the genitals are the real focus of the will, and consequently the opposite pole from the brain, which is the representative of knowledge, i.e. of the other side of the world, the world as presentation. They ·(the genitals)· are the life-maintaining principle, assuring endless life throughout time, for which they were honoured among the Greeks in the *phallus*, among the Hindus in the *lingam*, which are thus the symbol of the affirmation of will. Whereas knowledge makes possible •suspension of willing, •salvation through freedom, •the conquest and annihilation of the world.

In chapter 54, near the beginning of this fourth Book, I considered in detail how the will for life must in its affirmation view its relation to death, namely that death doesn’t disturb it because it confronts death as contained within

life and belonging to it; while death’s opposite, procreation, completely counter-balances it and—despite the death of the individual—guarantees that the will for life will live throughout all time. . . . I also explained in the same place how fearlessly death is confronted by someone who with full consciousness adopts the standpoint of the decisive affirmation of life. So no more about that here. Most people occupy this standpoint—persistently affirming life—*without* full consciousness. The world exists as the mirror of this assertion, with countless individuals in endless time and endless space, and in endless suffering, between generation and death without end.

In this matter, however, no further complaint can be raised from any side; for will is performing the great tragedy at its own expense, and as its own spectator. The world is exactly what it is because will—whose phenomenon it is—is what it is, because it so wills. The justification for sufferings is the fact that even in this phenomenon will is affirming itself; and this affirmation is justified and balanced out by the fact that will itself bears the sufferings. We get here a glimpse of *eternal justice* with respect to the whole. I’ll take this up more clearly and in detail further on. First, though, I must speak of *temporal or human justice*.

61. The egoism inherent in every being

We recall from Book II [chapter 27] that in the whole of nature, on all levels of the objectification of the will, there was necessarily a constant conflict among the individuals of all species, which expressed an inner *self*-conflict of the will to live. This phenomenon (like all others) can be depicted more clearly, and therefore further deciphered, at the highest level of objectification. To this end I want first to trace *egoism* to its source, as the starting-point for any conflict.

I have called time and space the *individuation-maker* because only through them and within them can there be a multiplicity of things of a single kind. They are the essential forms of natural knowledge, i.e. knowledge arising from the will. So the will always manifests itself in the multiplicity of individuals. But this multiplicity does not concern the will as *thing in itself* but only its phenomena; the will is present whole and undivided in each of them, and sees around itself the innumerable repeated image of its own nature. But it immediately finds this nature—and thus what is actually real—only within itself. Therefore, everyone wants everything for himself, wants to possess or at least control everything, and would like to annihilate anything that stands in his way. Something else about beings that have knowledge: the individual is the bearer of the knowing subject, which is the bearer of the world, meaning that the whole of nature outside him—including all other individuals—exist only in presentation to him. He is conscious of them only as presentation to him, thus merely indirectly and as something dependent on his own nature and existence. . . .

So every knowing individual really is (and finds himself to be) **(i)** the entire will for life, or the very *in-itself* of the world, and also **(ii)** the complementary condition of the world as presentation, and consequently a microcosm whose value is equal to that of the macrocosm. Always and everywhere truthful, nature gives him this knowledge—originally and independently of all reflection—with simple and direct certainty. The two necessary features I have cited enable us to explain why every individual—utterly vanishing and shrunk to nothing in the boundless world—

- makes himself the centre of the world,
- puts his own existence and well-being before anything else,

- from the natural standpoint is ready to sacrifice everything else to it, and
- is ready to annihilate the world, just to maintain his own self, this drop in the ocean, a little longer.

This disposition is the *egoism* that is essential to everything in nature. But the will's inner self-conflict gets its most frightening revelation from this. For this egoism has its existence and its continuance in the contrast between microcosm and macrocosm—in the fact that the objectivation of the will has the individuation-maker as its form, so that the will manifests itself in the same way in countless individuals, and indeed in each of them wholly and completely as will and as presentation. Thus while everyone is immediately given to himself as the whole will and the whole presenter, everything else is initially given only as presentations; so his own being and its maintenance take precedence over the totality of everything else. Everyone looks on his own death as if it were the end of the world, whereas he takes the death of an acquaintance as a matter of comparative indifference unless he has some personal stake in it. In the consciousness that has reached the highest level, that of mankind, egoism is bound to have reached the highest level (as do knowledge, pain, and pleasure), and the conflict of individuals arising from it appears in its most horrible form. We see this everywhere, in matters small and great; we see •now its terrible side in the lives of great tyrants and evil-doers and in wars that ravage the world, and •now the humorous side, where it is the theme of comedy and especially appears as conceit and vanity. . . .

We see it in world history and in our own experience. But it shows up most distinctly as soon as any mob is released from all law and order: *then* there appears most distinctly the *bellum omnium contra omnes* [Latin for 'war of all against all'] that Hobbes has excellently depicted in the first chapter of

his *De Cive*. It shows up not only in

- everyone's trying to snatch from others what he wants for himself, but also in
- someone's destroying another person's entire happiness (or his *life*) for the sake of an insignificant increase in his own well-being.

This is the height of the expression of egoism, the phenomena of which are surpassed only by those of true *malice*, in which someone seeks the harm and pain of others without any advantage to himself; I will address this soon. —This exposition of the source of egoism should be compared with the account of it in section 14 of my Prize Essay on the *Foundation of Morality*. A main source of suffering, which we found above to be essential and unavoidable in all life as soon as it actually occurs in some particular form, is that *Eris*,¹ that battle among all individuals, that expression of the contradiction that the will for life is infected with in its inner being and achieves visibility through the individuation-maker. The staging of animal fights is the cruel way to give it immediate and glaring illustration. In this state of original division there lies an indomitable source of suffering, despite the provisions that have been undertaken against it; and a closer consideration of those will be our next task.

62. Wrong and right

I have already explained that the primary and simple affirmation of the will for life is only affirmation of one's own body, i.e. the display of the will through acts in **time**, to the extent that the body's form and purposiveness displays that same will **spatially** and in no other way. This affirmation shows itself as maintenance of the body through its own forces.

Satisfaction of the sex drive is directly linked to this, is indeed *part* of it because the genitals are part of the body. Therefore, renunciation of that drive's satisfaction, *voluntarily* and without grounding in any motive, is a denial of the will for life, the will's voluntary self-suppression in response to knowledge that acts as a *quieter*. Accordingly, such a denial of one's own body exhibits itself as a contradiction between the will and its own phenomenon. For although the body objectifies in the genitals the will to perpetuate the species, yet this ·perpetuation· is not willed. Such a renunciation, being a denial or suppression of the will to live, is a hard and painful self-conquest; but more about this later.

Because of the egoism that is characteristic of everyone, it is easy for the will's self-affirmation in a one individual's body to pass on to a denial of that same will as it makes its appearance in b another individual—destroying or injuring b's body or compelling the forces of b's body to serve a's will instead of b's.

This incursion into the boundaries of someone else's affirmation of will has long been clearly recognised and its concept designated by the word *wrong*. For both parties recognise what's going on, not in a clear and abstract way as I am doing here but as a feeling, instantly. The wronged one feels

the encroachment on the sphere of his own body's affirmation through its denial by someone else
as an immediate mental pain that is quite different from any physical suffering caused by the deed, or any vexation over whatever loss it causes. The one who commits the wrong, on the other hand, is made aware of the fact that

he is in himself the same will that appears in that ·other· body also, asserting itself with such vehemence

¹ [the Greek goddess of strife and discord]

that it extends to the denial of this very same will in someone else, and so—considered as *will in itself*—it is in conflict with itself and is lacerating itself;

and his awareness of this comes not *in abstracto* but immediately as an obscure feeling; and this is what is called the sting of conscience or, more relevant to this case, the feeling of having done wrong.

Wrong, the concept of which I have been analysing in abstract terms, gets its most complete, basic, and blatant exemplification in **(i)** cannibalism. This is the clearest and most evident kind of wrongness, the horrific image of the greatest self-conflict of will at the highest level of its objectification, the human being. Next to it comes **(ii)** murder, the commission of which is immediately followed with frightful clarity by the sting of conscience, the abstract and dry significance of which I have just given, and inflicts on the murderer's peace of mind a wound that a lifetime cannot heal. For our shudder over a murder that has been committed, as well as our shrinking from committing one, corresponds to the boundless attachment to life that every living thing—as a phenomenon of the will for life—is pervaded with. (Later on I'll analyse more thoroughly the feeling that accompanies the commission of wrong and evil—i.e. pangs of conscience—clarifying the concept of it.) To be viewed as differing from murder only in degree is intentional **(iii)** mutilation, or mere injury to another's body, indeed any blow. Wrongness is also displayed in **(iv)** the subjection of other individuals, in forcing them into slavery, and in **(v)** attacks on the property of others, which, because property is regarded as the fruit of their labour, is essentially the same in kind as slavery, relating to it as mere injury relates to murder.

For property, which cannot be taken from a person without wrong, can—according to my explanation of *wrong*—only be that which has been worked on by his powers; so that by taking it we really take the powers of his body from the will objectified in it, to make them subject to the will objectified in another body. . . . From this it follows that all genuine (i.e. moral) right¹ to property is simply and solely based on labour, as was quite generally assumed even before Kant, and as was clearly and beautifully stated in the oldest of all books of law [in Hindu mythology]: 'Wise men who know the past explain that a cultivated field is the property of him who cut, cleared and ploughed it and got rid of the trees, as an antelope belongs to the first hunter who mortally wounds it.'

Kant's whole doctrine of right is a strange interweaving of errors all leading to one another, and he grounds the *right to property on first occupancy*. I can only think of this as a product of Kant's senility. For how should the mere declaration of my will to exclude others from the use of something immediately give me a *right* to it? . . . And how is someone supposed to be acting in a way that is in itself (i.e. morally) wrong if he doesn't respect claims to exclusive possession of a thing that are based on nothing but a mere declaration? How should his conscience trouble him about this? For it is easy to see that there can't be any such thing as getting a right to something by seizing it; a right to something can only come through expending one's own powers on it. When the labour of a someone has cultivated, improved, kept from harm or preserved something—

however small this labour was; even if it was only plucking or picking up from the ground fruit that has grown wild

¹ [At a number of points in this chapter it will be useful to remember that 'right' translates *Recht*, which is also the German word for 'law'. Identifying them is left as an exercise for you.]

- b** anyone who forcibly seizes the thing obviously
- deprives **a** the other of the result of his labour on it,
 - makes **a**'s body serve **b**'s will instead of **a**'s,
 - asserts his will beyond its phenomenon to the point of denying **a**'s; that is
 - does wrong.

By contrast, mere enjoyment of a thing, without working on it or securing it from destruction, creates no more *right* to it than does the declaration that one wants to have exclusive possession of it. A family that has for a century hunted alone in some district without doing anything to improve it would be acting in a morally wrong way if they kept out a newcomer who wanted to hunt there. The so-called 'right of previous occupancy'—according to which an exclusive right to further enjoyment of something is granted as a kind of reward for having previously enjoyed it!—has absolutely no moral basis. To someone invoking this right, a newcomer could with far better right reply: 'Just because you have enjoyed it for so long, it is now right that others should enjoy it.' As for anything that is absolutely incapable of being worked on by improving it or protecting it, there is no morally grounded exclusive possession, except where it is voluntarily surrendered by everyone else, perhaps as payment for other services. But that presupposes a commonwealth regulated by convention, the state.

The morally grounded right to property, as I have derived it above, by its very nature provides the possessor with power over a thing that is just as unlimited as the power he has over his own body; from which it follows that he can—through exchange or gift—transfer his property to others, who then possess the thing with the same moral right that he did.

Regarding the commission of wrong in general: this

occurs either by *violence* or by *cunning*, which are morally on a par.

First, in the case of murder it makes no moral difference whether I use a dagger or poison; and analogously for all bodily injury. The remaining cases of wrong all come down to the fact that in committing a wrong I compel the other individual to serve my will instead of his, to act according to my will instead of his.¹

On the path of violence I achieve this through physical causality, but on the path of cunning I do it by means of motivation, i.e. causality through knowledge, by foisting pseudo-motives on the other person's will, so that he thinks he is following his will but is really following mine. Since the medium for motives is knowledge, I can do that only by bringing falsity into his knowledge, and this is a lie. Its purpose is always to affect the other person's will, and to affect his knowledge only so far as it determines his will. . . .

This applies not only to lies that originate from obvious self-interest, but also to those that come from pure malice, which revels in the painful consequences of the errors it causes in others. Indeed, even mere empty boasting aims at greater or easier influence on the willing and conduct of others through their admiration for the boaster or respect for his opinions. Mere refusal to tell a truth, i.e. to make any statement at all, is not wrong in itself, but every imposing of a lie is surely wrong. . . . Every lie, just like every act of violence, is as such a wrong. For its purpose is to extend the rule of my will to other individuals, thus affirming my will by denying theirs, just as much as violence does.

The most complete lie is the broken contract, since here all the conditions I have mentioned are completely and clearly

¹ [This passage is indented because it seems to be a sheer interruption.]

united. For when I enter into a contract, the promised performance of the other individual is immediately and admittedly the motive for my reciprocal performance. The promises are exchanged with care and formality. . . . If the other party breaks the contract, he has deceived me and, by getting me to accept *psuedo*-motives of his as genuine, has bent my will to fit his intention, extending the rule of his will over another individual and thus committing a complete wrong. This is the moral basis for the legitimacy and validity of contracts.

Wrong by violence is not as discreditable for the perpetrator as wrong by cunning: because

(i) violence involves physical force, which is respected by the human species under any circumstances, whereas cunning's circuitous route involves weakness, and thus lowers him—the perpetrator—both as a physical and as a moral being;

and because

(ii) lies and deceit can succeed only through the perpetrator's winning the trust of his victim by expressing abhorrence and contempt for them, so that his victory rests on his being credited with an honesty that he doesn't have.

Why do deceit, disloyalty, and betrayal always arouse deep abhorrence? Because loyalty and honesty are the bond that externally reunifies the will that has been splintered into a plurality of individuals, thus setting limits to the consequences of the egoism that comes from this splintering. Disloyalty and betrayal shred this final, external bond, leaving boundless room for play to the consequences of egoism.

. . . I have located the content of the concept of *wrong* in the quality of an individual's conduct by which he extends his affirmation of the will appearing in his body so far that it becomes a denial of the will appearing in someone else's. I have

also, through general examples, established the boundary where the domain of wrong begins, and through a few main concepts determined its gradations from the highest on downwards. According to this, the concept of wrong [*Unrecht*] is the original and positive concept; the opposing concept of right [*Recht*] is the derivative and negative one. For we must keep not to the words which would lead us to count 'wrong'—*un-recht*—as derivative, but to the concepts. There would never be talk about right if there were no wrong. The concept of *right* merely contains the negation of *wrong*: an action is right if it is *not* an overstepping of the boundary I have depicted, i.e. not a denial of someone else's will so as to strengthen the affirmation of one's own. That boundary therefore divides. . . .the entire domain of possible actions into those that are wrong and those that are right. So long as an action does not (in the manner discussed above) reach into and deny the sphere of someone else's affirmation of will, it is not wrong. Thus, for example, refusing help to someone in dire need, calmly observing someone starving to death while one has a surplus, is cruel and fiendish to be sure, but not *wrong*. But there's no room for doubt that someone who is capable of pushing uncharitableness and hardness that far will also commit *any* wrong as soon as his desires demand it and nothing blocks it.

The concept of right as the negation of wrong has found its main application, and no doubt also its origin, in cases where an attempted wrong is warded off with violence; such a defence cannot also be wrong, so it is right. The violence it involves, regarded merely in itself and taken out of context, would be wrong; in this case it is justified—i.e. is made right—only by the motive for it. If an individual goes so far in affirming his own will that he intrudes on the sphere of affirmation of the will essential to my person as such, and thereby denies it, my defence against that intrusion is only

the denial of that denial, and to that extent nothing more on my part than affirmation of the will making its appearance essentially and originally in my body, and. . .consequently is not wrong, hence right. This means that I have a right to deny the other individual's denial with the force necessary to eliminate it, which it's easy to see can go as far as *killing* the other individual, whose encroachment on my space is an intruding external power, and can without any wrong—and consequently with right—be warded off by somewhat stronger countermeasures. For everything that happens from my side is wholly within the sphere of affirmation of the will essential to my person as such and already expressed by my person (which is the scene of the battle); none of it intrudes into the other's sphere—it is only my negation of his negation, and is thus not itself negation. I can thus without wrong compel the other's will (which is denying my will as it makes its appearance in my body). . . .to desist from that denial; i.e. I have to this extent a right of compulsion.

In any situation where I have a right of compulsion—a complete right to use violence against others—I can equally well oppose the violence of others with cunning; and therefore I have an actual *right to lie precisely to the extent that I have a right of compulsion*. So someone is acting completely in the right if he assures the highwayman who is searching him that he is carrying nothing more; similarly for someone who lures the night-time burglar into the cellar by a lie and then locks him in. Someone who is carried off as a captive by brigands, e.g. by Barbary pirates, has the right to kill them for the sake of his liberation, not only with overt violence but also by devious means.

For this reason too, a promise compelled by direct physi-

cal violence is in no way binding, because anyone suffering such compulsion can, with complete right, free himself by *killing* the perpetrator, let alone *deceiving* him! Someone who can't use violence to recover property stolen from him commits no wrong if he gets it back by cunning. And if someone is gambling with money stolen from me, I have the right to use loaded dice against him, since everything I win from him already belongs to me. Anyone who would deny this must all the more deny the legitimacy of stratagem in war, which is in fact a lie by deeds, and is a proof of the saying of Queen Christina of Sweden, 'The words of men should be counted for nothing; their deeds are hardly to be trusted.' I regard it as superfluous to demonstrate that this is all in utter agreement with what I have said regarding the illegitimacy of lies and of violence. It can also serve to clarify some odd theories about the telling of a white lie.¹

According to everything I have said up to here, *wrong* and *right* are merely *moral* determinations, i.e. ones that are applicable to human action considered as such and with reference to the inner significance of this action *in itself*. This inner significance announces itself directly in consciousness through

- (i) the fact that wrongdoing is accompanied by an inner pain that is the perpetrator's merely *felt* consciousness of the excessive strength of the affirmation of will in him, which extends to denying the manifestation of will in someone else; and through
- (ii) the fact that although *as a phenomenon* he is indeed distinct from the one who is being wronged he is *in himself* identical with him.

Further discussion of this inner significance of all pangs of

¹ [*Nothlüge*. Despite the component *Noth* = 'need', which has led previous translators to put 'necessary lie' or 'lie told under pressure', this compound refers to a minor, casual, morally unimportant lie, colloquially called a 'white lie'.]

conscience must be delayed until later [chapter 65]. The one who is suffering the wrong, on the other hand, is •painfully conscious of the denial of his will. . . . and is •aware that he could fend off that denial in any way he can, without doing wrong. This purely moral significance is the only one that right and wrong have for human beings as human beings, not as citizens. So it would remain even in the state of nature, in the absence of any man-made laws, and constitutes the foundation and content of all that is called *natural right*, but would better be called ‘moral right’, because its validity doesn’t extend to the suffering, to the actual external *Realität*, but only to the action and the ensuing self-knowledge that arises in a person with respect to his individual will; this is called *conscience*; but in the state of nature it can’t in every case make claims upon other individuals as well, keeping violence from holding sway instead of right. In the state of nature, it is merely up to everyone not to do wrong in any case, but by no means not to suffer wrong in any case, which depends on the external power that he happens to have. Therefore, the concepts of right and wrong are in no way conventional, but apply in the state of nature merely as moral concepts, bearing on each person’s self-knowledge with respect to his own will. They are a fixed point on the scale of the various degrees of strength with which the will for life affirms itself in human individuals, like the freezing point of water on the thermometer—the point where affirmation of one’s own will becomes the denial of someone else’s. . . . But anyone who wants to •set aside or reject a purely moral consideration of human action and •consider action ·not in terms of inner states, but· merely with respect to external efficacy and its consequences, can join Hobbes in declaring right and wrong to be conventional, chosen determinations,

with no application outside man-made law. And we can never teach such a person by outer experience something that doesn’t belong to outer experience. Just as that same Hobbes—

who remarkably displayed the completely empirical character of his way of thinking, when in his *Principles of Geometry* he rejected the whole of strictly pure mathematics, stubbornly maintaining that a point has extension and a line breadth

—can never be shown an unextended point or a line without breadth, and so can no more be taught the apriority of mathematics than the apriority of right, because he has once and for all shut himself off from all non-empirical knowledge.

The pure doctrine of right is thus a chapter of morality, and is directly related to doing, not to suffering.¹ For only doing is an expression of will, which is all that morality considers. Suffering is a mere event, and morality can be concerned with it only indirectly, in showing that what happens merely to avoid suffering wrong is itself not wrongdoing. The working out of this chapter of ethics would contain the precise setting of •how far an individual may go in asserting the will already objectified in his body without denying the same will as it appears in someone else, and of •what actions overstep these limits and so are wrong and can be warded off without wrong. Always, then, one’s own *doing* remains the focal point for consideration.

A detailed exposition of this branch of morality would contain exact specifications of •how far an individual can go in affirming the will already objectified in his body without denying the same will as it appears in another individual; and also of •the actions that transgress these limits, which consequently are wrong and so may be prevented without

¹ [The generality of the point AS is making here might be expressed by translating *Leiden* not by ‘suffering’ but by ‘undergoing’.]

wrong. Thus our own action always remains the point of view of the investigation.

But the suffering of wrong appears as an event in outward experience, and (to repeat something I said earlier) it is by far the clearest display of the phenomenon of the will-to-live's conflict with itself. Its sources are •the multiplicity of individuals and •egoism, both of which are conditioned through the individuation-maker. . . . We also saw earlier that a very large part of the suffering essential to human life has its perennial source in that conflict of individuals.

But the faculty of *reason* common to all these individuals—which allows them to know not merely about single events (as animals do) but also abstractly about everything as a connected whole—soon •taught them to see the source of that suffering and •brought them to think of the means for diminishing (or possibly eliminating) it through a common sacrifice that would be outweighed by the common advantage arising from it. . . .

Reason—having briefly

- emerged from the one-sided standpoint of the individual whose reason it is,
- freed itself from its attachment to him, and
- surveyed the whole

—•saw the pleasure of wrongdoing in one individual as always outweighed by a greater pain in another's suffering wrong, and •found further that, since all of this is left to chance, everyone would have to fear that he ·in particular· would share in the pleasure of occasional wrongdoing much less often than he would suffer the pain of being wronged. Reason recognised from this that the best and only **means** to lessen the suffering spread among everyone, and to distribute it as uniformly as possible, is to spare everyone the pain of suffering wrong by having everyone renounce the pleasure attainable by wrongdoing.

This **means**—which gradually developed from egoism through the employment of reason—is the *political contract* or *law*. Its origin as I present it here is already depicted by Plato in the *Republic*. That origin is in essence the only one, being imposed by the nature of the subject. No state anywhere can have had a different origin, because this way of starting, this purpose, is what makes something a state in the first place. It makes no difference whether the preceding condition was that of a mass of independent savages (anarchy) or of a mass of slaves ruled by the arbitrary will of the stronger (despotism). Either way, there was still no state; a state arises only through that common agreement, and it is more or less perfect depending on whether that agreement is more or less unmixed with anarchy or despotism. Republics tend toward anarchy, monarchies toward despotism; the middle road of constitutional monarchy—devised to avoid both of those—tends toward domination by factions. To establish a perfect state, one must first create beings whose nature allows them to *thoroughly* sacrifice their own welfare to that of the public. But until that happens, at least something can be achieved through the existence of one family **a** whose welfare is entirely inseparable from **b** that of its land, so that—at least in the main affairs—the welfare of **a** the one can never be promoted without promoting the welfare of **b** the other. That is why hereditary monarchy is strong and advantageous.

Morality is exclusively concerned with *doing-right-or-wrong*, and could precisely draw the line for someone who was resolved to do no wrong; whereas political theory, legislative doctrine, is solely concerned with *suffering* wrong, and would never bother about wrong-doing if it weren't for its inevitable correlate, the suffering of wrong, which is the focus of the state's attention because it is the enemy it is working against. Indeed, a case of wrong-*doing* uncon-

nected with anyone's *suffering* of wrong—if such a thing were conceivable—would not be forbidden by the state.

In addition—another difference between morality and political theory—in morality the object of consideration and the only real thing is the will, one's mental attitude; so a strong intention to act wrongly. . . . counts just the same for morality as a wrong that is actually committed, and its tribunal condemns anyone who has such an intention; whereas the state has no concern with

- will and mental attitude merely as such, but only with
- the *deed* (whether merely attempted or actually carried out),

which it cares about only because of its correlate, the *suffering* of the other party. For the state the only real thing is the deed, the event; the attitude, the intention, is enquired into only as a source of knowledge of the deed's significance. So the state won't forbid thoughts of murdering or poisoning someone, as long as it knows with certainty that fear of the sword and the wheel¹ will constantly prevent such thoughts from being put into effect. The state doesn't have the stupid policy of eradicating all inclinations to wrongdoing, all wicked frames of mind; it merely tries to link—through the inevitable punishment—every possible motive for acting wrongly with an outweighing motive for refraining; so the criminal code is the most complete index of counter-motives to the totality of criminal acts presumed to be possible—both of them *in abstracto*, to facilitate application to eventual cases *in concreto*.

For this purpose political theory will borrow the chapter of morality which is the doctrine of right and which determines, along with the inner meaning of right and wrong, the exact

line between the two; but it does this simply and solely to employ it in reverse. [AS's explanation of this is longer than it needs to be. It is just that behaviours that are wrong are ones we have a right to defend ourselves against, and there are laws about this. He continues:] So the legal theorist is a moralist in reverse, and legal theory in the strict sense—i.e. the doctrine of the *rights* that one may maintain—is morality in reverse. . . .

The concept of wrong and its negation, the concept of right, ·a concept-pair· that is basically *moral*, becomes *juridical* through displacement of the point of departure from the active to the passive side. This has recently occasioned the strange error of supposing that the state is an institution for the promotion of morality, and is accordingly directed against egoism (an error that owes something to the *doctrine of right* of Kant, who wrongly derives from his categorical imperative the establishing of the state as a moral duty). As if the inner disposition to which morality or immorality alone pertain, the eternally free will, could be modified from without and altered by effects upon it! Even more perverse is the theory that **a** the state is the condition of **b** freedom in the moral sense, and thereby of morality;² For freedom lies beyond phenomena, and indeed beyond human arrangements. The state is (I repeat) so little *directed against* egoism as such that it has *originated from* the egoism of all, with this understood in a way that abandons a one-sided for a general standpoint, and so produces a communitarian effect. And the state exists solely to serve that egoism, having been established on the correct assumption that pure morality—i.e. morally grounded rectitude—is not to be expected, for if it were, the state would be superfluous. Thus it is not against

¹ [Two devices for capital punishment, the second of them horribly painful.]

² [It's not clear from the German whether this means that **a** makes **b** possible or that **a** creates **b** .]

egoism, but only against the harmful consequences of egoism that come from the plurality of egoistic individuals and disturb their well-being, that the state is directed, with this well-being as its purpose. Thus Aristotle said: 'The end of the state is the good life, by which is meant a happy and honourable life.' Hobbes has also accurately and excellently expounded this origin and purpose of the state, which is also characterised in the ancient principle of all political order: 'The general welfare has to be the first law' (Cicero).

If **a** the state completely achieves its goal, it will produce the same phenomenon as if **b** complete righteousness of disposition held general sway. But the inner natures and origins of the two phenomena will be opposites of one other. In **b** the latter case the situation would be that nobody wanted to *do* wrong, while in **a** the former nobody would be willing to *suffer* wrong and appropriate means had been adopted to achieve this. Thus a single line can be described as going in opposite directions, and a carnivore with a muzzle is as harmless as a herbivore.

But the state can't bring things beyond this point; it can't display any phenomenon that might have originated in a general condition of mutual benevolence and love. For just as we found that

the state rules out **a** *all wrongdoing*, rather than **b** *all wrongdoing that leads to suffering on the part of someone else* only because it couldn't make the judgments needed to identify breeches of **b** that weren't also breeches of **a**;

so conversely

in accordance with its orientation toward the well-being of all, the state would most gladly see to it that **c** everyone experiences all sorts of benevolence and works of human love, if it weren't that this inevitably involves **d** the performance of benevolent deeds and

works of love; every citizen of the state would like to play **c** the passive role, and none to play **d** the active role, and there would indeed be no ground for putting **c** ahead of **d**

Accordingly, one can—meaning that the state can—only compel the negative, namely rights, not the positive thing that has been referred to under the labels 'duties of love' or 'imperfect duties'.

As I have said, legislation gets the pure doctrine of right—or of the essence and boundaries of right and wrong—from morality, so as to apply it in reverse to establish the state, i.e. positive legislation and the means for supporting it. Thus, positive legislation is purely moral doctrine of right as applied in reverse. The application may be made with reference to the peculiar relations and circumstances of a particular people. But it is only when positive legislation is thoroughly determined in its essentials under the direction of pure doctrine of right, and for each of its statutes a ground is demonstrable in pure doctrine of right, that the resultant legislation is strictly speaking positive right and the state a lawful union, a state in the strict sense of the term—a morally permissible institution, not an immoral one. Otherwise, positive legislation is the foundation of a positive wrong; is indeed the compelling of a publicly acknowledged wrong. Such is every despotism, the constitution of most Islamic kingdoms, and here belong many parts of a number of constitutions, e.g. indentured servitude, forced labour and the like.

The pure doctrine of right, or natural right—or, better put, moral right—is just as much the basis for all lawful man-made legislation, although always by reversing it, as pure mathematics is of every branch of applied mathematics.

The most important points of the pure doctrine of right,¹ as philosophy has to supply it for that end to legislation, are the following: **(i)** Explanation of the inner and true meaning and origin of the concepts of wrong and right, and their application and place in morality. **(ii)** Derivation of the right to property. **(iii)** Derivation of the moral validity of contracts, this being the moral foundation of the political contract. **(iv)** Explanation of the origin and purpose of the state, of the relation of this purpose to morality, and of this relation's enabling the moral doctrine of right to be extended, in reverse, for the purpose of legislation. **(v)** Derivation of the right to punish.

The remaining content of the doctrine of right is mere application of these principles, more precise definitions of the boundaries between right and wrong for all possible circumstances of life, which are for this purpose classified according to certain points of view and headings. With respect to these details, textbooks of pure right are mainly in agreement; but they *sound* very different in their principles, because they are always connected with some philosophical system. Having explained **(i)-(iv)** in terms of my own system, briefly and generally but precisely and clearly, it remains only for me to address in the same way **(v)** the right to punish.

Kant makes the fundamentally false assertion that outside the state there would be no complete **right to property**. According to my arguments, there is also property in the state of nature, with a perfectly natural—i.e. moral—right that can't be violated without wrong, but can be defended to the utmost without wrong. On the other hand, there is certainly no **right to punish** outside the state. All right to punish is based solely on man-made law, which settles—before the

offence—a punishment the threat of which is meant to act as as a counter-motive to outweigh any motives for the offence. This law is to be viewed as sanctioned and acknowledged by all citizens of the state. It is thus grounded in a collective contract which the members of the state are committed to conform to under all circumstances, both in the inflicting of punishment and in enduring it; and so the enduring of punishment is enforceable by law. It follows that the immediate purpose of punishment in the individual case is *fulfillment of the law as a contract*. But the single purpose of the law is *deterrence* from encroaching on the rights of others. . . .

Thus the law and the carrying out of it, punishment, are essentially directed to the future, not to the past. This distinguishes *punishment* from *revenge*, the latter being motivated only by what has been done, and thus by the past as such. All retribution for wrong through the infliction of a pain without any purpose for the future is revenge, and can have no purpose except to console oneself, through the sight of another's suffering caused by oneself, for the suffering one has undergone. This sort of thing is malice and cruelty, and morally unjustifiable. Someone's inflicting wrong on me in no way entitles me to inflict wrong on him. Repaying evil with evil without further intention is not justifiable morally or in any other rational way, and to adopt the *lex talionis* as the ultimate principle of penal law is senseless.² Therefore, Kant's doctrine of punishment as mere retribution for the sake of retribution is utterly groundless and perverse. Yet it continues to haunt the writings of many legal theorists, under all sorts of elegant phrases that amount to empty word-mongering—such as that through punishment the

¹ [Just this once, a reminder that 'right' translates *Recht*, which can mean 'law'.]

² [Latin for 'law of retaliation', often summed up in the phrase 'An eye for an eye'.]

crime is 'atoned for' or 'neutralised and nullified', and the like. No-one is entitled to set himself up arrogantly as a purely moral judge and revenge-taker, punishing another's misdeeds by inflicting pain on him. . . .

As the Bible says: 'Revenge is mine, saith the Lord, and I will repay.' But a person surely has the right to be concerned for the security of society, which can only be done by prohibiting all acts designated as 'criminal', so as to avert them by way of counter-motives, which is what the threat of punishment is; and the threat is effective only if it is carried out in cases that occur despite it. . . .

Now here a Kantian would inevitably object that on this view the punished criminal would be used 'merely as a means'. This proposition so tirelessly repeated by all Kantians—that 'one should treat a person always only as an end, never as a means'—has a significant ring to it, to be sure, making it suitable for all those who are glad to have a formula that spares them all further thought. But looked at in the light, it is an extremely vague, indefinite assertion which reaches its aim quite indirectly, requires to be explained, defined, and modified in every particular case of its application, and if taken generally is insufficient, meagre, and moreover problematical. The murderer who is subject to the death penalty in accordance with the law must indeed, and with full right, now be used as a mere *means*. For public security, the main purpose of the state, is disrupted (indeed nullified) by him if the law is not carried out. The murderer—his life, his person—must now be the *means* to fulfilling the law and thereby restoring public security; and it is made such, with every right, in the interest of carrying out the political contract; a contract which even he had entered into in his role as a citizen. According to it,

he had—to enjoy security for his life, his freedom, and his property—posted his life, his freedom, and his property as a bond for the security of all; and that bond is now forfeit.

The doctrine of punishment that I present here is in the main not a new thought, but only one that has been nearly suppressed by new errors, creating a need for a very clear exposition of it. The same doctrine is in its essentials already contained in what Pufendorf says about this in his *De officio hominis et civis*. Hobbes is likewise in agreement (*Leviathan*, chapters 15 and 28). In our time, Feuerbach is well known for defending it. Indeed, it is already found in the pronouncements of the philosophers of antiquity: Plato sets it forth clearly in *Protagoras*, *Gorgias* and *The Laws*. Seneca gives perfect voice to Plato's opinion and to the whole doctrine of punishment in these brief words: 'No wise man punishes because wrong has been done, but in order that wrong not be done.'

We have thus come to recognise in the state the means by which egoism endowed with reason seeks to evade its own negative consequences, and everyone now promotes the welfare of all because he sees his own involved in it. If the state achieved its goal *completely*, and was able to employ the human forces thus united in it to make the rest of nature more and more subservient to it, there might eventually come to pass—doing away with all sorts of ills—something like the Promised Land. But there are five things spoiling this happy thought. (i) The state has never come anywhere close to this goal. (ii) Countless ills essential to life would at once take the place vacated by the others, and keep life in its suffering as before; and if all those were done away with, boredom would set in. (iii) Strife among individuals can never be entirely eliminated by the state, because when strife is prohibited in

¹ [The goddess of discord in ancient Greek mythology.]

large matters, it still vexes us in small ones—that the state can't be concerned with. (iv) With Eris¹ happily driven out of our midst, she eventually switches: banned by political institutions as a conflict among individuals, she comes back as war among peoples, and now demands in bulk and at once, as an accumulated debt, the bloody sacrifice that wise precautions have denied to her on the small scale. (v) If all these difficulties were finally overcome and disposed of—by skill acquired through the experience of millennia—the result would eventually be **overpopulation of the entire planet**, a horrific ill that only a bold imagination can now envisage.

63. Temporal justice versus eternal justice

We have learned to recognise temporal justice, which has its seat in the state, as retributive or punitive; and we've seen that it becomes *justice* only through its concern for the future; for without that all punishment and retribution would be an iniquity without justification—taking an evil that had already occurred and, without sense or significance, adding a second evil to it. The situation is entirely different with eternal justice, which I mentioned earlier and which governs not the state but the world, does not depend on human institutions, is not subject to chance and deception, is not uncertain, vacillating and erring, but infallible, firm and sure.

The concept of retribution of course includes *time*; so eternal justice cannot be retributive—cannot

- allow of delays and deadlines,
- need time in which to balance bad deeds with bad consequences, or therefore
- need time in order to subsist.

With eternal justice, the punishment has to be so bound up with the offence that the two are one.

Do you think that crimes fly to the gods on wings,
And that someone writes them on Jove's tablet,
And Jove seeing them passes judgment on men?
The whole of Heaven would not be large enough
To take in all men's sins if Jove wrote them down.
No! Punishment is here, if only you would see it.
(Euripedes)

That such an eternal justice actually lies in the nature of the world will soon become completely evident to anyone who has grasped it on the basis of my thought up to here.

The phenomenon, the objectivisation of the one will for life, is *the world* in all the plurality of its parts and forms. Existence itself and any mode of existence—in the whole as in every part—emerges only from will. It is free, it is omnipotent. In each thing the will appears exactly as it determines itself to do, in itself and outside time. The world is only the mirror of this willing. And all the finitude, all the suffering, all the torments the world contains, belonging to the expression of what the will wills, are as they are because it wills as it does. Accordingly with perfect right every being supports existence in general, and then the existence of its species and of its own peculiar [see Glossary] individuality, entirely as it is and in circumstances exactly as they are, in a world such as this one is,

- ruled by chance and by error,
- temporal,
- transitory, and
- constantly suffering.

Justice is always done to it in everything that does—indeed, everything that *can*—happen to it. For the will belongs to it, and as the will is, so is the world. The responsibility for this world's existence and character lies with this world itself, not with any other; for how could it have *acquired* them from

anything else?

If we want to know what human beings, morally considered, are worth on the whole and in general, we have only to consider their fate on the whole and in general. It is lack, misery, sorrow, torment, and death. Eternal justice prevails: if they weren't so worthless, taken on the whole, then their fate (taken on the whole) would not be so sad. In this sense we can say: the world itself is the world court of justice. If all the world's sorrow were placed in one pan of a scale, and all the world's guilt in the other, the needle would certainly point to the centre.

Of course the world is not displayed to the knowledge of the individual as such in the way it is finally revealed to the inquirer, as the objectivisation of that one and only will for life that he himself is. Rather, as the Indians say, the veil of Maya¹ obscures the view of the uncultivated individual. Instead of the thing in itself, he is shown only the phenomenon, within time and space, the individuation-maker,² and within the other modes of the GP; and in this knowledge he doesn't see •the nature of things, which is unitary, but rather •its phenomena, as separate things, distinct, innumerable, very unlike one another, indeed opposed to one another. Here pleasure appears to him as one thing and torment as an entirely different one, this person as a torturer and murderer and that as a martyr and victim, wickedness as one thing and misfortune as another. He sees one person living in happiness, surplus, and pleasures, while another is dying at his door of cold and starvation. Then he asks: where is the retribution ·for these evil acts·? And he himself, in the

intense press of the will that is his origin and his nature, seizes the pleasures and enjoyments of life, grasps them in a tight embrace, and doesn't know that by this very act of his will he is seizing and pressing to himself all the pains and torments of life that he shudders at the sight of. He sees the misfortunes, he sees the evil in the world, but—far as he is from realising that these are only different sides of the phenomenon of a single will for life—he takes them to be very different, indeed wholly opposed to one another, and often tries to escape the misfortunes, the suffering, of his own individual case through wickedness, i.e. by causing another's suffering—caught up in the individuation-maker, deceived by the veil of Maya.

Like a seaman who sits in his boat, trusting this frail craft in a raging sea that lifts and lowers mountains of water, so the human individual sits peacefully in a world full of torments, supported by and trusting in the individuation-maker, i.e. the way the individual knows things as phenomena. The unbounded world—full of suffering everywhere, in the infinite past and infinite future—is foreign to him; indeed it is a fable to him. His vanishing person, his unextended present, his momentary satisfaction, this alone has reality for him; and he does everything to maintain it, so long as his eyes are not opened by knowledge of something better. Until that happens, there dwells in the innermost depths of his consciousness only the obscure threatening sense³ that all this is really not so foreign to him, but has a connection with him that the individuation-maker can't protect him from. This creates the *dread* that suddenly grips one—so

¹ [See the last paragraph of chapter 4 for AS's first mention of this.]

² [See the final paragraph of chapter 3 for AS's introduction of this phrase.]

³ [This two-word phrase translates *Ahndung*, which literally means 'punishment'.]

ineradicable and common to all human beings; . . .—when by some chance occurrence they become disoriented with respect to the individuation-maker, when there seems to be an exception to the GP in one of its modes—for example, when it seems that something happened without a cause, or a dead person appeared, or in some other way the past or the future were present, or distant things were close. Men’s tremendous horror over such things comes from their suddenly becoming disoriented about the forms of knowledge of the phenomenon, which are all that keep their own individual person separate from the rest of the world. But this separation lies only in the phenomenon, not in the thing in itself; and eternal justice rests on exactly *that*.

In fact all temporal happiness stands—and all wisdom moves—on ground that is hollowed out beneath. They protect the person from mishaps and provide him with enjoyments. But the person is mere phenomenon, and his difference from other individuals and his freedom from the sufferings they bear depends on the form of the phenomenon, the individuation-maker. According to the true nature of things, everyone should regard all the world’s sufferings as his own, indeed all merely possible sufferings as actual for himself, so long as he is the firm will for life, i.e. affirms life with all his force. For knowledge that looks through the individuation-maker, a happy life in time—granted by chance or won from it through prudence amidst the sufferings of countless others—is only the dream of a beggar in which he is a king, but from which he must awaken to learn that he has been separated from his life’s sorrows only by a fleeting deception.

Eternal justice withdraws itself from the vision that is involved in the knowledge which follows the GP in the individuation-maker; that way of looking at things misses eternal justice altogether unless it vindicates it in some way

by fictions. It sees evil people, after committing outrages and cruelties of every sort, living in pleasure and departing the world untroubled. It sees the oppressed drag a life full of suffering up to the end, without the arrival of an avenger, a requiter. Eternal justice will be comprehended and grasped only by one who

- rises above knowledge that is led by the GP and is bound to individual things,
- recognises the ideas,
- sees through the individuation-maker, and
- becomes aware that the forms of phenomena don’t apply to the thing in itself.

Also, only such a person can (through that same knowledge) understand the true nature of virtue, as it will soon appear in the context of my present considerations—although knowledge *in abstracto* is in no way required for the practice of virtue. To anyone who has attained the knowledge in question it becomes clear that, because will is the *in-itself* of all phenomena, the **a** torment inflicted on others and **b** the torment experienced by oneself—**a** evils and **b** misfortunes—always concern only that one and inner being, even if the phenomena in which **a** the one or **b** the other stand before us as entirely distinct individuals and are even separated by distant times and spaces. He sees that the difference between someone who inflicts suffering and someone who has to endure it is only a phenomenon and doesn’t concern the *thing in itself* that is the will which lives in both of them. This will, being deceived by knowledge bound to its service, fails to recognise itself here; seeking **a** increased well-being in one of its phenomena, it produces **b** great suffering in the other; and so in its intense pressing it buries its teeth in its own flesh, not knowing that it wounds only itself, thus revealing through the medium of individuation the self-conflict that is part of its inner nature. The tormentor

and the tormented are one. The former errs in believing that he does not share in the torment, the latter in believing that he does not share in the guilt. [AS spells this out along the lines already laid down, and then sums up:] The foreboding poet Calderon in his *Life is a Dream* expresses this: ‘The greatest guilt of man is to have been born. How can it *not* be guilt, since by eternal law it is followed by death?’ Calderon has here only expressed the Christian dogma of original sin.

Living knowledge of eternal justice, of the balance-beam that inseparably connects guilt with punishment, demands complete elevation above individuality and the principle of its possibility; so it will be always inaccessible to the majority of human beings (as will also the pure and clear knowledge of the nature of all virtue, shortly to be discussed).

Thus the wise patriarchs of the Indian people in fact pronounced it directly in the Vedas, in their **esoteric wisdom**,

- available only to the three castes of the reincarnated, so far as it is captured by concepts and language and permitted by their ever imagistic, even rhapsodic manner of depiction,

but in the popular religion, or in their **exoteric doctrine**,

- communicated it only mythically, and thus indirectly.

We find the direct depiction in the Vedas, fruit of the highest human knowledge and wisdom, the core of which, in the Upanishads, has finally reached us as the greatest gift of this century, expressed in a variety of ways, but particularly where all the beings of the world, living and lifeless, are led in succession before the gaze of the disciple and over each of them pronounced a word. . . . meaning: ‘This is you.’

But that great truth was translated for the people, so far as they could comprehend it given their limitations, into the form of knowledge that follows the GP, which is indeed from its nature quite incapable of assimilating that truth pure and

in itself, even stands in direct contradiction to it, but received a surrogate for it in the form of myth, which was sufficient as a guide to conduct, making comprehensible through an imagistic depiction the ethical significance of something that is eternally foreign to knowledge according to the GP. This is the purpose of all doctrines of faith, which provide mythical clothing for truths inaccessible to the uncultivated human mind. In this sense, that myth could even be called, in Kant’s language, a ‘postulate of practical reason’. Regarded as such, however, it has the great advantage that it contains absolutely no elements but such as lie before our eyes in the course of actual experience, so that it can support all its concepts with perceptions. What I’m talking about here is the myth of the transmigration of souls. It teaches that all the sufferings anyone inflicts on others during his lifetime have to be made up for in a subsequent life, in this very world, through exactly the same sufferings; this is taken so far that it says that anyone who kills even an animal will, at some point in infinite time, also be born as just such an animal and suffer the same death. It teaches that wicked conduct towards suffering and despised beings leads to a future life *on this earth* in which one is born again

- in lower castes, or
- as a woman, or
- as an animal,
- as a pariah or ‘untouchable’,
- as a leper,
- as a crocodile,

and so on. All the torments the myth threatens it confirms with illustrations from the actual world, by way of suffering beings who don’t know how they have deserved their torment; and it doesn’t need help from any other hell. But as a reward it offers the promise of rebirth in better, nobler forms, as Brahmans, as sages, as saints. The highest reward,

which awaits the noblest needs and the most complete resignation—which will come

- to the woman who has voluntarily died on her husband's funeral pyre seven lifetimes in a row, and
- to the man whose pure mouth has never spoken a single lie

—can be described in the language of this world only negatively, with the oft-repeated promise that they will *never* be reborn at all. . . . Or, as it is expressed by Buddhists, who recognise neither the Vedas nor castes: 'Thou shalt attain Nirvana, i.e. a state in which four things do not exist: birth, old age, sickness, and death.'

There never was and never will be a myth more closely fitted to a philosophical truth that is accessible to so few than this ages-old doctrine of the most noble and ancient people, among whom—although they are now broken up into many parts—it still holds sway as a general popular belief and has a decisive influence on life, today as much as four millennia ago. That *non plus ultra* of mythical depiction was thus already received with admiration by Pythagoras and Plato, taken over from India, or Egypt, honoured, applied, and (we don't know to what extent) even believed.

We, on the other hand, out of compassion for the Brahmans, send out to them English *clergymen* [AS uses the English word, and mockingly emphasises it] and Moravian linen-weavers, to teach them a better way and to teach them that they are made from nothing and should be thankfully pleased about it. But what we get is like what one gets by shooting a bullet at a rock. In India our religions never, *ever* take root; the primordial wisdom of the human race will not be pushed aside by the events in Galilee. On the contrary, Indian wisdom streams back to Europe and will bring about a fundamental alteration in our knowledge and thought.

64. Eternal justice obscurely felt by everyone

I now turn from •my account (not mythical but philosophical) of eternal justice to •related considerations regarding the ethical significance of action and of conscience, which is merely *felt* knowledge of that significance.

But I want first to call attention here to two peculiarities of human nature that might help to clarify how everyone can be aware, at least as an obscure feeling, of the nature of that eternal justice, and of the unity and identity of will in all its phenomena, on which it rests.

(i) When an evil deed is done, causing a pain to someone, if the perpetrator then suffers precisely b the same measure of pain himself, satisfaction is felt not only by •the sufferer of pain a but also by •the entirely impartial spectator who sees pain a and pain b. (This is quite independent of what I have shown to be the state's purpose in punishment, which is the foundation of penal law.) This ·satisfaction· seems to me to express nothing other than the consciousness of that eternal justice. But it is immediately misunderstood and falsified by the unenlightened mind. That mind, caught up in the individuation-maker, . . . demands from the phenomenon something that pertains only to the thing in itself, and does not see to what extent the injuring and injured parties are in themselves one, and that it is the same being which, failing to recognise itself in its own phenomenon, bears both the pain and the guilt, but wants to see the pain also in the particular individual to whom the guilt belongs.

Thus most people would indeed demand that

a person who is very wicked but who (unlike many wicked people) is far superior to others in his exceptional intellectual powers, which have enabled him to inflict unspeakable sufferings on millions of others (e.g. as a world conqueror),

should someday and somewhere be repaid for all those sufferings with an equal measure of pains for himself. For they don't see how the tormentor and the tormented are in themselves one, and that the same will by which the latter exists and lives is also just that which is making its appearance in the former; and indeed in the latter in a greater measure, because there the consciousness has attained a higher degree of clearness and distinctness and the will has greater vehemence.

But the deeper state of knowledge •that is no longer caught up in the individuation-maker, •that all virtue and generosity come from, and •that no longer fosters that vindictive disposition, is attested by the Christian ethic, which absolutely renounces all repaying of evil with evil and allows eternal justice to hold sway in the domain of the thing in itself, distinct from the phenomenon. ('Revenge is mine, I will repay, saith the Lord.' *Romans* 12:19.)

(ii) A much more striking but also much rarer trait in human nature—

expressing the desire to draw eternal justice into the domain of experience, i.e. of individuation, while also indicating a felt sense that (as I expressed it a few pages back) the will for life performs the great tragicomedy at its own expense, and the very same will lives in all phenomena

—is the following. We sometimes see a person so profoundly appalled by a great outrage that he has undergone—or perhaps only observed—that he deliberately and irrevocably stakes his own life on taking revenge on the perpetrator. We may see him pursue a mighty oppressor for years on end, finally murder him, and then himself die on the scaffold as he had foreseen—indeed often hadn't even tried to avoid, because his life held value for him only as a means toward that revenge.

Examples of this are found especially among the Spanish. If we look more exactly into the spirit of that desire for retribution, we find that it is very different from common revenge, which aims to mitigate suffering endured by the sight of suffering inflicted; indeed, we find that what it.—the obsessive desire for retribution that is my current topic—aims at deserves to be called 'punishment' rather than 'revenge'. For in it there lies the intention of an effect on the future through example, and in particular without any self-interested purpose •for the individual taking revenge or •for any society. Not the individual, because he dies through it; and not a society because a society creates its own security through laws, and in this case the punishment is carried out by the individual, not by the state, and not in fulfillment of any law, because it involves a deed.—the original outrage—that the state wouldn't or couldn't punish, and of whose punishment it •therefore• disapproves. It seems to me that the indignation that drives such a person so far beyond the bounds of self-love springs from the deepest consciousness that he is himself the entire will for life that makes its appearance in all beings through all times, to which the most distant future belongs just as the present does, and to which it cannot be indifferent. In affirming this will, he is demanding that in the drama which represents its nature no such outrage shall ever appear again; he wants to frighten any future •would-be• perpetrator by the example of a vengeance against which there is no means of defence, because the avenger is not deterred by the fear of death. The will to live, though still asserting itself, no longer depends on the particular phenomenon, the individual, but comprehends the idea of *man*, and wants to keep its manifestation pure from such a fearful and shocking wrong. It is a rare, very significant, and even sublime trait of character through which the individual sacrifices himself by striving to make

himself the arm of eternal justice, the true nature of which he doesn't yet recognise.

65. Good, bad, evil, malice. Conscience as feeling

Through all the discussions of human conduct up to here, I have been preparing the way for the last one, and greatly easing the task of •raising to the level of abstract and philosophical clarity the real ethical significance of conduct, which in daily life we designate with perfect understanding by the words 'good' and 'evil', and •demonstrating it as a component of my main thought.

But I want first to trace back to their real significance the concepts *good* and *evil*,

which the philosophical writers of our day amazingly treat as simple concepts, incapable of any analysis; so that the reader will not remain caught up in the senseless delusion that they contain more than they actually do, and in and for themselves already express all that needs to be said here. I can do this—i.e. look analytically at these concepts—because I am myself as little inclined to try to hide anything behind the word *good* in ethics as I was earlier to seek such a thing behind the words *beautiful* and *true*. If I *had* had that inclination, I might then

perhaps with an appended '-heit', which is nowadays supposed to have a particular gravity, and thereby help out in many cases¹

have assumed an air of solemnity and given out that in pronouncing three such words I had done more than merely signify three very broad and abstract—and consequently empty—concepts with very different origins and meanings.

Has anyone who has made himself familiar with the writings of our day not come to detest those three words, admirable as they are in the things they originally refer to, having seen a thousand times how those who are least capable of thinking believe that they need only to produce those three words—with mouth wide open and the air of an excited sheep—to have spoken great wisdom?

Explanation of the concept **true** has already been provided in my treatise on the GP. The content of the concept **beautiful** received its real explanation through the whole of my Book III—the first time this has been done. Now I want to trace the meaning of the concept **good**, which can be done with very little effort. This concept is essentially relative; it designates the *suitableness of an object to some particular effort of the will*; so that all the things that go along with the will in any of its expressions—all the things that fulfill its purpose—will be thought through the concept *good*, however unlike they are in other respects. Thus we speak of good food, good roads, good weather, good weapons, a good omen, etc.—in brief, we call 'good' anything that is precisely as we would have it. So something can be good to one person that is exactly the opposite of good to another.

The concept of good divides into two subspecies, namely those of

- a immediately present satisfaction and
- b only indirect, future-looking satisfaction

of the will that is in question; i.e. the **a** pleasant and the **b** useful.

The opposite concept, so long as the discourse concerns non-conscious beings, is expressed by the word *bad*, . . . which thus denotes everything that doesn't agree

¹ [This aside requires you to know that in German *wahr* → *Wahrheit* = 'true' → 'truth', that *schön* → *Schönheit* = 'beautiful' → 'beauty', and that *gut* → *Gutheit* = 'good' → 'goodness'.]

with the will's present strivings. Just like all other beings that can enter into a relation with the will, *people* have also been called 'good'—with the same meaning and always retaining the relativity—if they are favourable to directly willed purposes, supportive of them, congenial to them; which is expressed in such words as 'This person is good *for me*, but not *for you*.' But those for whom it is part of their character not to obstruct the endeavours of another person's will as such, but rather to further them, and who are thus thoroughly helpful, benevolent, friendly, beneficent, have been called *good* people on account of how their conduct relates to the will of others in general; note *good*, not the relative *good for...*.

[AS says that in German and (these days) French the opposite concept has a different word for conscious beings (*böse, méchant*) from the one it uses for non-conscious ones; most other languages lack this distinction, and use the same word for people and for non-living things that are 'contrary to the purposes of a particular individual will'. He writes as though what comes immediately after this somehow follows from it; but it clearly doesn't. This passage is indented because it is a sheer interruption.]

... The conduct of a person who is called 'good' should now be examined with reference not to others but to himself, with the particular aim of explaining on the one hand the purely objective esteem it produces in others, on the other hand the peculiar self-contentment that it obviously produces in the person himself, given that his conduct cost him sacrifices. . . .; and likewise, in the opposite case, explaining the inner pain that accompanies an evil disposition, however many outward advantages it brings to the person who harbours it. This gave rise to ethical systems, both

a philosophical and **b** faith-based. Both kinds constantly sought to link happiness with virtue:

- a** the former attempted this either through **c** the principle of contradiction or even through **d** the GP—thus making happiness either **c** identical with virtue or **d** a consequence of it, either way with sophistical reasoning, while
- b** the latter did it through the proclamation of worlds other than any that could possibly be known to experience.

In my treatment, on the other hand, the inner nature of virtue will prove to be a striving not after happiness, i.e. well-being and life, but in the flatly opposite direction.

From the above it follows that the good, according to its concept, is *something in relation to something else* [AS gives this in Greek], so every good is essentially relative. For it has its being only in its relation to a desiring will. *Absolute good* is thus a contradiction in terms. It means—as does 'highest good', *summum bonum*—a really final satisfaction of the will after which no new willing would occur, an ultimate motive the attainment of which would provide the will with indestructible satisfaction. According to my treatment up to here in this fourth Book, such a thing is not thinkable. Will can no more be so satisfied that it stops willing than time can end or begin; there is no lasting fulfillment for it, completely and forever satisfying its striving. It is the leaking vessel of the Danaïds: there is no highest good, no absolute good for it, but always only one for the time being. If, however, we wish to give an honorary position (as it were *emeritus*) to an old expression that we have grown used to and don't like to discard, we may—metaphorically and figuratively—call

the complete self-effacement and denial of the will,
the true *absence* of will which alone

- for ever stills and silences the will's struggle,

- gives the contentment that can never again be disturbed,
- redeems the world,

and which I shall soon be considering at the end of my whole investigation

the absolute good, the *summum bonum*, and regard it as the only radical cure of the disease of which all other means are only palliations or anodynes. In this sense the Greek *telos* and also *finis bonorum* correspond to the thing still better. So much for the words 'good' and 'evil', but now to the matter at hand.

If someone is always inclined to do *wrong* as soon as an occasion exists and no external power prevents him, we call him *evil* [*böse*]. According to my explanation of 'wrong', this means that such a person not only affirms the will for life as it appears in his body, but goes so far in this that he denies the will as it appears in other individuals; this is shown by his claiming *their* forces for the service of *his* will and trying to eradicate their existence if they oppose the endeavours of his will. The ultimate source of this is a high level of egoism, the nature of which was discussed in chapter 61 above. Two things are at once evident here: **(i)** in such a person an altogether more intense will for life is expressed, going far beyond affirmation of his own life; **(ii)** his knowledge, entirely given over to **a** the GP and caught up in **b** the individuation-maker, remains firmly attached to **b** the latter's complete distinction between his own person and all others. So he seeks only his own well-being, completely indifferent to that of all others, whose nature is utterly foreign to him, separated by a wide abyss from his own—whom indeed he really views only as masks, with nothing real behind them. These two properties are the fundamental elements of an evil character.

This great intensity of willing, then, is—in itself and for

itself and immediately—a constant source of suffering, ·for two reasons·. **(i)** All willing as such originates from lack, thus from suffering. (That is why, as will be recalled from Book III [chapter 38], the momentary silencing of all willing that occurs whenever. . . we are given over to aesthetic contemplation, is indeed a major component of pleasure in the beautiful.) **(ii)** Through the causal interconnection of things, most desires must remain unfulfilled, and the will is frustrated much more often than it is satisfied; and so intense and manifold willing always entails intense and manifold suffering. For all suffering is nothing but unfulfilled and frustrated willing; and even the pain that is felt when the body is injured or destroyed is possible only because the body is nothing but the will itself become object.

For this reason, then, because manifold and intense suffering is inseparable from manifold and intense willing, the facial expression of very wicked people bears the stamp of inner suffering; even when they have attained every external happiness, they always look unhappy except when they are seized by some momentary joy or are dissimulating. This inner torment. . . gives rise to a delight in the suffering of others, which doesn't come from mere egoism but is disinterested; this is true *malice* and rises to the level of *cruelty*. In this, the suffering of others is a goal in itself, not a mere means to the attainment of other goals of one's own will. Here now is a more detailed explanation of this phenomenon.

Because man is a phenomenon of will illuminated by the clearest knowledge, he is constantly comparing the •actual felt satisfaction of his will with the merely •possible satisfaction that his knowledge presents to him. From this comes envy: every privation is made infinitely worse if others are enjoying themselves, and lessened if it is known that others are also enduring the same privation. Ills that are

common to all and inseparable from human life don't trouble us much; nor do those that pertain to the climate or to the whole land ·that one lives in·. Recollection of greater sufferings than our own ·present ones· stills the latter's pain; sight of the sufferings of others alleviates one's own. But someone who is filled with an exceedingly intense press of the will must have a burning greed to take in everything so as to cool the thirst of his egoism, and in so doing is sure to learn

that all satisfaction is only illusory, that attainment never achieves what desire promised, namely, a final stilling of the fierce press of will, because when desire is fulfilled it merely changes and now torments in a different form; and finally when the desires are exhausted the very press of will remains without any conscious motive and announces itself with unassuageable torment as a feeling of the most horrific desolation and emptiness.

... Such a person, finding himself to be subject to an inordinate inner torment, eternal unrest, unsalvable pain, seeks *indirectly* the alleviation of which he is not *directly* capable, that is, he seeks to mitigate his own pain through sight of the suffering of others that he recognises as an expression of his own power. The suffering of others now becomes a goal in itself for him—it's a sight in which he revels, this being the phenomenon of will at its point of exceptional malice. Thence arises the phenomenon of real cruelty, of blood-thirstiness, which history so often shows us in its Neros and Domitians, in its African Deys, in Robespierre, etc.

Vengefulness does indeed have an affinity with malice, ·because each involves· repaying evil with evil not with a view

to the future (which is what characterises punishment) but merely on account of what is done and past as such, thus without self-interest, not as a means but as an end, so as to revel in torment of the injuring party that has been caused by oneself. What distinguishes revenge from pure malice and somewhat excuses it is the semblance of right: if the act of revenge were inflicted legally—i.e. in accordance with a previously determined and recognised rule and within a union that has sanctioned it—it would be punishment, and thus would be right.

Beyond the suffering described, along with malice rooted in a very intense will and thus inseparable from it, there is yet another entirely distinct and particular pain associated with every evil action—whether a mere egoistic injustice or pure malice—which is called 'sting of conscience' or (if it lasts longer) 'remorse'.¹ [AS now proceeds to expound something which he (complicatedly) says arises from things he has already said in this Book, namely that:] in the sting of conscience two components are distinguished, though they entirely coincide and must be thought in complete union with one another.

(i) Though the veil of Maya tightly envelops the evil person's understanding, i.e. though he is caught up in the individuation-maker in accordance with which he views his person as absolutely distinct and widely separated from every other—

a way of thinking that he holds to with all his might because it alone fits and supports his egoism, his thought being almost always corrupted by will

—there nonetheless stirs within his innermost consciousness the secret presentiment •that such an order of things is only

¹ [Because the difference between 'sting of conscience' (*Gewissensbiss*) and 'remorse' (*Gewissensangst*) is only one of longevity, it has no theoretical importance for AS; which explains why we shall soon see him first discussing one and then writing as though he had discussed the other.]

a phenomenon, and that the state of affairs *in itself* is quite otherwise; •that, however much time and space separate him from other individuals and the countless torments they suffer (indeed suffer through him) and display them as entirely foreign to him, it is nevertheless—in itself and apart from presentation and its forms—**the one will for life** that makes its appearance in all of them and, failing to recognise itself, turns its weapons against itself and by seeking greater well-being in one of its phenomena imposes the greatest of suffering on others. •It is also a presentiment •that he, the evil person, *is* this whole will, and consequently is not only the tormentor but the tormented, from whose suffering he is separated and held free only by a deceptive dream whose form is space and time; but •that the dream fades away and then he is in reality bound to pay for his pleasure with torment, and •that he must undergo any suffering that he recognises as even possible, because

- the difference between possibility and actuality, like
- the difference between proximity and distance in time and space,

are not differences *in themselves* but only products of the individuation-maker. This is the truth that is mythically expressed in reincarnation, i.e. adapted to the GP and thereby transposed into the form pertaining to the phenomenon; but it has its purest expression, free of all admixture, in that obscurely felt but inconsolable torment that is called ‘remorse’.

(ii) Remorse also arises from a second item of immediate knowledge, closely tied to the first, namely knowledge of how strongly the will for life affirms itself in the evil individual, which goes far beyond his individual phenomenon to the point of complete denial of the same will appearing in other individuals. Consequently, the evil-doer’s inner horror at his own deed, which he seeks to conceal from himself, contains—

along with that presentiment of the nullity and mere illusoriness of the individuation-maker and of the latter’s differentiation between himself and others

—also knowledge of the intensity of his own will, of how violently he has taken hold of life and fastened himself to it; this very life whose frightful side he sees before him in the torment of those oppressed by him. . . . He recognises himself as a concentrated phenomenon of the will for life, feels the degree to which he is given up to life and with it also to the countless sufferings that are essential to it; for it has infinite time and infinite space in which to turn possibilities into actualities, and to transform all the torments that he now merely *recognises* into ones that he *feels*. The millions of years of constant rebirth exist merely in conception, just as the entire past and future exist only in conception: achieved time, the form of the phenomenon of will, is only *the present*, and for the individual time is always new—he constantly finds himself risen anew. For life is inseparable from the will for life, and its form is only the *Now*. Death. . . .is like the setting of the sun, which seems to be devoured by the night but actually. . . .burns without remission, brings new days to new worlds, always rising and always setting. Beginning and end concern only the individual, by means of time, the form of this phenomenon with respect to presentation. Beyond time lies only

- will, Kant’s *thing in itself*, and
- its adequate objectivisation, Plato’s *idea*.

Therefore suicide provides no rescue: what each in his innermost being *wills*, that must he *be*; and what each *is*, that is just what he *wills*.

Thus, besides the merely felt knowledge of the illusoriness and nullity of presentation’s forms,self-knowledge of one’s own will and its degree gives conscience its sting. The course of someone’s life produces the image of his empirical

character, the original of which is the intelligible character, and the wicked person takes fright at this image—whether it is produced •in broad strokes, so that the world shares his abhorrence, or •in ones so small that he alone sees them. . . . What has happened in the past would be a matter of indifference, as a mere phenomenon, and could not cause remorse, if character weren't felt to be free of all time, and unalterable in its course so long as it doesn't deny itself. For this reason, things that happened long ago still weigh on the conscience. The prayer 'Lead me not into temptation' means: 'Let me not see who I am.'

Proportionally to the violence with which the evil person affirms •the will for• life, and which is displayed to him in the suffering he inflicts on others, he measures how far he is from surrendering and denying that very will—a denial that offers the only possible redemption from the world and its torment. He sees to what extent he belongs to the world and how firmly he is bound to it: the *known* suffering of others wasn't able to move him; he is at the mercy of life and *felt* suffering. It remains in question whether this will ever break and overcome the intensity of his will.

This discussion of the meaning and inner nature of evil—which as mere feeling (i.e. not as clear, abstract knowledge) is the content of remorse—will become even clearer and more complete through the consideration •of *good* as a property of human will, and finally •of the complete resignation and saintliness that comes from goodness after it has reached the highest degree. For opposites always illuminate one another, and—as has splendidly said—day reveals both itself and the night.

66. Virtue. True goodness

A morality without a grounding—thus mere *moralising*—can have no effect, for it doesn't motivate. A morality that *does* motivate can do so only by working on self-love. But nothing that originates in that way has any moral worth. From this it follows that genuine virtue can't come from morality or from any kind of *abstract* knowledge; it has to come from the *intuitive* knowledge that recognises in other individuals the same nature as one's own.

For virtue does indeed come from knowledge, but not from knowledge that is abstract, communicable by words. . . . Ethical discourses or sermons can no more create a virtuous person than all the aesthetic theories since Aristotle's have produced a poet! For concepts are unfruitful for the true and inner nature of virtue, just as they are for art, and can only serve in a subordinate duty as tools for carrying out and maintaining what has been otherwise recognised and resolved. *Velle non discitur*. Abstract dogmas have no influence on virtue, i.e. on goodness of disposition: false ones don't disturb it, and true ones are unlikely to promote it. And it would be a really bad thing if the main issue for human life—its ethical and eternally valid worth—depended on something the achievement of which was as subject to chance as dogmas, doctrines of faith, philosophical theories. The only value dogmas have for morality is this: a person who has become virtuous through a different kind of knowledge (to be discussed shortly) is provided by dogmas with a schema, a formula, in accordance with which he can give his own faculty of reason an account—mostly fictitious—of his non-egoistic doings, the nature of which his reason, i.e. he himself, does not *grasp*.¹ He has accustomed his reason

¹ [AS here uses and emphasizes the verb *begreifen*, cognate with *Begriff* = 'concept'.]

to rest content with this ·mostly fictitious stuff·.

Dogmas can indeed strongly influence *conduct*, external doings, as also can habit and example—

(the latter because the ordinary person doesn't trust his own judgment, being aware of its weakness, but follows only his own or others' experience),

—but none of these affect a person's *frame of mind*. Abstract knowledge provides only motives; but—as I have shown above—motives can only change the direction of the will, not the will itself. . . . However much dogmas steer a person, what he really and in general wills always remains the same; he has merely had different thoughts about how to attain it, and a imaginary motives guide him just as b real ones do. For example, it makes no difference to his ethical worth whether he

a makes great contributions to the helpless, firmly convinced that he'll get it back tenfold in a future life, or

b spends the same amount improving a country estate, which yields interest that is indeed deferred but all the more sure and sizeable.

And the true believer who commits heretics to the flames is as much a murderer as the bandit who does it for gain. [AS elaborates this a little, saying that those who do dreadful things so as to earn a place in heaven are acting egoistically, differing from bandits 'only by the absurdity of their means'. He sums up:] The will can be reached only through motives; but they do not change the will, only how it expresses itself. *Velle non discitur*.

But in the case of *good* deeds whose doer appeals to dogmas, one always has to decide whether in doing this he is •stating his real motives for his conduct or •telling his reason that he acts as he does because he is *good*, when really his good deed has an entirely different source. In the latter case

he doesn't know how to explain it in proper terms because he is no philosopher, but would still like to have some thoughts on the matter. It is very hard to discover which of these is right, because the difference depends on his inner state of mind. Thus we can hardly ever make an accurate moral judgment on the conduct of others, and seldom on our own.

The actions and ways of behaving of an individual and of a people can be greatly modified by dogmas, example, and custom. But all deeds are in themselves mere empty images, and get moral significance only from the frame of mind leading to them. The moral status can be entirely the same while there is a great difference in the external phenomenon. It can happen that of two people who have the same degree of malice, one dies ·tortured to death· on the wheel while the other dies peacefully in the bosom of his family. The same source of malice can show up in one people in brutish traits, in murder and cannibalism, while in another it appears finely and softly in miniature, in court intrigues, oppressions, and delicate plots of every kind; the inner nature remains the same. It is conceivable that a perfect state, or even a completely firm belief in a dogma of rewards and punishments after death, would prevent all crime; politically, much would be gained by this, morally nothing at all; it would only show the will being impeded throughout life.

So genuine goodness of disposition, disinterested virtue, and pure nobility don't come from abstract knowledge; but they come from knowledge nevertheless—namely from •an immediate and intuitive knowledge that can't be reached through reason and can't be reasoned from; •a knowledge that can't be communicated because it isn't abstract, but must arise in each person for himself, and so doesn't find its true and adequate expression in words, but only in actions, in a person's conduct throughout his life. We who are trying

to construct a *theory* of virtue, and so have to give abstract expression to the nature of the knowledge it is based on, won't be able in that way to present *the knowledge itself* but only *the concept of it*; so we always start from the conduct in which it becomes visible, taking that to be the sole adequate expression of that knowledge; and we can only explain and interpret the conduct, i.e. state in abstract terms what it really involves.

Before coming to discuss true goodness as opposed to the evil I have been depicting, I need to say a little about something that comes between those two, namely the mere negation of evil. This is **justness**.¹ I have already said enough about what right and wrong are; so here I can say briefly that anyone who voluntarily acknowledges the purely moral boundary between wrong and right, putting it into application even where no state or other power secures it—

and consequently, according to my explanation, never going so far in affirming his own will as to deny that displayed in another individual

—is **just**. He is not willing to increase his own well-being by making others suffer; i.e. he will commit no crimes, will respect the rights, respect the property of everyone.

We see, then, •that for a just person the individuation-maker is no longer an absolute partition, •that he doesn't affirm only the phenomenon of his own will and deny all others, •that others are not for him mere masks whose nature is entirely distinct from his own. (In this he is unlike the evil person.) Rather, he shows through his conduct that he recognises his own essence—namely, the will to life as *thing in itself*—in others who are given to him as mere presentations. So he finds himself again in them, up to a certain point—namely, to the point of non-wrongdoing, i.e.

of non-injury. To just this degree, then, he sees through the individuation-maker, the veil of Maya; to this extent he equates the nature beyond him with his own; he does not injure it.

If we look into the innermost being of this justness, we'll find the intention not to go so far in affirming **a** one's own will as to deny the phenomena of **b** others' wills by forcing **b** them to serve **a** it. So the just person will want to give as much to others as he enjoys from them. The highest degree of this justness of disposition—

which is in fact always coupled with true goodness, the character of which is not merely negative, as rightness is [see chapter 62]

—goes so far that the just person •casts doubt on his rights to inherited property, •wants to maintain his body only by its own forces, mental or corporeal, •reproaches himself for every service by others, for every luxury, and eventually •embraces voluntary poverty. Thus we see Pascal, when he turned towards asceticism, no longer willing to be served even though he had servants enough; despite his chronic ill-health made his own bed, fetched his meals from the kitchen, etc. Similarly, it is reported that many Hindus, even Rajas with great wealth, spend it only in support of their family, court, and servants, and with strict scrupulousness follow the maxim to eat nothing but what they have sowed and reaped with their own hands. A certain misunderstanding underlies this. For an individual can, just because he is rich and powerful, do so much service to the whole of human society that it counterbalances the inherited wealth that the society enables him to keep safely. The inordinate justness of such Hindus is really more than justness; it is actual renunciation, denial of the will for life, asceticism; I'll

¹ [*Gerechtigkeit*. This has a verbal overlap—not reproducible in English—with *recht* = 'right' and *unrecht* = 'wrong'.]

speak of this later. Conversely, by contrast, pure idleness and living with inherited wealth through the efforts of others, can be seen as morally wrong, although it must remain a right according to man-made laws.

We have found that voluntary justness has its innermost origin in seeing through the individuation-maker to a certain degree, while the unjust remain altogether caught up in it. It can be seen through not only to this degree but also to the higher degree that drives a person to positive benevolence and beneficence, to love of humanity; and this can occur however *strong and energetic in itself* the will is that appears in such an individual. Knowledge can always keep him in balance, teach him to resist the temptation to do wrong, and even produce every degree of goodness, indeed of resignation. So it is quite wrong to think of the good person as fundamentally a weaker phenomenon of will than the evil one is; rather, it is knowledge that masters the blind press of the will within him. Some individuals merely *seem* to have a good frame of mind because of the weakness of the will that appears in them; but what they really are soon shows itself in their being incapable of any considerable self-conquest for the sake of performing a just or good deed.

But when as a rare exception we encounter someone who has a considerable income but uses only a little of it for himself and gives all the rest to the poor, while denying himself many pleasures and comforts, and we try to understand the conduct of this person, then—ignoring any dogmas that he may use to make it comprehensible to his reason—we will find the simplest general expression and the essential character of his conduct to be this: *he makes less distinction than is usually made between himself and others*. If this distinction is so great in the eyes of many others that

- the suffering of others is
 - an immediate pleasure for the malicious,

- a welcome means toward his own well-being for the unjust,
- something the merely just individual stops at so as not to cause it;
- most people know and are familiar with the countless sufferings of others in their vicinity but don't undertake to mitigate them because that would involve some sacrifice on their part;
- there seems to them to be a powerful difference between their own *I* and that of others,

to the noble individual we are imagining this difference is not so significant. The individuation-maker, the form of the phenomenon, no longer has him firmly in its grip, and the suffering he sees in others concerns him almost as closely as does his own. He tries to establish a balance between the two—renounces pleasures, makes sacrifices, so as to lessen the sufferings of others. He becomes aware that the difference between himself and others, which is such a great gulf to the evil person, belongs only to a transitory deceptive phenomenon. He knows immediately and without any inferences that the *in-itself* of his own phenomenon is also that of others, namely the will for life that constitutes the essence of every single thing and lives in all of them; and indeed that this extends even to animals and the whole of nature; so he won't give pain even to an animal.

He is now as unlikely to let others starve to death while he himself has enough and to spare as anyone would be to suffer a day of hunger so as to have more than he can enjoy on the following day. Because to anyone who engages in works of love, the veil of Maya has become transparent, and the deception of the individuation-maker has left him. He recognises himself, his *self*, his will, in every being, and consequently in any that are suffering. He is free from the perversity with which the will to live, not recognising

itself, enjoys a fleeting and precarious pleasure *here* in one individual and pays for it with suffering and starvation *there* in another, and thus both inflicts and endures misery, not knowing that like Thyestes it is eagerly devouring its own flesh; and then bemoaning its undeserved suffering *here* and doing wicked things without fear of Nemesis *there*, only because it doesn't recognise itself in the phenomenon of the other, and thus doesn't perceive eternal justice, being caught up in the individuation-maker and thus in the kind of knowledge that is governed by the GP. Being free from this delusion and dazzle of Maya is the same thing as engaging in works of love.

The opposite of pangs of conscience, the origin and significance of which I have elucidated above [chapter 65], is *good conscience*, the satisfaction we feel after every disinterested deed. It arises from the fact that such deeds, just as they come from immediate recognition of our own *essence in itself* in the phenomenon of someone else, also bear witness to this recognition, to our knowing that our true self exists not merely in our own person—in this individual phenomenon—but in everything that lives. The heart feels itself expanded by this, just as it is contracted by egoism. For just as egoism concentrates a person's concern on the particular phenomenon that is his own individual case, where knowledge always confronts him with countless dangers that constantly threaten this phenomenon—making anxiety and care the keynote of his mood—so knowledge of the fact that all living things are his own *essence in itself*, just as much as his own person is, spreads his concern to all living things; and through this his heart is expanded. With this lessening of engagement in one's own self, anxious concern for it is attacked at its root, and limited; hence the peaceful, confident cheerfulness that a virtuous disposition and good conscience provide. . . . The egoist feels himself surrounded

by hostile phenomena that are other than himself, and his hope is centred on his own welfare. The good person lives in a world of friendly phenomena; the welfare of each of them is his own. So even if his knowledge of the human condition doesn't make his over-all state of mind a merry one, the enduring recognition of his own essence in all living things still gives him a certain equanimity and even cheerfulness of mood. For concern over countless phenomena can't cause as much anxiety as that which is concentrated on *one*. The contingencies that happen to individuals collectively get balanced out, while those that happen to the particular individual constitute ·his· good or bad fortune.

If others have advanced moral principles as prescriptions for virtue and laws that *must* be followed, I cannot (I repeat) do the same, because I have no 'ought' or law to prescribe to the eternally free will. But something analogous to it—to a certain extent corresponding to it—does emerge from my system; it is a purely theoretical truth, and my whole exposition can be seen as merely unpacking it. It's the truth that will is the *in-itself* of every phenomenon, but is itself free from the latter's forms and thereby from plurality. As applied to action, I can find no better expression of this truth than the previously mentioned formula of the Veda: *Tat twam asil* ('This is you'). Anyone who can with clear knowledge and steady inner conviction say this of every being he encounters is certain of all virtue and blessedness, and is on the road leading directly to redemption.

But before I continue with that theme, showing **(i)** how love—whose origin and essence we recognise as a penetration [see Glossary] of the individuation-maker—leads to redemption, i.e. to complete surrender of the will for life, i.e. surrender of all willing, and also **(ii)** how another path leads a person less gently but with greater frequency to the same place, I must first state and explain the paradoxical proposition

that **'All love is compassion.'** ·I stress this· not because it is paradoxical, but because it is true and is an essential part of the system I am presenting.¹

67. Compassion. Crying

We have seen how justness comes from a lower degree of penetration of the individuation-maker, and seen that from a higher degree comes the true goodness of disposition that shows itself as pure, i.e. disinterested [see Glossary], love for others. A truly good person regards the fate of other individuals as perfectly on a level with his own; he can never go further than this, because there's no available reason for preferring another individual over himself. But it can certainly happen that a number of other individuals whose well-being or life is in danger can outweigh consideration of one person's welfare. In such a case, a character that has attained to the highest goodness and to perfect nobility will offer his welfare and his life in sacrifice to the welfare of many others: thus died Codros, thus Leonidas, thus Regulus, thus Decius Mus, thus Arnold von Winkelried, thus anyone who goes willingly and knowingly to certain death for his own ·near and dear·, for his fatherland. Also on this level stands anyone who willingly takes on suffering and death in defence of something that touches and rightly belongs to the welfare of all mankind—i.e. maintaining important universal truths and eradicating great errors: thus died Socrates, thus Giordano Bruno; thus many a hero of truth found his death on the pyre, under the hands of priests.

Now it is time to remind the reader, with respect to the paradox stated above, •that we earlier found suffering to be

essential to life as a whole, and inseparable from it, and •that we saw how every desire comes from a need, a lack, a suffering, so that every satisfaction is only the removal of a pain and not the acquiring of a positive happiness; pleasures do indeed tell desire that they are positive goods, but this is a lie, for really they are only negative in nature, only the end of an evil. Therefore, anything that goodness, love, and generosity do for others is always only an alleviation of their sufferings; and consequently the only thing that can ever move someone to good deeds and works of love is *knowledge of the suffering of others*, directly understood from the doer's own suffering and equated with it. From this it results that pure love is by its nature compassion; the suffering that it alleviates may be great or small, and includes all unsatisfied desires. So I don't hesitate to say—

in direct contradiction to Kant, who won't recognise anything as truly good and virtuous unless it has come from abstract reflection, and indeed from the concept of duty and the categorical imperative, and who declares compassion to be a weakness, in no way a virtue

—that mere concepts are as unfruitful for genuine virtue as for genuine art; all true and pure love is compassion, and all love that is not compassion is selfishness. Selfishness and compassion [AS gives their Greek names] are frequently confused. Even genuine friendship is always a mixture of selfishness and compassion: the larger ingredient is the ·selfish· satisfaction in the company of the friend whose individuality agrees with one's own; the compassion shows itself in sincere participation in his welfare and woe, and in the disinterested ·self·-sacrifice that one brings to the latter.

¹ [AS gives 'compassion' in Greek and Latin as well as German. The German *Mitleid* breaks down into 'suffering with', which is also the idea underlying the Latin-derived English 'com-passion'.]

Even Spinoza says: 'Benevolence is a desire born of pity.' As confirmation of my paradoxical proposition that all love is compassion, it may be noted that the tone and words of the language and caresses of pure love entirely coincide with the tone of compassion; and, incidentally that in Italian the word *pietà* denotes both compassion and pure love.

This is also the place to discuss one of the most striking peculiarities of human nature, crying, which like laughter is one of the expressions that distinguish humans from animals. Crying is in no way a direct expression of pain; for one cries at the very slightest pain. In my opinion, people don't ever cry over the immediately felt pain, but always only over its repetition in memory. That is, the sufferer passes from the pain that is felt, even when it is corporeal, to a mere presentation of it, and *then* finds his own state to be so deserving of compassion that—so he firmly and sincerely believes—if it were someone else's he would come to that person's aid with compassion and love; only it is *himself* that is now the object of his sincere compassion. . . . In this strangely woven mood, where immediately felt suffering returns to perception through a double detour—presented as the suffering of someone else, sympathised with as such, and then suddenly again perceived as directly one's own—nature provides itself with relief through that strange corporeal spasm.

So *crying is compassion for oneself*, or compassion that has been thrown back on its own point of departure. It is therefore conditioned by the capacity for love and compassion and by imagination. So hard-hearted people and those lacking in imagination don't cry easily, and crying is always taken to indicate a certain degree of goodness of character, and disarms anger; because it is felt that anyone who can cry must also be capable of love, i.e. compassion for others, because compassion passes over into the state of mind that

leads one to cry, as I have explained. . . . What I have said is also confirmed by the fact that children who have been hurt usually don't cry until someone commiserates with them; so they are crying not over the pain but over its presentation.

When we are led to cry not over our own suffering but someone else's, this comes from our vividly transporting ourselves in imagination into the position of the sufferer, or seeing in his fate of the lot of humanity as a whole and consequently above all of our own; so that by a wide detour we are after all crying over ourselves, feeling compassion for ourselves. This seems also to be the main reason for the universal, thus natural, fact of crying in cases of death. The bereaved person is not weeping over his loss; if it were, his tears would be egoistic and would shame him, whereas sometimes he is ashamed of *not* crying. In the first instance he does indeed cry over the fate of the person who has just died; but he also cries when death has come as a welcome release after long, heavy, and incurable suffering. For the most part, then, he is gripped by compassion over the lot of humanity as a whole, which is subject to the finitude entailing that every life—so full of endeavour, often so rich in deeds—must be extinguished and come to nothing. But in humanity's lot the mourner sees his own, and all the more, the closer he was to the deceased, and therefore the most if it was his father. . . .

68. Virtue. Asceticism. Saintliness

After this digression about the identity of pure love and sympathy, the final return of which upon our own individuality produces the phenomenon of weeping, I resume the thread of my interpretation of the ethical significance of action, in order to show how the source from which all goodness, love, virtue, and generosity originate also eventually generates what I call

‘denial of the will for life’. Just as we earlier saw hate and malice conditioned by egoism, and this resting on knowledge caught up in the individuation-maker, so we found the origin and essence of justness—and of love and generosity up to their highest degrees—to be penetration [see Glossary] of that individuation-maker. That penetration, by abolishing the distinction between one’s own individuality and that of others, makes possible and explains the complete goodness of disposition that extends to the most disinterested love and most generous self-sacrifice in the interests of others.

If this penetration of the individuation-maker—this direct knowledge of the identity of will in all its phenomena—is present with the highest degree of clarity, it will at once show an influence on the will that goes even further. Namely, if

that veil of Maya, the individuation-maker, is so thoroughly lifted from someone’s eyes that he no longer makes the egoistic distinction between his own person and others, but participates in other individuals’ suffering as much as in his own, and is thereby not only benevolent in the highest degree but even ready to sacrifice his own individuality whenever such a sacrifice will save a number of others,

then it automatically follows that

such a person—who recognises in all beings himself, his innermost and true self—regards the endless sufferings of all living things as his own, and so must take on himself the entire world’s pain.

No suffering is any longer foreign to him. All the torments of others that he *sees* and is so seldom able to alleviate, all the torments that he knows about only *indirectly*, indeed all the ones that he recognises only as *possible*, affect his spirit as if they were his own.

It is no longer the changing joy and sorrow of his own person that he has his sight on, as is the case with someone

still caught up in egoism; rather, since he sees through the individuation-maker, everything lies equally close to him. He recognises the whole, comprehends its nature, and finds it to be in the grip of a constant passing-away, vain striving, inner conflict, and continual suffering; he sees, wherever he looks, human suffering and animal suffering, and a vanishing world. But he is now as close to all this as the egoist is to his own person. How then could he, with such knowledge of *the world*, affirm *this one life* through constant acts of will, thereby pressing it ever more firmly to himself? Thus if someone who is still caught up in the individuation-maker, in egoism, recognises only individual things and their relation to his person, and if those things become ever-renewed motives of his willing, then by contrast the just-described knowledge of the whole, of the nature of *things in themselves*, becomes a quieter of all and every willing. The will now turns away from •life; it now shudders at the pleasures in which it recognises •its affirmation. Anyone who gets this far attains to the state of voluntary renunciation, resignation, true composure and complete willlessness.

If those of us who are still caught in the veil of Maya sometimes—in the hard experience of our own suffering or in the vivid recognition of the suffering of others—come close to recognising the nullity and bitterness of life, and want to destroy the sting of our desires, deny admission to all suffering, and purify and sanctify ourselves by complete and final renunciation, then before long the deception of the phenomenon entangles us and its motives get the will moving again; we can’t tear ourselves loose. We are drawn back to it with newly tightened fetters by

- the lures of hope,
- the flattery of the present,
- the sweetness of pleasure,
- the well-being that falls to our lot amidst the sorrows

of a suffering world governed by chance and error.

Therefore Jesus says: 'It is easier for a rope to pass through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God.'¹ If we compare life to a circular track of glowing coals, with a few cool places, which track we had unceasingly to run, someone who is caught up in the delusion is consoled by the cool place where he is standing right now or that he sees close ahead of him, and he goes on running the course. But anyone who sees through the individuation-maker and knows the nature of things in themselves, and thereby of the whole, is no longer receptive to such consolation; he sees himself in all places at once, and leaves the course.

His will turns around, no longer affirms its own essence that is mirrored in the phenomenon, but denies it. The phenomenon that shows this happening is the passage from virtue to asceticism. It is no longer enough for him to love others as himself and to do as much for them as for himself; there arises within him a horror of the will for life, the nature that is expressed in the phenomenon that is himself, the kernel and inner nature of that world which is recognised as full of misery. He thus disowns the nature that appears in him and is expressed through his body, and his conduct attacks—comes into open contradiction with—the phenomenon that he is. Essentially nothing but a phenomenon of will, he ceases to will anything, guards against attaching his will to anything, seeks to confirm in himself the greatest indifference towards all things.

His body, healthy and strong, expresses the sexual impulse through genitals; but he denies the will and gives the lie to his body; he doesn't want sexual satisfaction under any condition. Voluntary, complete chastity is the first step

of asceticism or denial of the will for life. So its denial of affirmation of the will goes beyond the individual's life, and indicates that along with the life of this body the will of which it is the phenomenon is also nullified. Nature, always true and straightforward [*naiv*], says that if this maxim were universal, the human race would die out. And in accordance with what I said in Book II [chapter 24] about the interconnection of all the phenomena of will, I think I may assume that, with the highest phenomenon of will, its weaker reflection, the animal world, would also fall away. . . .

With the complete nullification of knowledge, the rest of the world would then of itself vanish into nothing; for without subject, no object. I would like to refer here to a passage in the Veda: 'Just as in this world hungry children press about their mother, so all beings wait in longing for the sacred sacrifice.' Sacrifice means resignation in general, and the rest of nature has to await *its* redemption by man, who is both priest and sacrifice. Indeed, it merits mention as a most remarkable fact that this thought has also been expressed by the admirable and immeasurably deep Angelus Silesius, in the verse headed 'Man brings all things to God'. It reads:

'Man! All things love you; around you they throng
in force:
All of them run to you, to reach God in their
course.'

But a still greater mystic, Meister Eckhart, . . . says the same thing in exactly the sense discussed here:

'I confirm this by Christ when he says "And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me" (John 12:32). Thus should the good man carry

¹ [The King James version has 'It is easier for a *camel*. . . .' AS is following the view of some scholars that there was a mix-up between a Greek word meaning 'camel' and a very similar one meaning 'rope'.]

all things to God, into their first origin. The masters certify to us that all created things are made for the sake of man. It is seen in all created things that one makes use of another: the cow of the grass, the fish of the water, the bird of the air, the wild animal of the forest. Thus all creatures come to be of use to the good man: one creature in another, a good man carries them to God.'

He means: in exchange for redeeming the animals, man makes use of them on his own terms in this life. It seems to me that the difficult passage from the Bible at Romans 8:21-24 is to be interpreted in this sense. [That passage in the King James version reads as follows: 'Because the creature itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God. For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now. And not only they, but ourselves also, which have the first fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body. For we are saved by hope: but hope that is seen is not hope: for what a man seeth, why doth he yet hope for?' AS goes on to say that Buddhism has plenty of texts supporting the view he is expounding here, and quotes one.]

Asceticism then shows itself further in voluntary and intentional poverty—

which does not arise only *per accidens* [see Glossary] (one's possessions given away in order to mitigate the suffering of others) but is here indeed a purpose in itself)

—which is meant to serve as a constant mortification of the will, so that the satisfaction of desires, the sweetness of life, no longer arouses the will which self-knowledge has come to abhor. Someone who has reached this point still always

feels—as an animate body, as a concrete phenomenon of will—the disposition to willing of every sort; but he intentionally suppresses it, forcing himself to do nothing of what he would like to do, and to do everything that he wouldn't like to do, even if only for the purpose of mortifying the will. Since he denies the will that appears in his person, he won't resist when someone else does the same, i.e. inflicts wrong upon him. So every suffering that comes to him from without—by chance or the malice of others—is welcome to him; he gladly receives every harm, every humiliation, every injury, as an opportunity to assure himself that he no longer affirms the will but gladly takes the side of any enemy of the phenomenon of will that is his own person. He bears such humiliation and suffering with inexhaustible patience and meekness, returns good for evil without making a show of it, and doesn't allow the flames of anger to spring up in him any more than he does the flames of desire.

Along with the will itself he also mortifies its objectivisation, the body: he nourishes it sparingly, lest its excessive vigour and prosperity should animate and arouse more strongly the will of which it is merely the expression and the mirror. Thus he takes to fasting, indeed to castigation of the body and self-torture, in order more and more to break and kill the will by constant sacrifice and suffering—the will that he recognises and detests as the source of his own and of the world's suffering existence.

When death finally arrives,

dissolving this phenomenon of will whose being had (through free self-denial) long since been brought down to the weak residue that makes its appearance as this body's ·merely· being alive,

it is most welcome, gladly accepted as a longed-for deliverance. It doesn't merely bring to an end the phenomenon (as it does with others ·who are unlike the ascetic we are now

looking at.; it eliminates the very nature that still had a weak existence in the phenomenon and through it; this last slight bond is now broken. For someone who ends in this way, the world has ended with him.

And what I have depicted here with feeble tongue and only in a general way is not an invented philosophical fable, and not only of today. No, it was the enviable life of many saints and beautiful souls among the Christians, and even more among the Hindus and Buddhists and adherents of other faiths as well. However different were **a** the dogmas impressed on their reason, **b** the inner, immediate, intuitive knowledge from which alone all virtue and saintliness can proceed was expressed in the same way, namely through their way of life. For here too we see the great difference between **b** intuitive and **a** abstract knowledge—so important in all my considerations and all-pervasive, but until now too little noticed ·by me·. Between the two is a wide abyss which, as regards knowledge of the nature of the world, only philosophy crosses. Everyone is really conscious of all philosophical truths **b**intuitively, or *in concreto*, but to bring them into his **a** abstract knowledge, into reflection, is the business of the philosopher, who can't go further and shouldn't ·even try·.

This may be the first time that—abstractly and free of anything mythical—the inner nature of

- saintliness,
- self-renunciation,
- the killing of self-will,
- asceticism

has been explained as **denial of the will for life** occurring after complete knowledge of one's own essence has become a quieter of all one's willing. Those saints and ascetics have all immediately recognised and pronounced it through their deeds. With the same inner knowledge, they discoursed

in very different languages, according to the dogmas they had taken up into their reason, so that an Indian saint, a Christian one, a follower of the Lama, are sure to give very different accounts of their own actions; but this makes no difference to the fact of the matter. A saint may be full of the most absurd superstition, or he may instead be a philosopher: it is all the same. His conduct alone authenticates him as a saint; for, morally speaking, his saintliness comes not from •abstract but from •intuitively grasped immediate knowledge of the world and its nature, and is only *interpreted* by him through some dogma for the satisfaction of his reason. So there is as little need for the saint to be a philosopher as for the philosopher to be a saint, just as there is no need for a perfectly beautiful man to be a great sculptor, or for a great sculptor to be a beautiful man. In general, it is strange to demand that a moralist should possess every virtue that he recommends. To present the entire nature of the world in concepts—abstractly, generally, and clearly—and thus to store up, as it were, a reflected image of it in permanent concepts, always available to reason: this and nothing other is philosophy. . . .

The account I have given of the denial of the will for life—or of the conduct of a beautiful soul, of a resigned, voluntarily penitent saint—is only abstract and general, and therefore cold. Just as the knowledge from which the denial of the will comes is intuitive and not abstract, so also that denial finds its complete expression not in abstract concepts, but only in conduct and life-style. Therefore, in order to understand more fully what we philosophically call 'denial of the will for life', one has to become acquainted with examples from experience and from reality. They won't, of course, be met with in everyday experience: 'For all excellent things are as difficult as they are rare', as Spinoza superbly says. Therefore—unless a notably happy chance makes

one an eye-witness—one will have to settle for *descriptions* of the lives of such people. Indian literature, as we see from the little we know of it through translations, is very rich in descriptions of the lives of saints and penitents. . . . Among Christians there is no lack examples that illustrate this. Read the (usually badly written) biographies of those persons who are sometimes called ‘holy souls’, sometimes ‘pietists’, ‘quietists’, ‘devout enthusiasts’, etc. Collections of such biographies have been made at various times [AS cites two of them]. Among these should be counted the biography of Saint Francis of Assisi, that true personification of asceticism and example for all mendicant monks. The account of his life by his younger contemporary Saint Bonaventure, also famous as a scholastic, was recently republished, not long after there appeared in France a careful, detailed biography of him, making use of all sources,. [AS gives details of both these publications.] —As an oriental parallel to these monastic writings, we have Spence Hardy’s extremely readable *Eastern monachism, an account of the order of mendicants founded by Gotama Budha* (1850) [AS gives this title in its original English]. It shows us the same thing in different dress. We also see how little difference it makes whether it comes from a theistic or from an atheistic religion.

But above all I can recommend the autobiography of Madame de Guyon as a special and exceedingly full example and practical illustration of the conceptions I have established. To become acquainted with this beautiful and great soul, whose memory constantly fills me with awe, and to do justice to the excellence of her disposition while making

allowance for the superstition of her reason, is sure to be a delight to persons of the better sort, just as that book was sure always to be looked down on by those who think in common terms, i.e. the majority. For no-one can value anything that isn’t to some extent like himself and that he isn’t at least drawn to. This holds as much in ethical matters as in intellectual ones. To a certain extent, one could even consider the well-known French biography of Spinoza as a relevant example, if we use as a key to it the noble opening of his unsatisfactory treatise *Of the emendation of the intellect*, a passage that I can at the same time recommend as the most effective means I know for calming the storm of one’s passions.¹ Finally, the great Goethe himself, so much a Greek he is, did not regard it as unworthy of himself to show us this loveliest side of humanity in the clarifying mirror of the literary arts, giving us an idealised depiction of the life of Fräulein Klettenberg in his *Confessions of a Beautiful Soul* and later in his autobiography also gave historical details about her, as he also twice relates the life of Saint Philip Neri.

World history, to be sure, must always remain silent about the people whose way of life is the best illustration, and the only adequate one, of this important point in my line of thought. For the *material* of world history is entirely different from this. Indeed, it is flatly contrary to it, consisting not in

- denial and surrender of the will for life, but
- its affirmation and appearance in countless individuals in which its conflict with itself shows up with complete clarity at the highest peak of its objectifica-

¹ [The ‘noble’ opening runs as follows (in Curley’s translation): ‘After experience had taught me that all the things which regularly occur in ordinary life are empty and futile, and I saw that all the things which were the cause or object of my fear had nothing of good or bad in themselves, except insofar as [my] mind was moved by them, I resolved at last to try to find out whether there was anything which would be the true good, capable of communicating itself, and which alone would affect the mind, all others being rejected—whether there was something which, once found and acquired, would continuously give me the greatest joy, to eternity.’]

tion, setting before our eyes

- now the superiority of the individual through his cleverness,
- now the power of the crowd through its mass,
- now the power of chance personified as fate, and
- always the the vanity and emptiness of the whole effort.

But what we aim to do here is not to follow the thread of phenomena in time, but as philosophers to examine •the ethical significance of conduct, taking •this as the only measure of what is significant and important to us. So we won't let the voice of the permanent majority—the vulgar and dull—deter us from recognising that

the greatest, most important, and most significant phenomenon that the world can display is not the world-conqueror but the world-subduer; nothing but the quiet, unobserved way of life of someone who has acquired the knowledge which leads him to surrender and deny the will to live which fills everything and strives and strains in all, first gaining freedom here in him alone, so that his conduct becomes the exact opposite of the ordinary.

In this respect, therefore, those accounts of the lives of holy, self-denying people—badly written, as they are usually are, and indeed mixed with superstition and nonsense—are yet for the philosopher, because of the significance of the subject, incomparably more instructive and more important than even Plutarch and Livy.

I have in an abstract and general way described something as 'denial of the will for life'; but we'll get a fuller and more definite knowledge of this if we attend to •ethical precepts that have been offered in this sense and to •people who were full of this spirit; and attending to these will

show how old my view is, though the purely philosophical expression of it may be new. What lies nearest to hand is Christianity, whose ethics are entirely in the spirit I'm talking about, and lead not only to the highest degree of love of humanity but also to renunciation. The *seed* of the latter side •of Christianity• is indeed already clearly present in the writings of the apostles, but it is not *fully developed* or clearly stated until a considerable time later. We find prescribed by the apostles

- love for one's neighbour as equivalent to self-love,
- beneficence,
- repayment of hate with love and beneficence,
- patience,
- meekness,
- submitting to all possible injuries without resistance,
- abstemiousness in eating so as to suppress desire, and
- resisting the sex drive (entirely, if possible).

We already see here the first levels of asceticism, or of real *denial of the will*—which is exactly the same as what the gospels called 'renouncing oneself and taking up the cross' (Matthew 16:24–5; Mark 8:34–5; Luke 9:23–4, 14:26–7, 33). This orientation soon developed more and more, and led to the origination of penitents and anchorites, and to monasticism, which was pure and saintly in itself but for just that reason was unsuited to the greatest portion of humanity; so that what developed from it could only be hypocrisy and wickedness, for *abusus optimi pessimus* [Latin for 'the abuse of the best is the worst']. In the further development of Christianity we see the seed of asceticism develop into full blossom in the writings of the Christian saints and mystics. These preach

- purest love and utter renunciation,
- total voluntary poverty,

- true composure,
- complete indifference to all worldly things,
- dying to one's own will and being reborn in God,
- totally forgetting one's own person and immersing oneself in the contemplation of God.

.... Nowhere is this developing spirit of Christianity more completely and powerfully pronounced than it is in the writings of the German mystics, thus of Meister Eckhart and in the rightly famous ·14th century· book *The German Theology*, of which Luther says—in the preface he wrote for it—that from this book he had learned more about what God, Christ and man are than he learned from any other books except for the Bible and the writings of Augustine. . . . The precepts and doctrines contained in it are the most complete articulation, originating in a deeply internal conviction, of what I have presented as denial of the will for life. [AS says that this work has only recently appeared in a decent edition, and that it should be studied in that form before being written about 'with Jewish-Protestant confidence'. He also praises other works expressing Christian asceticism.]

In my opinion, the doctrines of these genuine Christian mystics relate to those of the New Testament as the alcohol relates to the wine. Or: what we see as if through veils and fog in the New Testament meets us in the works of the mystics uncovered, in full clarity and distinctness. . . .

But we find what I have called 'denial of the will for life' in ages-old works in the Sanskrit language—unfolded still further, more many-sided in its pronouncements, and more vividly depicted than could have been the case in the Christian church and the western world. That this important ethical view of life could be more thoroughly developed and more decisively expressed here ·in the Sanskrit writings·

is perhaps mainly due to the fact that it is not limited here by an entirely foreign element, as the doctrine of the Jewish faith is within Christianity. The sublime author of Christianity, partly consciously and perhaps partly even unconsciously, had to accommodate and adapt himself to the Jewish element, so that Christianity was formed out of two very heterogeneous constituents. Of these I would prefer to reserve the label 'Christianity' for the purely ethical constituent, distinguishing it from the pre-existing Jewish dogmatism. It has often been feared—especially these days—that that superb and salutary religion has fallen into complete decline; and if it has, I would seek the reason for this solely in the fact that it does not consist of one simple element but rather of two that have quite different origins and came to form a compound only through an accident of history.¹ The compound was bound to come apart because of the difference in how the two parts have related to and reacted against the advance of the spirit of the times; but even after this dissolution the purely ethical part must always remain undamaged, because it is indestructible.

Now in the ethics of the Hindus, . . . we see prescribed:

- love of one's neighbor with utter renunciation of all self-love,
- love not limited to the human race but encompassing all living things,
- beneficence to the point of giving away one's hard-won daily earnings,
- boundless patience towards all who inflict injury,
- repayment of all evil, no matter how wicked, with goodness and love,
- voluntary and glad endurance of every humiliation,
- abstention from all meat-eating,

¹ [nur mittelst des Weltlaufs = strictly 'only by means of the course of the world'.]

- complete chastity and renunciation of all sensual pleasure for anyone who strives after true saintliness,
- surrender of all possessions,
- forsaking every dwelling-place, and all kin,
- deep unboken solitude, spent in silent contemplation with voluntary penance and terrible slow self-torture. . . .

[AS gives gruesome details of that. Then:] And these precepts, whose origin reaches back four millennia, are still today—even after the Hindu nation has been broken into many parts—observed by individuals to even the utmost extremes. Something that demands the hardest sacrifices, and yet has for so long remained in practice among a people with many millions of members, cannot be a mere whim, but must have its basis in the nature of humanity. But besides this, one cannot marvel enough at the uniformity that one finds in reading about the life of a Christian penitent or saint and that of an Indian one. With such fundamentally different dogmas, customs, and circumstances. the striving and inner life of the two is entirely the same. So also with the precepts of the two. [AS gives some details about this, and concludes:] So much agreement across such different times and peoples is a factual proof that what is expressed here is not—as optimistic banality would like to maintain—a contorted and demented state of mind, but rather an aspect of human nature that is essential to it but shows up only rarely because of its excellence.¹

I have now cited the sources from which one can—drawing directly from life—learn to know the phenomena in which denial of the will for life is displayed. In some respects this is the most important point in my whole work; yet I have presented it only in general terms, because it is better •to

refer to those who speak from immediate experience than •to allow this book to swell needlessly with a weaker repeat of what they have said.

I want to add only a little to my general characterisation of their state. Just as we saw above that

the evil person, through the intensity of his willing, suffers constant, consuming, inner torment, and eventually—when all objects of willing are exhausted—cools the fierce thirst of self-will by the sight of the torment of others,

so on the contrary

someone in whom denial of the will for life has risen—however impoverished, joyless, and full of sacrifice his state may be when viewed from outside—is full of inner joy and true heavenly peace.

It is not the restless press of life, the rejoicing in pleasure, that has intense suffering as its preceding or following condition, such as constitutes the way of life of men with a lust for life; rather, it is an unshakable peace, a deep calm and inner serenity—a state which, if it comes before our eyes or our imagination, we can only view with the greatest longing, acknowledging it as that which is alone right, infinitely outweighing everything else, something that our better spirit calls us to with its great *sapere aude!* [= 'dare to know',] quoted from Horace. When that happens, we feel that every fulfillment of our desires won from the world is only like alms that keep the beggar alive for today, so that tomorrow he may again go hungry; whereas resignation is like an inherited estate: it relieves its owner from all cares forever.

It may be recalled from Book III that aesthetic pleasure in the beautiful consists mainly in the fact that when we enter

¹ [In giving that reason, AS is relying on something he praised Spinoza for saying three pages back.

into the state of pure contemplation we are for the moment relieved of all willing, i.e. all desires and concerns, as if it had fallen to our lot to be no longer

•the individual whose knowledge is subordinated to the service of its constant willing, the correlative of the particular thing for which objects are motives,

but rather

the eternal subject of knowing purified from will, the correlative of the ·platonian· idea;

and we know that these moments—when we are released from the fierce press of the will and seem to rise up out of earth's heavy atmosphere—are the most blessed that we know. From this we can gather how blessed must be the life of a person whose will is quieted not •for moments, as in enjoyment of the beautiful, but •for ever—indeed ·not merely quieted but· extinguished, down to the last glimmering spark that maintains the body and will be extinguished with it. Such a person who, after many bitter battles against his own nature, has at last completely won, now remains only as a pure knowing subject, an undimmed mirror of the world. No longer can anything make him anxious, or move him; for he has *cut* all the thousand threads of willing that keep us bound to the world and—as desire, fear, envy, anger—pull us this way and that in a state of constant pain. Peacefully smiling, he now gazes back on this world's deceptive images, which were indeed once able to move and torture his spirit, but now stand before him as indifferently as chess pieces after the game has ended, or as the cast-off masquerading dress that had worried and disquieted us the night before in the Carnival. Life and its figures float before him like a fleeting apparition, like a faint morning dream to the half-awake sleeper, through which reality is already glimmering and which can no longer deceive; and they eventually vanish, as the dream does, without being *forced* out of existence. From

these considerations we can come to understand the sense of what Madame Guyon so often expressed toward the end of her autobiography: 'Everything is indifferent to me: I cannot will anything more. I often do not know whether I exist or not.' In order to express how, after the dying away of the will, the death of the body (which is only the phenomenon of the will, and therefore loses all meaning when the will is nullified) can now no longer be a bitter affair, but is rather most welcome, let me set down the words of that saintly penitent herself, although they are not elegantly expressed: 'Glorious noon-day; day where there is no longer any night; life that no longer fears death, in death itself; because death has vanquished death, and someone who has suffered the first death will not taste the second death.' [AS gives this quotation in Guyon's French.]

Still, we should not suppose that once the will to live has been denied—through knowledge that becomes its quieter—this denial no longer wavers, and can be relied on as though one owned it. Rather, it must always be renewed by constant battle. For since the body is the will—only in the form of objectivisation, or as a phenomenon in the world as presentation—as long as the body lives, the whole will to live exists potentially, and constantly strives to become actual, and to burn again with all its ardour. In the life of the saintly person, therefore, we find the depicted repose and blessedness only as the blossom that comes from constantly overcoming the will, and see as the ground from which it sprouts the constant battle against the will for life; for no-one can have lasting peace on earth. We thus see the histories of the inner life of saints full of spiritual conflicts, temptations, and abandonment by grace, i.e. by the kind of knowledge that •makes all motives ineffective, •brings calm as a general quieter of all willing, •provides the deepest peace, and •opens the gate to freedom. Thus too, we see those who have once

succeeded in denying the will keeping themselves on **this path** with every exertion, through self-imposed renunciations of every sort, through a penitent, hard way of life and the selection of that which is unpleasant for them—all to suppress the will that is constantly trying to rise again. They know the value of redemption; so they have an anxious concern for the maintenance of salvation once acquired, a scrupulous conscience over every innocent enjoyment and every stirring of vanity; and even with these people, vanity is what dies last; it is the most indestructible, most active, and most foolish of all human inclinations.

I understand the term *asceticism*, which I use so often, in the narrow sense of

the *intentional* breaking of the will through renouncing the pleasant and seeking out the unpleasant, the self-chosen life of penance and self-castigation for the continual mortification of the will.

And those who have already achieved denial of the will ·in that voluntary way· make efforts to maintain themselves in that state. But suffering in general, as it is imposed by fate ·rather than chosen by the sufferer·, is a **second path** to that denial. Indeed, we can assume that most people reach it only in this way, and that what most often creates utter resignation is not merely known-about suffering but suffering that the person experiences, often when death is near. For only in the few is pure knowledge—

that which, in seeing through the individuation-maker, first produces perfect goodness of disposition and general love for humanity, and finally recognises all the sorrows of the world as one's own

—sufficient to bring about denial of the will. Even for someone who is nearing this point, the bearable state of his own person, the flattery of the moment, the lure of hope, and the repeated offer of satisfaction of the will, i.e. of desire,

are in nearly all cases a constant obstacle to denial of the will and a constant temptation to its renewed affirmation. . . . Usually, therefore, the will must be broken through the greatest personal suffering before its self-denial occurs. *Then* we see someone, after being brought through increasing levels of distress (with the most intense resistance) to the edge of desperation, suddenly •retire into himself, •recognise himself and the world, •change his whole nature, •rise above himself and all suffering, and (as if purified and sanctified by suffering) in inviolable peace, blessedness, and sublimity, •willingly renounce all that he had previously willed with the greatest intensity, and •joyfully receive death. Coming suddenly to the fore out of the purifying flame of suffering, it is the gleam of silver in the denial of the will for life, i.e. in redemption. The great Goethe has given us a clear and visible representation of this denial of the will, brought about by great misfortune and hopeless despair, in the story of the sufferings of Gretchen in his immortal masterpiece *Faust*. I know no parallel to this in poetry. This is a perfect paradigm of the second path to denial of the will—not, like the first, through mere knowledge of the suffering of an entire world, knowledge that one voluntarily acquires, but through one's own personally felt abundance of pain. To be sure, many tragedies conduct their mightily willing hero to this point of complete resignation in the end, where the will for life and its phenomenon usually end simultaneously; but no other depiction known to me brings before our eyes the essence of that transformation, so distinctly and free of all irrelevances, as the part of *Faust* I have referred to.

In real life we see in many of those unfortunates who have to undergo the greatest measure of suffering that after all hope has been entirely taken from them, when they fully understand that they face a shameful, violent, often agonising death on the scaffold, they undergo this kind of

transformation. . . .¹ They now display real goodness and purity of disposition, true abhorrence at the thought of their performing any action that is the least bit bad or uncharitable. They forgive their enemies, even if they are the ones under whom they have innocently suffered; they don't merely 'forgive' them with words and in hypocritical fear before the judges of the underworld, but really forgive them with inner seriousness, wanting no revenge whatsoever. Indeed, their suffering and dying are in the end welcome to them, for denial of the will for life has occurred; they often turn away an offer of rescue, die peacefully, at rest, happy. In their inordinate pain the ultimate secret of life has been revealed to them, namely, that

- misery and wickedness,
- suffering and hate,
- tormented and tormenter,

however different they show themselves to be for knowledge that follows the GP, are in themselves *one*, phenomena of that one will for life that objectifies its self-conflict by means of the individuation-maker. They—the people I am talking about—have become thoroughly acquainted with both sides, the misery and the wickedness, and seeing at last the identity of the two, now turn them both away, denying the will for life. It doesn't matter in the least what myths and dogmas they employ to explain to their reason this intuitive and immediate knowledge and their transformation. . . .

Such purification through suffering can occur without the proximity of death or hopelessness. Even without them, knowledge of the self-contradiction of the will for life can through great misfortune and pain urge itself forcibly upon

us and the pointlessness of all effort be seen. Hence people who had led a most animated life in the press of passions—kings, heroes, adventurers—have often been seen to change suddenly, take up resignation and penance, become hermits and monks. Here belong all genuine conversion anecdotes, e.g. that of Raymond Lully:

He had long been wooing a beautiful woman, who finally admitted him to her room. He went in, anticipating the fulfillment of all his desires, but she uncovered her breast and showed him her bosom horrifically consumed by cancer.

From this moment on, as if he had looked into hell, he was converted, left the court of the king of Majorca, and went into the wilderness to do penance. This tale of conversion is very similar to that of the Abbé Rancé, which I have briefly related elsewhere. When we consider how in each case a passage from life's pleasures to its horrors was the occasion of the conversion, this throws some light on the remarkable fact that the order of the Trappists, by far the strictest of all monastic orders, has been restored by Rancé after its decline, and despite

- revolutions,
- ecclesiastical changes, and
- the spread of unbelief

maintains itself to the present day in its purity and fearful strictness, all this having happened among the French, the nation in Europe with the greatest lust for life, the most cheerful, sensual and frivolous.

But the knowledge of the nature of our existence that I have described can also grow distant again, along with

¹ [The ellipsis replaces •the sentence 'We shouldn't assume that the difference between their character and that of most people is as great as their fate indicates, for their fate is mostly due to circumstances; yet they *are* guilty and to a considerable degree wicked', which is here relegated to a footnote because it is a sheer interruption in what AS is saying; and •another sentence which repeats, almost word for word, the sentence immediately before the ellipsis. There has presumably been a revision-mishap at this point.]

its occasion,¹ and the will for life, and with it one's previous character, can reappear. Thus we see the passionate Benvenuto Cellini

•at one time in prison,

•at another time with a major sickness,

transformed in such a manner, but reverting to his old state after the suffering has vanished. Denial of the will doesn't come from suffering with the necessity of an effect from its cause; rather, the will remains free. For here is the single point where its freedom enters immediately into the realm of phenomena. Thus the so strongly expressed astonishment of Asmus regarding 'transcendental alteration'. For any suffering, it is conceivable that there's a will superior to it in intensity and therefore unconquered by it. Thus Plato tells in the *Phaedo* of those who feast, drink, and enjoy sensuous pleasure up to the moment of their execution, affirming life right up to the point of death. In Cardinal Beaufort Shakespeare brings the frightening end of an unconscionable individual before our eyes; he dies full of despair, no suffering or death being able to break this will, intense to the point of utmost malice.²

The more intense the will, the more glaring the phenomenon of its conflict; and thus the greater the suffering. A world that was the phenomenon of an incomparably more intense will for life than the actual world manifests would

display so much the greater suffering; so it would be a *hell*.

All suffering, since it is a mortification and a call to resignation, has a potentially sanctifying force; and that explains why great misfortune and severe pains just in themselves instill a certain awe. But the sufferer becomes wholly worthy of our awe only when, surveying the course of his life as a chain of sufferings, or grieving over some great and unsalvable pain, he does not

look to the concatenation of circumstances that has plunged his life in particular into sorrow, or dwell on the individual great misfortune that has struck him, for if he does that his knowledge follows the GP and clings to the individual phenomenon; but rather

raises his gaze from the individual to the general, regarding his own suffering only as an example of suffering as a whole,

so that for him, having become ethically speaking a genius, one case counts as equivalent to thousands, and the whole of life—seen as essentially suffering—brings him to resignation. That's why it is awe-inspiring when in Goethe's *Torquato Tasso* the Princess speaks of how her own and her family's life has always been sad and joyless, and regards the matter wholly from the universal point of view.

We always think of a very noble character as having a certain touch of quiet sadness; it's not mere constant vex-

¹ [meaning, presumably, along with awareness of the misfortune and pain that occasions it]

² This refers to *Henry VI* Part 2, act 3, scene 3. The cardinal has been tortured and is near death. His unbroken will is perhaps best expressed by how King Henry deploras it:

O thou eternal Mover of the heavens.
 Look with a gentle eye upon this wretch!
 O, beat away the busy meddling fiend
 That lays strong siege unto this wretch's soul.
 And from his bosom purge this black despair!

ation over everyday set-backs—far from it!—for that would be an ignoble trait, indicating a bad disposition; it is rather a knowledge-based awareness of the emptiness of all goods and the suffering of all life, not only one's own. Yet such knowledge can first be awakened by suffering experienced by oneself, especially by a single great one. For example, a single unfulfillable desire brought Petrarch to that resigned sadness concerning the whole of life which speaks to us so touchingly from his works; for the Daphne he pursued had to flee from his hands in order to leave the immortal laurel for him instead of for herself. When the will has been somewhat broken by such a great and irrevocable reverse by fate, almost nothing is willed any more by the person in question and his character shows itself as gentle, sad, noble, resigned. When eventually the misery no longer has any definite object but spreads itself over life as a whole, then it is something like a *going-into-himself*, a withdrawal, a gradual vanishing of the will; it even undermines—quietly but resolutely—the body, which is the will's visible manifestation, so that the person feels a certain loosening of his bonds, a gentle foretaste of death announcing itself as simultaneous dissolution of the body and will. So this misery is accompanied by a secret joy, which I think is what the most melancholy of all peoples has called 'the joy of grief'.¹ But just here lies the reef on which sensibility can be wrecked,² both in life itself and in its depiction in poetry. When someone is always lamenting and always complaining, without getting hold of himself and rising to the level of resignation, he simultaneously loses earth and heaven and is left with a watery sentimentality. Only when •suffering

takes the form of bare pure knowledge, which then brings forth true resignation as a *quieter of the will*, is •it the path to redemption and thus worthy of awe. But the sight of any very unfortunate person makes us feel a certain respect, related to what virtue and generosity make us feel, so that our own fortunate state appears as a reproach. We can't help seeing every suffering, whether felt by ourselves or by others, as an at least possible *approach to virtue and saintliness*, whereas pleasures and worldly satisfactions are seen as a *move away* from them. This goes so far that

anyone who bears some great corporeal suffering, or some heavy spiritual one, indeed anyone who only does hard physical labour by the sweat of his brow and with visible exhaustion, but all of it with patience and without grumbling,

when we regard him attentively seems to us like a kind of invalid who is going through a painful cure, bearing the pain it causes willingly and even with satisfaction, knowing that the more he suffers the more his illness is beaten back; so that the present pain is the measure of his cure.

According to what I have said up to here, denial of the will for life (which is called complete resignation or saintliness) always comes from the quieting of •the will that is the knowledge of •its inner conflict and •its essential pointlessness, which are expressed in the suffering of all living things. The difference between what I have called 'two paths' to that knowledge is that between

a the case where the person merely *knows about* suffering, and voluntarily makes it his own through his penetration of the individuation-maker, and

¹ [AS gives this in English; it is the title of, and final phrase in, a poem by Ossian, a Gaelic poet; it's presumably the Gaels that AS is calling 'the most melancholy'.]

² [slightly expanding the German *die Klippe der Empfindsamkeit*, literally meaning 'the reef [or rock] of sensibility'.]

↳ the case where the knowledge comes from the person's *experiencing* of suffering that is immediately felt by himself.

True salvation, release from life and suffering, is unthinkable without a complete denial of the will. Until that happens, each person is nothing other than this will itself, whose phenomenon is an ephemeral existence—an always pointless, constantly frustrated striving—and what has been depicted as the world full of suffering to which all things irrevocably belong. For we found above that life is always certain for the will for life, and its single actual form is *the present*, from which those things never escape, although birth and death prevail within the phenomenon. The Indian myth expresses this by saying of those who follow path a that 'They are reborn'. The significance of the great ethical difference between characters is that the evil person is infinitely far from acquiring the knowledge that leads to denial of the will, so that he is *actually* exposed to all the torments that appear as *possible* in life. For even the present happy state of his person is only a phenomenon and deception of Maya, mediated by the individuation-maker, the beggar's happy dream. The sufferings that he inflicts on others in the intensity and fury of the press of his will are the measure of the sufferings whose experience by him cannot break his will and lead him to eventual denial.¹ All true and pure love, by contrast, indeed even all free rightness of conduct, comes from seeing through the individuation-maker, which when it is a completely clear seeing-through brings complete salvation and redemption, the phenomenon of which is the state of resignation I have described, the unshakable peace that accompanies it, and the greatest joyfulness in death.

69. Suicide

Nothing is more different from

the denial of the will for life that I have depicted. . . ., which is the single act of freedom showing up in the phenomenon. . . .

than

the voluntary elimination of its individual phenomenon: *suicide*.

Far from being a denial of the will, suicide is a phenomenon of powerful affirmation of the will. For the denial of the will has its essence in the person's hatred not of the sufferings but of the enjoyments of life. Someone who commits suicide *wills life*, and is merely dissatisfied with the conditions under which he has it. So he emphatically doesn't give up the will for life; he merely gives up life, by destroying the individual phenomenon. He wills life, wills the unrestricted existence and affirmation of his body; but the web of circumstances doesn't permit this, and he experiences great suffering. The very will for life in this individual phenomenon is so much hampered that it can't put forth its energies. So it decides according to its own nature in itself, which lies outside the domain of the GP and isn't affected by the difference between one individual phenomenon and another; for it is the inner being of the life of all things, and isn't affected by any arising or passing away. For that same firm, inner certainty by which we all live without constant fear of death—the certainty, that is, that will can never fail to have its phenomenon—supports even the deed of suicide. The will for life thus shows up just as much in this commission of suicide (Shiva) as in the satisfaction of self-preservation (Vishnu) and in the pleasure of procreation (Brahma). This is

¹ [We easily recognise the two groups of sufferings that AS refers to in this sentence, but it's not clear why he says that one is the measure (*das Mass*) of the others.]

the inner significance of the *unity of Trimurti*,¹ which every human being is as a whole, though which of the three heads is raised varies from time to time.

As the individual thing relates to ideas, so suicide relates to denial of the will: someone who commits suicide denies merely the individual, not the species. We have already found that, because life is always certain for the will for life, and suffering is essential to this, suicide is an entirely vain and foolish action; it is the voluntary destruction of a single phenomenon, leaving the *thing in itself* undisturbed, as a rainbow endures however fast the exchange of the drops that are its momentary bearers. But in addition to this, suicide is the masterpiece of Maya, as the most screaming expression of the self-contradiction of the will for life. Just as we have recognised this contradiction in the lowest phenomena of will, in the constant battle for matter and time and space among all expressions of natural forces and all organic individuals (chapter 27), and as we saw with frightening clarity this conflict increasingly at work at the rising levels of objectification of will, so on the highest level, which is the idea of the human being, it finally reaches the degree where not only individuals displaying the same idea—i.e. belonging to the same species—engage in mutual extermination, but even the same individual declares war on himself, and the intensity with which he wills life and opposes the suffering that hinders it brings him to the point of destroying himself, so that by an act of will the individual will eliminates the body, which is just his own form of visibility, rather than allowing suffering to break the will. [AS continues this line of thought rather obscurely. His central point is that someone's suffering 'could lead him to self-denial and to redemption',

and that if he commits suicide he 'destroys the phenomenon of the will, the body, so that the will may remain unbroken'.]

That is why almost all ethical systems, philosophical and religious, condemn suicide, although they can give only weird sophistical reasons for doing so. But if anyone was ever held back from suicide by a purely moral impulse, the innermost sense of this self-overcoming (whatever concepts his reason may have clothed it in for him) was this: 'I do not wish to escape suffering, because submitting to it can contribute to nullifying that will for life whose phenomenon is so wretched, strengthening the knowledge of the world's real nature that is already dawning on me, so that it may finally become a quieter of my will and redeem me forever.'

It is well known that from time to time cases occur where the act of suicide extends to the children: the father kills the children, whom he greatly loves, and then himself. If we consider that conscience, religion, and all traditional notions lead him to recognise murder as the worst crime, yet he commits it in the hour of his own death and could have no egoistic motive for doing so, then the deed can only be explained this way: the will of the individual, the father, immediately recognises itself in the children, though caught up in the delusion that takes the phenomenon for the essence in itself; and being deeply in the grip of knowledge of the misery of all life, he now intends to eliminate the essence itself along with the phenomenon, thus rescuing himself and the children. . . .from existence and its sorrow.

[AS now has a paragraph concerning the attempt to reproduce that suicide's line of thought to 'voluntary chastity'. He argues, a bit obscurely, that] this isn't possible by physical force such as destruction of the seed, or killing of the

¹ [The Trimurti are the trinity of supreme divinity in Hinduism, in which the cosmic functions of creation, maintenance, and destruction are personified.] (Wikipedia)]

newborn, or suicide. It is precisely nature that leads the will to the light, because it can only find its redemption in the light. Therefore, the purposes of nature are to be in every way promoted, once the will for life that is its inner essence has decided.

There seems to be one particular sort of suicide that is quite different from the ordinary sort, though its occurrence has perhaps not been sufficiently verified. It is voluntarily chosen starvation coming from the highest degree of asceticism; its phenomenon has always been accompanied by much religious fanaticism and even superstition, so that the reality of it—if it really has occurred—has been obscured. But it seems that *it has occurred*, that complete denial of the will can reach the level where even the will to take in the nourishment needed to maintain the body's vegetative life falls away. When someone dies in this way, his suicide doesn't arise from the will for life; rather, this utterly resigned ascetic has simply stopped living because he has totally stopped willing. [After an obscure addition to this, AS goes into details of individual cases that have been reported of suicide by starvation, where there is some evidence of their being of the will-denying kind of asceticism that is his topic here. He concludes:] The following item appears in a recent number of a Nuremberg newspaper:

'It is reported from Bern that in a thick forest near Thurnen a male corpse was discovered in a small hut; it had already been lying in a state of decomposition for about a month, in clothes that threw little light on the standing of their possessor. Two very fine shirts lay nearby. The most important item was a Bible interleaved with blank pages which had been partly written on by the deceased. He reports in them the day of his departure from home (but the place of his home is not named), then says that he has been

driven by the spirit of God into a wilderness to pray and to fast. He had already fasted for seven days on his journey to this place; then he ate again. Having settled in, he began to fast again. . . . Then every day is marked with a stroke; there are five of these, at the end of which the pilgrim presumably died. There was also found a letter to a pastor regarding a sermon that the deceased had heard him give; but here too the address was missing.'

Between these two sorts of voluntary death—•one arising from extreme asceticism, •the other, more usual, from desperation—there may be all sorts of intervening levels and combinations that are indeed hard to explain; but the human spirit has depths, darkneses, and convolutions whose illumination and unfolding is an extremely difficult task.

70. Freedom in the phenomenon. Contradictions

That concludes my account of what I call *denial of the will*. One might regard it as incompatible with the earlier discussion of the necessity that belongs to motivation just as much as to any other mode of the GP, so that motives—like all causes—are only occasioning causes. With motives the *person's* character unfolds its essence and reveals it with the necessity of a natural law, which is why back there I absolutely denied freedom as *liberum arbitrium indifferentiae* [see Glossary]. But far from suppressing that denial here, I call it to mind. In truth, real freedom, i.e. independence from the GP, belongs only to will as *thing in itself*, not to its phenomenon, whose essential form is everywhere the GP, the sphere *or home ground* of necessity. But there is one case—*only* one—where that freedom can become directly visible in the phenomenon; that's the case where freedom

puts an end to that which is making its appearance, and because

when this happens the mere phenomenon, a link in the chain of causes, the animate body, still continues in time, which contains only phenomena,

it follows that the will that manifests itself through this phenomenon now stands in contradiction with it, denying what the phenomenon expresses. In such a case the genitals, for example, as the visible aspect of the sex drive, exist and are healthy; but nonetheless, even in the innermost ·consciousness·, no sexual satisfaction is willed; and the entire body is only the visible expression of the will for life, yet the motives corresponding to this will are no longer effectual. Indeed,

- the dissolution of the body,
- the end of the individual, and thereby
- the maximal impeding of the will in nature

is welcome and desired. Now, the contradiction between my assertion of •the necessity of the determination of the will by motives in accordance with the character and my assertion of •the possibility of the entire suppression of the will through which the motives become powerless is only the repetition in philosophy of this *real* contradiction that arises from the direct encroachment of the freedom of *the will-in-itself*, which knows no necessity, into the sphere of the necessity of its phenomenon. The key to reconciling these contradictions lies in the fact that the state in which one's character is removed from the power of motives comes not directly from the will but from an altered manner of knowledge. That is: as long as knowledge is only what is caught up in the individuation-maker, simply following the GP, the power of motives is indeed irresistible; but when

the individuation-maker is seen through; and ideas, indeed the essence of things in themselves, are directly

recognised as the same will in all of them, and from this recognition comes a general quieting of willing, then individual motives become ineffective, because the kind of knowledge corresponding to them has withdrawn, having been obscured by an entirely different one. So the character can of course never change in any of its **parts**, and must with the consistency of a natural law carry out the will of which it is as a **whole** the phenomenon; but this very **whole**, the ·person's· character itself, can be totally cancelled by the switch ·in kinds· of knowledge that I have described. This cancellation is what Asmus, as cited a few pages back, described as the 'catholic, transcendental change' and wondered at; it is also what the Christian church most fittingly calls *being born again*, calling the recognition that it comes from *the effect of grace*. Just because our topic is not alteration in someone's character but a complete cancellation of it, it follows that however different characters may have been before reaching that cancellation, after it they—i.e. the people whose characters they were—display a great similarity in their conduct, though they all *talk* very differently, according to their different concepts and dogmas,

On this understanding of it, therefore, the old philosophical doctrine of freedom of the will—constantly challenged and constantly maintained—is not groundless, nor is the church's dogma of *effect of grace* and *rebirth* without meaning and significance. But unexpectedly we now see the two of them come together into a unity, and can now understand the sense in which the excellent Malebranche could say *La liberté est un mystère* [French for 'freedom is a mystery'], and be right. For what the Christian mystics call 'effect of grace' and 'rebirth' is the single direct expression of *freedom of the will*. It first occurs when the will, having achieved knowledge of its essence in itself, is quieted by this and thereby removed from being affected by motives, which are in the domain

of a different kind of knowledge whose only objects are phenomena.

The possibility of freedom thus expressing itself is man's greatest prerogative. It is eternally lacking in animals, because it requires cool thinking by reason, which— independently of present impressions—allows for a survey of one's life as a whole. Animals lack all possibility of freedom, just as they lack all possibility of true—thus coolly thoughtful—decision-making on the basis of a previous thoroughgoing conflict among motives, which would involve abstract presentations, thus involving reason, which animals don't have. With the same necessity with which a stone falls to the earth, a hungry wolf sinks its teeth into the flesh of its prey, with no possibility of realising that it is the one that is torn apart as well the one that is doing the tearing. Necessity is the realm of nature; freedom is the realm of grace.

So we have seen that this self-cancellation of the will comes from knowledge, and all knowledge and insight are independent of choice; so it follows that this denial of willing, this occurrence of freedom, cannot be intentionally forced, but comes from the innermost relationship of knowing to willing in a person, thus coming suddenly, as if spontaneously, from without. That is precisely why the church called it 'a work of grace'. Just as it still had to depend on the reception of grace, so also the effect of the quieting is in the end an act of freedom on the part of the will. And because in consequence of such an effect of grace the whole nature of the person is fundamentally changed and reversed, so that he no longer wills anything that he previously willed intensely, something like a *new man* replaces the old one, which is why the church called this consequence of the effect of grace 'being born again'. For what it calls *the natural man*, to whom it denies all capacity for goodness, is just

the will for life, which must be denied if redemption is to be achieved from an existence such as ours. That is, behind our existence something else is hidden, which only becomes accessible to us by our shaking off the world.

It is with respect not to

- individuals, according to the GP, but to
- the idea of humanity in its unity,

that Christian theology symbolises *nature*, *affirmation of the will for life*, in **Adam**, whose sin as inherited by us—

i.e. our unity with him in the *idea*, which is represented in time by the bond of procreation

—makes all of us partakers of suffering and eternal death. And on the other hand it symbolises *grace*, *denial of the will*, *redemption* in **God become man**, who, as free from all sin, i.e. from all will for life,

cannot have come as we do from the most decisive affirmation of the will for life, or like us have a body that is through and through simply concrete will, phenomenon of will,

but rather, born of the pure virgin, has indeed only a phantom body. . . . This doctrine about Christ's body was particularly taught by Apelles, who with his followers was objected to by Tertullian. But even Augustine himself comments on Romans 8:3 ('. . . God sent his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh') as follows: 'It was not indeed sinful flesh, not being born of carnal desire; but there was the likeness of flesh in it, because it was mortal flesh.' He also teaches in the work called *Opus imperfectum* that original sin is at once sin and punishment. It is present in newborn children, but first shows itself when they have grown. Nonetheless, this sin does not originate in the will of the sinner. This sinner was Adam, but we had all existed in him; misfortune befell Adam, and in him misfortune has befallen us all.

The doctrine of original sin (affirmation of the will) and

redemption (denial of the will) is actually the great truth that constitutes the core of Christianity, while the rest is mostly just clothing, husk, trappings. Accordingly, one should always take Jesus Christ in general terms, as the symbol or personification of denial of the will for life; not as an individual, whether according to his mythical history in the gospels or according to the plain history that that is presumably based on. For neither of those is likely to give complete satisfaction. It is merely the vehicle for its initial reception, for people who always demand something factual. —In recent times Christianity has forgotten its true meaning and degenerated into banal optimism, but that is of no concern to us here.

Furthermore, it is an original and evangelical doctrine of Christianity that Augustine—with the approval of the heads of the church—defended against the platitudes of the Pelagians, and that Luther made it the main goal of his efforts to purify of errors and re-establish, as he clearly declares in his book *On the bondage of the will*, namely the doctrine that

the will is not free, but is in its origin subject to the inclination to evil, so that its works are always sinful and imperfect and can never be enough for righteousness; therefore what make us blessed is not these works but faith alone; and this faith arises not from intention and free will but from *the work of grace* which, without our co-operation, comes to us **as though from outside**.

Along with the dogmas mentioned earlier, this genuinely evangelical dogma belongs with the ones that ignorant and trivial opinion nowadays rejects as absurd, or hides. The rationalism of today, despite Augustine and Luther, latches onto to vulgar Pelagianism, dismissing as antiquated the profound dogmas that are peculiar [see Glossary] to Christianity

in the narrowest sense, and and essential to it, while holding to and granting primary importance to dogma that has been derived and retained from Judaism alone, connected with Christianity ·not in theology or philosophy, but· only on the path of history.

But I recognise in the above-mentioned doctrine a truth that wholly agrees with the upshot of my own investigations. That is, I see ·in that Christian doctrine the thesis· that true virtue and holiness of disposition have their origin not in deliberate choice (works), but in knowledge (faith); which is exactly the conclusion I reached on the basis of my main thought. If salvation always came from works backed by motives and deliberate intentions, then virtue would always be—twist it how you will—a matter of shrewd, methodical, farseeing egoism.

But the **faith** for which the Christian church promises salvation is this: that just as

by the fall of the first man we all share in that sin and have become subject to death and perdition,

so too

we are all redeemed only through grace and the divine mediator's taking on himself our tremendous guilt,

which happens entirely without any personal merit on our part. For anything that can come from the person's intentional motive-determined conduct (**works**) can by its very nature never justify us. . . . This **faith** ·has two components; it is the belief· **(i)** that our state is originally and essentially a wretched one from which we need to be redeemed; and **(ii)** that we ourselves have evil in our nature, and are so tightly bound to it that our **works** in accordance with law and precepts—i.e. in accordance with motives—are never enough for righteousness and cannot redeem us. Rather, redemption can be won only through **faith**, i.e. through a change in one's mode of knowing, and this faith itself can

only come through grace, and so **as though from outside**. This means that salvation is something entirely foreign to our person, and points to a denial and surrender of this person as required for salvation. . . . Luther in his book *On Christian freedom* insists that once faith has appeared, good works follow from it automatically, as symptoms or fruits of it; not as laying claim to any merit, justification, or reward, but rather in a completely voluntary way and gratuitously.—So in my view also, free righteousness comes initially from ever more clearly seeing through the individuation-maker, with love then extending to the point of the utter elimination of egoism, and in the end resignation, or denial of the will.

I have brought in these dogmas of Christian theology, which in themselves have nothing to do with philosophy, only in order to show that the ethics yielded by my whole inquiry. . . .is in perfect agreement with Christian doctrines, properly so called, and was in its essentials contained in them and made available by them; just as it equally agrees with the doctrines and ethical precepts expounded. . . .in the sacred books of India. At the same time, recalling the dogmas of the Christian church served to clarify and elucidate the seeming contradiction between on the one hand **(i)** the necessity of all expressions of character when motives are presented (the ‘realm of nature’), and on the other **(ii)** the freedom of the *will in itself* to deny itself and to nullify one’s character along with all the motivational necessity that is grounded in it (the ‘realm of grace’).

71. Nothingness

As I bring to an end my treatment of the basics of ethics, and with it the whole development of that one thought which it has been my purpose to impart, I want not •to conceal an objection concerning this last part of the account but

rather •to show that it lies in the nature of the matter and can’t possibly be removed. The objection is this: once our considerations have finally brought us to the point where we—in complete saintliness—are contemplating denial and abandonment of all willing, and thus deliverance from a world whose entire existence has shown itself to be suffering, this now appears to us as a passage into empty *nothingness*.

[After a detour through Latin technicalities and Kantian terminology, AS arrives at the conclusion that any intelligible use of ‘nothing’ is *relative*, i.e. involves the thought *nothing of kind K* for some value of K. (The main point of the detour is to enable him to tack Kant’s Latin *nihil negativum* and *nihil privatum* onto expressions meaning ‘absolute nothing’ and ‘relative nothing’ respectively. The Latin phrases are omitted in this version.) He then continues:] No absolute nothing is so much as thinkable; anything of this sort—when considered from a higher standpoint or subsumed under a broader concept—is always in turn a relative nothing. Every nothing is such only in relation to something else, and presupposes this relation and thus also presupposes that something else. Even a logical contradiction is only a relative nothing. It is not something thought by reason, but that doesn’t make it a case of absolute nothing. For it is a verbal composition, it is an example of something unthinkable which is needed in demonstrating the laws of thought; so when it is employed for this purpose the arguer will keep focus on *nonsense* as the positive thing that he is just at the moment seeking, passing over *sense* as something negative. So every absolute nothing, when subordinated to some higher concept, will make its appearance as a mere relative nothing. . . . That which is generally assumed as positive—what we call *the existent* and whose negation the concept *nothing* in its most general meaning expresses—is precisely the world of presentation, which I have shown to be the objectivisation of will, its mirror.

We ourselves *are* this will and this world, and presentation in general belongs to them as one aspect of them. The form of this presentation is *space and time*, so from this standpoint everything that exists has to be somewhere and at some time. To presentation belong concepts (the material of philosophy) and words (the signs for concepts). Denial (suppression, conversion) of the will is also denial and suppression of the world, its mirror. No longer seeing the will in this mirror, we ask in vain where it has gone, and then lament that—since it no longer has any where or when—it has vanished into nothingness. . . .

If you insist on somehow acquiring a positive knowledge of that which philosophy can express only negatively as *denial of the will*, then I can only point to the state experienced by all who have achieved complete denial of the will—the state that is given the names ‘ecstasy’, ‘rapture’, ‘illumination’, ‘union with God’, and so on; but this state really shouldn’t be called knowledge, because it no longer has the form of subject and object—the knower and the known—and is, moreover, available only in one’s own experience and can’t be further communicated.

But we who consistently occupy the standpoint of philosophy must here be satisfied with knowledge of the negative sort, content to have arrived at the boundary-marker of the domain of the positive. Having recognised world’s *essence in itself* as will, and only its objectivisation in all of its phenomena, and having pursued the latter from the unconscious press of obscure natural forces up to the most fully conscious conduct of human beings, I don’t in the least shrink from the conclusion that with free denial—with abandonment of the will—all of those phenomena are nullified, that constant pressing and driving without goal and without rest, on all the levels of objectivisation in which and through which the world subsists; the multiplicity of forms in its

step-wise succession nullified; along with the will its entire phenomenon is nullified, and finally its general forms space and time, and even its fundamental subject/object form. No will: no presentation, no world.

Before us remains indeed only nothingness. But what resists this dissolution into nothingness, *our nature*, is just the will for life, which we ourselves *are*, just as it is our world. Our great abhorrence of nothingness is merely another expression of the fact that we will life so much, and are nothing but this will, and know nothing but it.

But if we turn our gaze away from our own neediness and uncertainty and toward those who have overcome the world, in whom the will, having achieved full self-knowledge, recognises itself in all things and then freely denies itself, and who then only wait to see the vanishing of its last trace, along with the body that it animates, then we are shown—

- instead of restless press and effort,
- instead of the constant passage from desire to fear and from joy to sorrow,
- instead of the undying and never satisfied hope that constitutes the life-dream of the man who wills,

—that peace which is higher than all reason, that perfect sea-calm of the spirit, that deep repose, unshakable confidence and cheerfulness whose mere reflection in a face (such as Raphael and Correggio have depicted it) is an entire and sure gospel: only knowledge has remained, the will has vanished. But we then look with deep and painful longing at this state, the contrast with which shines a full light on the sorrowful and wretched character of our own state. Yet this is the only consideration that can give us lasting consolation, when on the one hand,

we have recognised as essential to the phenomenon of will—to the world—incurable suffering and endless sorrow,

and on the other hand,

we see the world dissolve with nullification of the will,
leaving only empty nothingness before us.

And so in this way, by contemplating the life and conduct of
saints—

whom of course we seldom encounter in our own
experience, but who are brought before our eyes by
their written history and by art, attested with the
stamp of inner truth

—we must *banish* the dark impression of that nothingness,
which hovers as the ultimate goal behind all virtue and
saintliness and which we fear as children do the dark,
instead of *circumventing* it as do the Indians, through myths
and meaningless words such as ‘reabsorption in Brahma’ or
the ‘Nirvana’ of the Buddhists. Rather, we freely confess it:
after complete nullification of the will, what remains for all
those who are still full of will, is indeed nothingness. But
also conversely, for those in whom the will has turned and
denied itself, this our so very real world with all its suns and
galaxies is nothing.

Appendix: Critique of Kantian philosophy

It is the privilege of great genius, especially of genius that opens up a new path, to commit great faults with impunity. (Voltaire)

72. Introduction

It is much easier to display the faults and errors in the work of a great mind than to give a clear and full exposition of its value. For the faults are individual and finite, so that they can be completely surveyed. Whereas the stamp that genius impresses on its works is that what is excellent in them is unfathomable and inexhaustible; so that they become never-aging teachers through many centuries. The completed masterpiece of a truly great mind will always have such a deep and powerful effect on the entire human race that there's no way of calculating how far—down the centuries and across the nations—its illuminating influence can reach. This will always be so; for however cultivated and rich the times may have been in which the masterpiece arose, genius always rises like a palm-tree above the ground in which it is rooted.

But a deeply penetrating and widespread effect of this sort cannot occur suddenly, because of the great distance between the genius and ordinary men. The knowledge that this individual has at *one* period drawn directly from life and the world—won and set forth for others as something won and readied for them—can't become the possession of mankind right away; for mankind has less power to receive than the genius has to give. Rather, even after a successful battle with unworthy opponents who challenge the immortal thing's life at its very birth, wanting to nip in the bud the salvation of man (like the serpents in the cradle of Hercules), that knowledge still has to

- wander the byways of countless false interpretations and distorted applications,
- survive attempts to unite it with old errors, and so
- live in a state of battle

until a new, unprejudiced generation arises for it, a generation which, even from its youth, receives waters from that well through a thousand derivative channels, assimilates them bit by bit, and so comes to share in the benefit that was destined to flow to mankind from that great mind. Thus slowly goes the education of the human race, of that weak yet refractory pupil of the genius.

So too, it will take time for the entire force and importance of Kant's doctrine to become obvious, which it will do once the spirit of the times—having been gradually reshaped by the influence of that doctrine, altered in its most important and innermost features—comes to bear living witness to the power of that colossal mind. But I don't want here in rash anticipation of the *Zeitgeist* to take on the thankless role of Calchas and Cassandra.¹ But I must be allowed, in accordance with what has been said, to regard Kant's works as still very new, while many nowadays view them as already antiquated—indeed have laid them aside as over and done with; and others, made bold by that, ignore them altogether and brazenly go on philosophising about God and the soul under the presuppositions of the old dogmatic realism and its scholastic teaching. It's like wanting to make the doctrines of the alchemists hold good in the context of modern chemistry! Anyway, Kant's works don't need my feeble praise, but will

¹ [Prophets in Greek mythology.]

themselves eternally praise their master and live forever on earth—not perhaps in his letter but in his spirit.

Of course, if we look back at the immediate upshot of his doctrines, and thus on efforts and events in the domain of philosophy during the time since he wrote, we find confirmation of something very disheartening that Goethe said: ‘Just as the water that is displaced by a ship immediately flows back in behind it, so when great minds have pushed error aside and made room for themselves, it very quickly closes in behind them according to a law of nature.’ Yet this period has been only an episode, which is to be reckoned as part of the fate I have referred to that befalls all new and great knowledge; an episode that is now unmistakably near its end, for the persistently driven bubble eventually bursts. There is a growing general awareness that true and serious philosophy still stands where Kant left it. At any rate, I cannot see that between Kant and myself anything has been done in philosophy; so I regard myself as his immediate successor.

What I intend in this Appendix to my work is really only to justify my doctrine in respect of its many points of disagreement—even of contradiction—with the Kantian philosophy. A discussion of this is necessary because my train of thought, different as its content is from the Kantian, is obviously under its influence, necessarily presupposes it, and takes it as a starting-point; and I confess that what is best in my system is due, second only to the impression of the perceptual world, to the works of Kant as well as to the sacred writings of the Hindus and to Plato.

But I can’t justify my side in the disagreements between myself and Kant without accusing him of error and exposing mistakes that he has made. In this Appendix, therefore, I must proceed against Kant in a thoroughly polemical manner and indeed with seriousness and with all-in effort; for that’s

the only way to get rid of the error that clings to Kant’s doctrine and make its truth shine more brightly and stand more securely. So it is not to be expected that my sincere reverence for Kant should extend to his weaknesses and mistakes, leading me to expose them with the most cautious indulgence, using circumlocutions that would inevitably make my writing weak and faint. Such indulgence is needed for the living, because human frailty cannot endure even the most just refutation of an error unless it is accompanied by soothing and flattery, and hardly even then; and a teacher of the age and benefactor of humanity at least deserves that we indulge his human weakness so as to spare him pain. But a dead man has cast off this weakness: his achievement stands firm; time will more and more purify it from every overestimation and devaluation. His mistakes must be separated from it, rendered harmless, and then consigned to oblivion. Therefore, in the polemic against Kant that I’m about to begin I have my eye solely on his mistakes and weaknesses, confront them with hostility, and wage a relentless war of extermination against them, constantly concerned not to shelter them under indulgence but rather to set them in the brightest light so as the more surely to annihilate them. For the reasons I have given, I am not conscious of injustice or ingratitude toward Kant. Still, so as to prevent anyone from seeing malice in my proceedings, I want first to display my sincere reverence for and gratitude toward Kant by briefly expounding his main achievement as I see it; and I’ll do this at such a level of generality that I’m not required to touch on the points on which I must later contradict him.

73. Kant and his predecessors

Kant's greatest achievement is his distinction between phenomenon and thing in itself—on the basis of a demonstration that between things and us there always stands the *intellect*, so that things cannot be known as they may be in themselves. He was led on this path by Locke (see Kant's *Prolegomena* §13). Locke had shown that the secondary qualities of things—such as sound, smell, colour, hardness, softness, smoothness, and the like—being based on states of the senses, don't belong to objective bodies, to things in themselves, to which he attributed only the primary qualities, i.e. those that merely presuppose space and impenetrability, thus extension, shape, solidity, number, mobility. But this easily discoverable Lockean distinction, which remains merely on the surface of things, was only a youthful prelude, so to speak, to the Kantian distinction. Starting from an incomparably higher standpoint, Kant explains all of what Locke had allowed to count as primary qualities, i.e. qualities of •the thing in itself, as also belonging only to •its appearance in our faculty of apprehension, and indeed just because we know *a priori* of their conditions—space, time, and causality. Thus Locke had removed from the thing in itself the share that the sense organs have in its appearance. Kant, however, also removed from it the brain-functions' share (although not under this name), thus giving the distinction between *phenomenon* and *thing in itself* an infinitely greater significance and a very much deeper meaning. For this purpose he had to take in hand the important separating of our *a priori* knowledge from knowledge that is *a posteriori*, something that had never been done before him with adequate strictness and completeness or with a clear understanding of what was going on; this accordingly became the main subject of his

profound investigations.

Now here I want to note at once that Kant's philosophy has a threefold relation to that of his predecessors: **(i)** confirming and broadening **Locke's** philosophy, as we have just seen; **(ii)** correcting and using **Hume's**, a relation that is most clearly expressed in the preface to the *Prolegomena*—

(that finest and most comprehensible of all Kant's main writings, which ought to be read much more than it is, for it immensely facilitates the study of his philosophy);

and **(iii)** a decidedly polemical and destructive relation to the **Leibniz-Wolffian** philosophy. One should be familiar with all three doctrines before proceeding to a study of Kantian philosophy.

If (as I have said) the distinction between •phenomenon and •thing in itself—thus the doctrine of the utter *diversity* of the ideal and real—is the hallmark of the Kantian philosophy, the assertion of the absolute *identity* of these two which appeared soon afterwards is a sad example of proof of what I quoted Goethe as saying a page or two back; all the more so as it rested on nothing but the humbug of 'intellectual intuition' and was accordingly only a return to the crudeness of the common viewpoint, masked under the imposing ways of elegant airs, bombast, and gibberish. It became the point of departure worthy of the still grosser nonsense of the plodding and stupid Hegel.

·KANT'S RENOVATION OF ALREADY EXISTING DOCTRINES·

Kant's separation of the phenomenon from the thing in itself, understood in the way I have explained, far surpassed in the depth and thoughtfulness of its grounding everything that had gone before it. (It was also infinitely consequential in its results; ·I'll come to that shortly·.) Kant took a truth that Plato tirelessly repeated, and presented it

- entirely in his own terms,
- in an utterly new manner,
- from a new angle, and
- on a new path.

Plato usually put it thus: This world that appears to the senses has no true *being* but only a ceaseless *becoming*; it is and also is not; and apprehension of it is not so much knowledge as delusion. This is also what he put in mythical form in the most important passage in all his works (*Republic*, beginning of Book 7, mentioned early in chapter 31 above, saying that men who are tightly bound in a dark cave see neither genuine original light nor actual things, but only the scant light of the fire in the cave and shadows of the actual things that are passing in front of the fire behind their backs; yet they think the shadows are *Realität*, and that determining the succession of them is true wisdom.

The same truth, expressed again in an entirely different way, is also one of the main doctrines of the Vedas and Puranas, the doctrine concerning Maya, by which was understood what Kant calls phenomenon as opposed to thing in itself.¹ For the work of Maya is said to be this visible world in which we exist, which is

- a conjured-up bit of magic,
- an insubstantial semblance with no nature in itself,
- like an optical illusion or a dream,
- a veil that envelops human consciousness,
- a Something of which it is equally false and true to say that it is and that it is not.

•HOW KANT IMPROVED ON THOSE•

But Kant not only expressed the same doctrine in an utterly new and original manner, but made it a proved and indis-

putable truth by means of the calmest and most temperate exposition, whereas Plato and the Indians had based their assertions merely on a general perception of the world, presented them as the direct output of their consciousness, and expressed them in a way that was mythical and poetic rather than philosophical and clear. In this respect, they relate to Kant as the Pythagoreans Hicetas, Philolaus, and Aristarchus—who had already maintained the movement of the earth around a resting sun—relate to Copernicus. Such distinct knowledge and calm, thoughtful exposition of this dream-like nature of the whole world is really the basis of the whole Kantian philosophy; it is its soul and its greatest merit. He accomplished this by dissecting and showing us piece by piece the entire machinery of our knowledge faculty, by means of which the phantasmagoria of the objective world is brought about, doing this with admirable thoughtfulness and skill. All earlier western philosophy, appearing unspeakably clumsy as compared with the Kantian, had failed to recognise this truth, and for just that reason had always spoken as if in a dream. It was Kant who first suddenly awakened them from it; and therefore the last sleepers (Mendelssohn) called him ‘the all-destroyer’. He showed that the laws that reign with unbreakable necessity in existence, i.e. in experience in general, are not to be used to derive or explain existence itself; and thus that their validity is only relative, i.e. comes into play only after existence—the world of experience in general—is already posited and before us; so that these laws cannot be our guide when we come to explain the existence of the world and of ourselves. All earlier western philosophers had fancied •that these laws which govern phenomena—and all of which (time and space as well as causality and inference) I sum up in formulating the GP—were absolute laws

¹ [See the final paragraph of chapter 37.]

conditioned by nothing, *aeternae veritates* [Latin for 'eternal truths'], •that the world itself existed only in consequence of and in conformity with them; and therefore •that under their guidance the whole riddle of the world must be capable of solution. The assumptions made for this purpose (criticised by Kant under the name of 'ideas of reason') really only served to raise the mere phenomenon (the work of Maya, the 'shadow-world' of Plato) to the level of the one highest *Realität*, to set it in the place of the innermost and true essence of things, thereby making real knowledge of this impossible; that is, in a word, to put the dreamers still more soundly to sleep. Kant showed those laws, and consequently the world itself, to be conditioned by the subject's kind of knowledge; from which it followed that however far one might go in inquiring and inferring under their guidance, one wouldn't advance a step towards the main thing, i.e. towards knowledge of the nature of the world in itself and apart from presentation, but would only move like a squirrel in a treadmill. So one can compare all the dogmatists to people who thought that if they went straight ahead long enough they would reach the end of the world; but Kant then circumnavigated the world and showed that, because it is round, one cannot escape it by horizontal movement, but that by perpendicular movement this may be possible.¹ One can also say that Kant's doctrine provides the insight that the end and beginning of the world is to be sought not beyond but within us.

But all of this rests on the basic distinction between **a** dogmatic philosophy and **b** critical (or transcendental) philosophy. Anyone who wants to make this quite clear to himself, and embody it in an example, can do that in all

brevity by reading, as a specimen of a dogmatic philosophy, Leibniz's essay 'The Ultimate Origin of Things'. Here in a quite proper realistic-dogmatic manner, using the ontological and cosmological proofs of the existence of God, the origin and excellent character of the world are demonstrated *a priori* on the basis of *veritates aeternae*. It is mentioned in passing that experience reveals the exact opposite of the excellence of the world here demonstrated, whereupon experience is told that it understands nothing about this and should keep its mouth shut when philosophy has spoken *a priori*.

Now, with Kant, the critical philosophy has appeared as the opponent of this whole dogmatic method. It •takes for its problem those *veritates aeternae* that serve as the foundation of every such dogmatic structure, •investigates their origin, and •finds it in the human head, where they arise from the forms which belong specifically to it, and which it carries in itself for the purpose of comprehending an objective world. Thus here in the brain is the quarry that provides the material for those proud dogmatic constructions. But because to attain to this result the critical philosophy had to go beyond the *veritates aeternae* on which all preceding dogmatism was based, so as to make them the very object of its investigation, it became *transcendental*² philosophy. It follows from this that the objective world, as we know it, does not belong to the essence of the *thing in itself*, but is its mere phenomenon, conditioned by those very forms that lie *a priori* in the human intellect (i.e. brain); so it—the objective world—can contain nothing but phenomena.

Kant admittedly did not get as far as knowing that the phenomenon is the world as presentation and the thing in itself is will. •(i)• But he did show that the phenomenal

¹ [This sentence is a kind of joke. AS is not soberly saying that Kant showed anything about the shape of our globe.]

² [*transscendentale*; from Latin *trans scandare* = 'to climb beyond'.]

world is conditioned by the subject as much as by the object; and by isolating the most general forms of the world's phenomenon, i.e. the presentation, he showed that we can recognise these forms not only by starting from the object but just as well by starting from the subject, and can survey them in the whole of their lawful character, because they are really the common boundary between object and subject; and he concluded that following this boundary never enables us to penetrate into the inner being of the object or the subject, and consequently never lets us know the essence of the world, the thing in itself.

He derived the *thing in itself* not in the correct way (as I will soon show) but with help from an inconsistency that he had to pay the penalty for through frequent and incontrovertible attacks on this chief part of his doctrine. He didn't recognise the thing in itself directly in *will*; **·(ii)·** but he took a great, ground-breaking step toward this recognition by depicting the undeniable moral significance of human action as entirely distinct from the laws of the phenomenon, independent of them and and never explicable in accordance with them, but as something that immediately touches the thing in itself: this is the second main point about his achievement.

·(iii)· The third is utter overthrow of scholastic philosophy—a term that I use here designate the whole of the period beginning with the Church Father Augustine and ending just before Kant. For the chief characteristic of scholasticism is the one that was very accurately stated by Tennemann: *the prevailing religion's guardianship over philosophy*, leaving nothing for philosophy to do but proving and embellishing the main dogmas prescribed to it by that religion. The true scholastics, up to Suarez, confess this openly; subsequent philosophers do it more unconsciously, or without admitting it. It is generally thought that Scholastic

philosophy extended only to about a hundred years before Descartes, and and that he began an entirely new epoch of free inquiry, independent of all doctrines of positive faith; but in fact no such thing is attributable to Descartes and his successors, but only a semblance of it and at best an attempt at it. Descartes was a highly exceptional mind, who—considering the times he lived in—accomplished a great deal. But if we set this consideration aside and measure him for the alleged •liberation of thought from all fetters and •initiation of a new period of unprejudiced independent inquiry, we have to find that—with his scepticism lacking in true seriousness, adopted and discarded so quickly and so clumsily—he indeed puts on airs as if he would once and for all throw off all the early-implanted opinions of his time and his nation, but he does this only momentarily for show, in order to take them up again at once and maintain them even more firmly; and so have all of his successors up to Kant. Most applicable to a 'free independent thinker' of this stripe is the verse by Goethe:

Saving your gracious presence, he to me
A long-legged grasshopper appears to be,
That leaping flies, and flying leaps,
And in the grass to the same old ditty keeps.

Kant had grounds for putting on airs as if he too only meant things this way. But the supposed leap—which was permitted because of course it was 'known' to lead back into the grass—this time turned out to be a flight, and those who stand below have only to follow it, and can never recapture him.

So Kant ventured, on the basis of his doctrine, to show the impossibility of proving those dogmas that were supposed to have been proved so often. **Speculative theology** and the **rational psychology** connected with it received their death-

blow from him. Since then, they have vanished from German philosophy. Don't be misled by the fact that here and there the word is retained after the thing has been abandoned, or that some impoverished philosophy professor has the fear of his lord¹ before his eyes and leaves the truth to take care of itself. The size of this achievement of Kant's can be appreciated only by someone who has observed the harmful influence of those conceptions on natural science as well as philosophy, in all the writers of the 17th and 18th centuries, even the best of them. In German writings in natural science, the change in tone and metaphysical background that has appeared since Kant is striking; before him, the situation here was the same as it still is in England!

The size of this achievement of Kant's is connected with the fact that all the preceding philosophy (ancient, medieval, and modern) had been dominated by an unthinking adherence to the laws of the phenomenon, elevation of these laws to the position of eternal truths and thereby the raising of fleeting phenomena to the position of true essence of the world—in short, *realism* undisturbed in its delusion by any reflection. Berkeley, like Malebranche before him, had already recognised the one-sidedness, indeed the falsity of that philosophy; but he couldn't overthrow it, because his attack was limited to a single point. So it was left to Kant to enable the idealistic point of view to be dominant in Europe, at least in philosophy; the point of view which throughout all non-Moslem Asia, and indeed essentially, is that of religion. So before Kant we were in time; now time is in us, etc.

Ethics was also treated in accordance with laws of the phenomenon by that realistic philosophy, which takes those laws to be absolute, even applicable to the *thing in itself*. So it based ethics

- sometimes on a doctrine of happiness,
- sometimes on the will of the Creator, and
- finally on the concept of *perfection*.

This conception, taken by itself, is entirely empty and lacking in content, because it designates a mere relation that gets its meaning from the things it is applied to. For 'to be perfect' means nothing more than 'to correspond to some concept hereby presupposed and given'; and the concept must be presented in advance, because without it 'perfection' is an unknown quantity and consequently says *nothing* when expressed by itself. Someone might want to make the concept of *humanity* a tacit presupposition here, and accordingly set *striving for human perfection* as his moral principle; but then he is only saying 'Human beings ought to be as they ought to be'—and we are no wiser than before. In fact, 'perfect' is nearly a mere synonym for 'complete', for it signifies that in a given case or individual all the predicates that lie in the concept of its species are actually present. So the concept of 'perfection', when used simply and *in abstracto*, is a word empty of thought, and the same applies to talk of a 'most perfect being' and so on. It is all mere word-mongering. Nevertheless, in the last century this concept of perfection and imperfection had become common coin; it was indeed the hinge on which all moralising and even theologising turned. It was on everyone's lips, so that eventually real mischief was done with it. We see even the best writers of the time, such as Lessing, lamentably entangled in perfections and imperfections and thrashing about with them. Any thinking person would at least obscurely feel that this concept has no positive content because like an algebraic sign it signifies a mere relation *in abstracto*.

Kant, as I have said, completely separated the undeniably

¹ [meaning 'his employer'.]

great **a** ethical significance of actions from **b** the phenomenon and its laws, and showed **a** the former as directly bearing on *the thing in itself*, the innermost nature of the world, whereas **b** the latter—time and space and everything that fills them and is ordered within them following causal laws—are to be viewed as a shifting and insubstantial dream. . . .

That Kant's great accomplishments had to be accompanied by great errors can be appreciated on purely historical grounds: although he brought about the greatest revolution in philosophy, putting an end to the *scholasticism* (using this term in the broad sense I have indicated) that had lasted for fourteen centuries, thus beginning an entirely new third epoch in world philosophy,¹ the immediate upshot of his appearance was almost purely negative, not positive, because he didn't present a complete new system that his followers could at least have held onto for a while; so everyone noticed that something great had happened, but nobody quite knew what it was. They saw of course that the whole of previous philosophy had been fruitless dreaming from which the new age was now awakening; but they didn't know what they should now hold to. A great void, a great need, had come on the scene; even the general public was aroused. Occasioned by this fact, but not impelled by inner drive and a feeling of force. . . ., men with no exceptional talent made various weak, absurd, indeed sometimes crazy attempts to fill the void; and the now-aroused public listened to them with the great patience that is to be found only in Germany.

The same thing must once have happened in nature, when a great revolution altered the whole surface of the earth, land and sea changed places, and the scene was cleared for a new creation. It took a long time for nature to produce a new series of lasting forms, each in harmony with itself and with

all the others. During that time there appeared strange, monstrous organisms that lacked harmony internally and among themselves, and so could not survive for long, but whose still existing remains bring us memorials of that vacillation and effort on the part of newly forming nature.

We all know that an entirely similar crisis and an age of tremendous monstrosities was brought forth by Kant in philosophy; and that allows us to infer that his achievement can't have been perfect, and must have been burdened with great defects. . . . I want now to track these down.

74. Flaws in Kant's philosophy

We should start with the fundamental thought underlying the intention of the *Critique of Pure Reason* as a whole—making it clear for ourselves, and examining it.

Kant adopted the standpoint of his predecessors, the dogmatic philosophers, and so he started out as they did from the following presuppositions. **(1)** Metaphysics is the science of that which lies beyond the possibility of all experience. **(2)** Such a science can never be achieved using principles that are themselves first drawn from experience (*Prolegomena* §1); the only thing that can reach further than possible experience is what we know *before* all experience and thus *independently of* it. **(3)** Within our faculty of reason, some principles of this sort are actually to be found; they are comprehended under the name 'knowledge through pure reason'.

Kant goes this far with his predecessors, but here they part company. They say:

These principles, or items of knowledge through pure reason, are expressions of absolute possibility of

¹ [The first being ancient philosophy.]

things, *aeternae veritates*, sources of ontology; they stand *above* the world-order, as fate stood above the gods of the ancients.'

Kant says:

They are mere forms of our intellect, laws not of the existence of things but of their presentation to us, so they apply merely to our apprehension of things and can't extend beyond the possibility of experience (see objective **(1)** above). For the *a priori* nature of these forms of knowledge, since it can only rest on their subjective origin, is just what cuts us off for ever from knowledge of the nature of things in themselves, and confines us to a world of mere phenomena, so that we can't know—*a posteriori*, let alone *a priori*—things as they may be in themselves. So metaphysics is impossible, and its place is taken by the criticism of pure reason.¹

Against the old dogmatism, Kant is utterly victorious here; so all dogmatic efforts appearing since then have had to follow entirely different paths from the earlier ones. And I will now lead the way to the justification of my own path, in accordance with the currently accepted aim of that criticism.

A more careful examination of the reasoning given above will oblige one to confess that its first assumption is a *petitio principii* [see Glossary]. It lies in this proposition (presented with special clarity in Kant's *Prolegomena* §1): 'The source of metaphysics must not be at all empirical; its basic principles and concepts must never be taken from experience, whether inner or outer.' This cardinal assertion is given no support except an etymological argument based on the word 'metaphysics'—from Greek meaning 'beyond (or above) the physical'. But in fact things stand as follows. The world

and our own existence are necessarily displayed to us as a riddle. It is assumed without further ado •that the solution of the riddle can't come from a thorough understanding of the world itself, but must be sought in something entirely distinct from the world (for that's what is meant by 'beyond the possibility of all experience'); •that this solution cannot include anything of which we can have any sort of *immediate* knowledge (for that is what is meant by 'possible experience', both inner and outer); and •that it must be sought only in what we can learn in a merely *mediated* way, namely, in what we can learn through inferences from general propositions *a priori*. After the chief source of all knowledge was in this way excluded, and the direct way to truth was closed off, it is no wonder that the dogmatic systems failed, and that Kant could show the necessity of this failure; for metaphysics and knowledge *a priori* had been assumed beforehand to be identical.

In addition, one would have had to prove in advance that what it takes to solve the riddle of the world flatly *cannot* be contained within the world itself, but is to be sought only outside the world, in something we can be directed to only by those forms of which we are conscious *a priori*. But as long as this hasn't been proved, we have no ground—in this most important and difficult of all tasks—to block the source of knowledge that is richest in content, namely **inner and outer experience**, so as to work only with contentless forms. So I say that •the solution of the riddle of the world must come from an understanding of the world itself; thus that •the task of metaphysics is not to fly beyond the experience within which the world exists, but to understand it in its depths, because experience (outer and inner) is indeed the main source of all knowledge; and therefore that •the solution of

¹ [*Kritik der reinen Vernunft*, standardly translated as 'Critique of Pure Reason'.]

the riddle of the world is possible only by *correctly* connecting outer with inner experience, bringing these two so heterogeneous sources of knowledge into a ·fruitful· combination; although this is possible only within certain limits that are inseparable from our finite nature, hence in such a way that we achieve a correct understanding of the world itself, yet without reaching an explanation of its existence that is complete and eliminates all further problems. Hence, *est quadam prodire tenus* [Horace's Latin, meaning 'It is something to have come this far'], and my path lies in the middle between •the ·supposedly· omniscient science of earlier dogmatism and •the despair of Kantian critique. But the important truths discovered by Kant, by which the earlier metaphysical systems were overturned, have provided data and material for my path. . . . So much for Kant's fundamental idea; now I want to consider its elaboration and details.

Kant's style bears throughout the stamp of a superior mind, of genuine, firm individuality, and a quite unusual power of thought. Its character may perhaps be aptly described as a *sparkling dryness*, which enables him to take firm hold of concepts, single them out with great assurance, then toss them about with the greatest freedom, to the amazement of the reader. I find the same sparkling dryness in Aristotle's style as well, although his is much simpler.

Nonetheless, Kant's exposition is often unclear, indefinite, unsatisfactory, and sometimes obscure. The obscurity is partly to be excused by the difficulty of the topic and the depth of the thought. But •someone who is himself fundamentally clear and knows quite distinctly what he thinks and wants will never write unclearly, will never set forth wavering and vague concepts, and label them with extremely difficult, complicated expressions drawn from foreign languages, to be continually employed from there on, in the way that Kant took words and formulas from older—even

scholastic—philosophy, which he combined for his purposes, e.g. 'transcendental synthetic unity of apperception', and all over the place puts 'unity of synthesis' where 'union' alone would have been quite sufficient. Further, •such a person will not explain over and over again what has once been explained, which Kant does, e.g. with understanding, the categories, experience, and other chief concepts. •Such a person will not incessantly repeat himself and yet in every new exposition of the thought already expressed a hundred times leave it in just the same obscure condition. Rather, he will once and for all state his opinion clearly, rigorously, exhaustively, and leave it at that. As Descartes says in a letter ·to the Princess Elisabeth·: 'The better we understand something, the more we are determined to express it in just one way.' But the greatest drawback to Kant's sometimes obscure exposition is that it worked as an *exemplar vitiis imitabile* [Horace's Latin, meaning 'pattern for the imitation of his faults']; indeed, misunderstandings of it were employed to give authority to bad stuff. The public had been compelled to recognise that the obscure is not always senseless; and nonsense immediately took refuge behind obscure exposition. Fichte was the first to seize this new privilege, which he employed vigorously; Schelling was at least his equal in this; and a host of hungry scribblers without talent and without integrity soon outdid them both. But the greatest audacity in dishing up sheer nonsense, in stringing together senseless and frenzied webs of verbiage such as had until then been heard only in madhouses, finally came on the scene with **Hegel**, and became the instrument for the most outrageous general mystification that has ever existed, with a success that will appear a marvel to posterity and remain a monument to German stupidity.

75. The Categories

But let us return to Kant. It has to be admitted that he entirely lacks the imposing simplicity of the ancients, lacks innocence, *ingénuité, candeur*. His philosophy has no analogy with Greek architecture, which offers grand, simple relationships, revealing themselves all at once to our view; rather, it reminds one most strongly of the Gothic style in architecture. For a quite individual peculiarity of Kant's mind is a strange satisfaction with symmetry, which loves a varied multiplicity so that it may order it, and repeat the ordering in sub-orderings, and so on indefinitely, as in Gothic churches. Indeed, he sometimes carries this so far that it degenerates into something trivial, doing obvious violence to the truth and proceeding with it as old-fashioned gardeners do with nature, whose work we see in symmetrical alleys, squares, and triangles, trees shaped like pyramids and spheres, and hedges winding in regular curves. I will support this with facts.

After dealing with space and time in isolation, then—having dismissed the entire world of perception that fills space and time (the world in which we live and exist) with the empty words 'the empirical content of perception is *given* to us'—he at once reaches with a single leap *the logical foundation of his entire philosophy*, the Table of Judgments. From this he deduces a strict dozen categories, symmetrically arranged under four headings—Quantity, Quality, Relation, Modality—which later become the frightful procrustean bed into which he violently forces all the things of the world and all that happens in men, not shrinking from any violence and not ashamed of any sophisms as long as he can everywhere repeat that Table's symmetry. The first

thing that is symmetrically derived from it is the pure table of the general principles of natural science, namely, the Axioms of Intuition, Anticipations of Perception, Analogies of Experience, and Postulates of Empirical Thought in General. Of these principles, the first two are simple; but the latter two symmetrically generate three offspring each.

The mere categories were what he calls concepts; but these principles of natural science are judgments. In accordance with his highest directing principle with respect to all wisdom, namely symmetry, it is now time for inferences to prove their fruitfulness, and this indeed they do in turn in symmetrical fashion, without missing a beat.¹ For just as experience, together with its *a priori* principles, arose for the understanding by applying the categories to sensibility, so in the same way the ideas of reason arise by applying inferences to the categories, which is achieved by reason in accordance with its supposed principle of seeking the unconditioned. This then proceeds as follows. The three categories of relation supply to syllogistic reasoning the three possible kinds of major premises, and syllogistic reasoning accordingly falls into three kinds, each of which is to be regarded as an egg out of which reason hatches an idea:

- out of the categorical syllogism the idea of the soul,
- out of the hypothetical syllogism the idea of the world,
and
- out of the disjunctive syllogism the idea of God.

In the second of these, the idea of the world, the symmetry of the table of the categories is once again repeated, with its four headings producing four Theses, each of which has its Antithesis as a symmetrical counterpart.

I pay the tribute of my admiration to the very acute combination that produced this elegant structure, but I

¹ [AS clearly means this whole sentence sarcastically.]

shall none the less proceed to a thorough examination of its foundation and its parts. The following remarks must come first.

76. Kant's stubbornness in his errors

It is amazing how Kant follows his path without further reflection, pursuing his symmetry, ordering everything in accordance with it, without ever separately addressing one of the subjects thus treated. I will explain this in more detail. After treating intuitive knowledge solely in connection with mathematics, he entirely neglects the rest of the perceptual knowledge within which the world lies before us, and confines himself entirely to abstract thinking, though this gets its significance and value solely from the perceptual world, which is infinitely more significant, more general, and richer in content than the abstract part of our knowledge. Indeed—and this is one of the main points—he never clearly distinguishes perceptual from abstract knowledge, and for just this reason (as we will subsequently see) he becomes entangled in self-contradictions that he can't escape from.

Having dispatched the entire sensory world with the empty 'it is given', he then (as I said) sets the logical Table of Judgments as the foundation-stone of his building. But here he doesn't give a moment's thought to what really lies before him. These judgment-forms are words and word-combinations. It should first have been asked what these words directly stand for, and it would have been found that they stand for concepts. The next question would have concerned the nature of concepts. The answer to that would have shown the relation of concepts to the perceptual presentations of which the world consists; then perception would have been distinguished from reflection. Then there would have to have been an investigation not

only of •how pure and merely formal perception *a priori* enters consciousness but also of •how its content, empirical perception, does so. But that would have involved showing what role the understanding has in this, thus also in general what **understanding** is and how it contrasts with the **reason** the critique of which is here being written. It is most striking that he doesn't *once* define the latter in an orderly and satisfactory way; he only gives incomplete and inaccurate explanations of it, incidentally and as the context of the moment demands—quite in contradiction with the rule of Descartes cited a page or two back. For example, at B24 of the *Critique of Pure Reason* it is the faculty for *a priori* principles; at B356 Kant says again that reason is the faculty for principles, and contrasts it with the understanding, which is the faculty for rules! One would then suppose that the difference between principles and rules is enormous, since it entitles us to assume a special faculty for each. But this great difference is supposed to consist in the fact that

- what is known *a priori* on the basis of pure perception, or through the forms of the understanding, is a rule, whereas
- what results *a priori* from mere concepts is a principle.

I shall come back later to this arbitrary and unsatisfactory distinction, in connection with the Dialectic. At B386 reason is the faculty for making inferences; he more often explains (B94) the understanding as concerned with mere judging. [There follows a difficult passage in which AS adds to his objections to Kant's handling of these notions, terminating with this:] At B360 he explains that the immediate conclusions drawn from a proposition are still a matter for the understanding, and only those where a mediating concept is employed are carried out by reason. For example, he says that the conclusion 'Some mortals are human beings' is still drawn by the mere understanding from the proposition

'All human beings are mortal'; by contrast, 'All scholars are mortal' requires a quite different and much more preeminent faculty, reason. How was it possible for a great thinker to come up with such stuff? And then

- at B581 reason is all of a sudden the persisting condition of all voluntary actions;
- at B642 it consists in the fact that we can give an account of our assertions;
- at B671–2 it consists in the fact that it unites concepts of the understanding into ideas, just as the understanding unites the manifold belonging to objects into concepts; and
- at B674 it is nothing other than the faculty for deriving the particular from the general.

The understanding is likewise explained at seven places in the *Critique of Pure Reason*:

- (1) At B75 it is the faculty for producing presentations by oneself;
- (2) At B94 it is the faculty for judging, i.e. for thinking, i.e. for knowing through concepts;
- (3) At B137 it is the faculty for knowledge in general;
- (4) At A132/B171 it is the faculty for rules. But
- (5) at B197 we are told 'It is not only the faculty for rules, but the source of principles in accordance with which everything stands under rules'; yet it had been earlier contrasted with reason because only reason was the faculty for principles.
- (6) At B199 the understanding is the faculty for concepts, but
- (7) at B359 it is the faculty for the unity of phenomena by means of rules.

My explanations of those two cognitive faculties are firm, sharp, determinate, simple, and always in agreement with the linguistic usage of all peoples and times. I don't need to

defend them against Kant's truly confused and groundless talk about the matter. I cited the latter only as confirmation of my charge that Kant pursues his symmetrical, logical system without sufficiently reflecting on the subject matter that he is treating in this way.

Now if Kant had (I repeat) seriously investigated •how far two such diverse cognitive faculties (one of which marks off mankind from other species) can be known, and •what 'reason' and 'understanding' mean according to the linguistic usage of all peoples and all philosophers, he would never— with no further authority than the scholastics' distinction between *intellectus theoreticus* and *intellectus practicus*, which in fact was nothing like the distinction he was making

—have distinguished *theoretical reason* from *practical reason* and made the latter the source of virtuous action. Likewise, before so carefully separating concepts of the understanding (by which he understands sometimes his categories, sometimes all general concepts) from concepts of reason (his so-called 'ideas') and made both of them the subject of his philosophy, which in fact for the most part deals only with the validity, application, origin of all these concepts,

Kant should have investigated what in general a *concept* is. This investigation, necessary as it is, he unfortunately leaves undone; which has greatly contributed to the hopeless confusion of intuitive knowledge and abstract knowledge, which I shall soon prove.

The same lack of adequate reflection with which he bypasses the questions

- what is perception?
- what is reflection?
- what are concepts?
- what is reason?

- what is understanding?

allows him also to neglect the following inescapably necessary investigations:

- What is it that I am calling the objective thing, which I distinguish from presentation?
- What is existence?
- What is an object?
- What is a subject?
- What are truth, illusion, error?

But he follows his logical schema and his symmetry without reflecting or looking about him. The table of judgments—he seems to think—should and must be the key to all wisdom.

I have presented as Kant's main achievement that he

- distinguishes the phenomenon from the thing in itself,
- explains this entire visible world as phenomenon, and therefore
- denies its laws any validity extending beyond the phenomenon.

It remarkable that he didn't derive the phenomenon's merely relative existence from the truth—so simple, readily available, and undeniable—'No object without subject', so as to depict the object, because it always exists only in relation to a subject, as being radically dependent on the subject, conditioned by it, and therefore as being a mere phenomenon that doesn't exist *in itself*, doesn't exist absolutely. Berkeley—to whose achievement Kant does not do justice—had already made that important principle the cornerstone of his philosophy and thereby established the immortality of his memory, although he did not himself draw the proper conclusions from that principle, and after that was both misunderstood and not sufficiently attended to.

[The background to AS's discussion of Kant's reaction to Berkeley is the fact that (A) the first edition of the *Critique of Pure Reason* virtually disappeared from

sight, to be replaced by repeated reprintings of (B) the second edition. AS praises J. K. F. Rosenkranz for including in his reprintings of Kant the whole of A, 'whereby he has perhaps rescued the most important work of German literature from oblivion. . . . Let no-one imagine that he knows the *Critique of Pure Reason* and has a distinct concept of Kant's doctrine if he has read it only in B. . . .; for he has read only a disfigured, spoiled, to a certain extent inauthentic text.' AS also claims that it was he who first prodded Rosenkranz into doing this.]

In the first edition of the present work, I launched some accusations against Kant's reaction to Berkeley because at that time I knew the *Critique* only in the B version. When I later read A, I saw to my great pleasure that all the contradictions of which I had accused Kant vanished and that he explains the external world lying before us in space and time as a mere presentation to the knowing subject, doing this with just as much decisiveness as Berkeley and I do, even if he doesn't employ the formula 'no object without subject'. Thus, for example, he says at A383 without reservation: 'If the thinking subject went out of existence, necessarily the whole corporeal world would also vanish, because the world is nothing but an appearance in the sensibility of our thinking subject, a way in which its representations occur.' The entire passage A348–392, in which Kant sets forth his idealism in a very fine and clear way, was suppressed by him in B and replaced by a multitude of expressions that conflict with it. So the text of the *Critique* as it was in circulation from 1787 to 1838 became something deformed and spoiled; it was a self-contradictory book whose sense could, just for that reason, not be entirely clear and intelligible to anyone. . . .

The decisively idealistic basic view that is so clearly expressed in A is undeniably in conflict with Kant's way

of introducing the *thing in itself*, and no doubt this is the main reason why in B he suppressed the main idealistic passage and declared himself as straightforwardly opposed to Berkeleyan idealism. But this only brought inconsistencies into his work, without being able to remedy its main defect. It is well known that the defect consists in the way he chose to introduce the *thing in itself*, the unsatisfactoriness of which was shown at length by G. E. Schulze in his work *Aenesidemus*, and was soon recognised as the untenable point in his system. The matter can be made clear in very few words.

Kant bases the assumption of the *thing in itself*—although under the cover of many differences of terminology—on an inference in accordance with the law of causality; namely that empirical perception (more accurately, the sensation in our sense organs from which perception comes) must have an external cause.

·There are three things wrong with this·. **(i)** According to his own account, which is correct, the law of causality is known to us *a priori*, and is consequently a function of our intellect, thus of subjective origin; **(ii)** sensation through the senses, to which we are here applying the law of causality, is undeniably subjective; and finally **(iii)** even the space into which this inference places the cause of sensation as an object is something given *a priori*, and is thus a *subjective* form of our intellect. So empirical perception as a whole remains altogether on subjective ground and soil, as merely process within us, and nothing entirely distinct from it—independent of it—can be demonstrated as a necessary presupposition of it, as a *thing in itself*. In actual fact, empirical perception is mere presentation to us; it is the

world as presentation. We can get to the nature of this world only along the entirely different path that I have entered on, by bringing in self-consciousness, which informs us of *will* as the *in-itself* of the phenomenon that we are; but then the thing in itself becomes something utterly different from presentation and its elements, as I have explained.

The great infirmity of the Kantian system at this point. . . illustrates the truth of the beautiful Indian proverb 'No lotus without a stem.' The stem here is the fallacious derivation of the thing in itself; but only **a** the way of deriving it, not **b** the recognition of a thing in itself for the given phenomenon. It was in **b** the latter manner that Fichte misunderstood the issue. He could do this only because for him it was not a matter of truth but of making a stir for the promotion of his personal goals. Accordingly he was bold and thoughtless enough to deny the thing in itself altogether, and to set up a system in which what is supposedly derived *a priori* from the subject is not (as with Kant) the mere form of the presentation but also the material element, the whole of its content. In doing this he was rightly counting on the foolishness and lack of judgment of the public, which accepted as proofs what were really poor sophisms, mere hocus-pocus, and a senseless mishmash.¹ In this way, he succeeded in directing the public's attention from Kant to himself, and in giving German philosophy the direction in which it was subsequently carried further by Schelling, finally reaching its goal in the senseless Hegelian pseudo-wisdom.

I now return to Kant's great mistake, mentioned above, of not properly distinguishing perceptual knowledge from abstract knowledge; leading to a hopeless confusion which we have now to consider in greater detail. If he had sharply

¹ [The original of this sentence contains the words *Hokuspokus* and *Wischiwaschi*]

separated •perceptual presentations from •concepts merely thought *in abstracto*, Kant would have kept the two apart and in every case would have known which of them he was dealing with. Unfortunately that's not what happened; though this accusation has not been openly made, and so may come as a surprise. The 'object¹ of experience' that he keeps talking about, the real object² of the Categories, is not a perceptual presentation but is not an abstract concept either; rather, it is of neither kind yet at the same time of both kinds, and an utter absurdity. For, unbelievable as it seems, he lacked the wisdom or the honesty needed for him to be clear within himself and to explain clearly to others whether his 'object of experience, i.e. •object• of knowledge arising through employment of the categories' is a perceptual presentation in space and time (my first class of presentations) or a mere concept. Strange as it may be, he constantly has in mind something intermediate between the two, and this creates the unfortunate confusion that I must now draw into the light. For this purpose, I have to go in general terms through the entire Doctrine of Elements.³

77. The Transcendental Aesthetic

The Transcendental Aesthetic is a work of such extraordinary merit that it alone would suffice to immortalise Kant's name. Its proofs are so convincing that I count its theorems among the incontrovertible truths, just as without doubt they also belong among the most consequential, and so are to be regarded as the rarest thing in the world, namely a genuine major discovery in metaphysics. The fact, rigorously

proved by him, that a part of our knowledge belongs to our consciousness *a priori* admits of no other explanation than that this constitutes the forms of our intellect; indeed, this is not so much an explanation as a clear statement of the fact itself. For *a priori* means nothing other than 'not gained on the path of experience, thus not coming into us from outside'. But what is present in the intellect without having come from outside is just that which *originally* belongs to it, its own essence. . . . Accordingly, 'knowledge *a priori*' and 'the intellect's very own forms' are fundamentally only two expressions for the same thing, thus synonyms, so to speak.

So I wouldn't know how to subtract anything from the doctrines of the Transcendental Aesthetic, only how to add something, namely that Kant didn't bring his thoughts to completion, in that he didn't reject the entire Euclidean method of demonstration, although he had said (A87/B120) that all geometrical knowledge is made directly evident by perception. It is most noteworthy that even one of his opponents, and indeed the most acute of them, G. E. Schulze, concluded that Kant's doctrine would lead to a treatment of geometry entirely different from the one actually in practice. He thought that this was an argument against Kant, but really he was unknowingly initiating a war against the Euclidean method. See chapter 15.

After the Transcendental Aesthetic's detailed discussion of the general *forms* of all **perception**, one would surely expect to be given some explanation of its *content*, concerning how empirical perception enters our consciousness, how knowledge of this entire world—so real and so important for

¹ [Objekt]

² [Gegenstand]

³ [Kant divided the *Critique* into the Doctrine of Elements and the Doctrine of Method, the former constituting 80% of the whole.]

us—arises within us. But Kant's whole teaching contains nothing about this except frequent repetitions of the empty statement 'The empirical element in perception is *given* from outside.'

78. A fundamental contradiction

From the pure forms of perception, Kant also arrives by a leap at **thought**, by arriving at the Transcendental Logic. Right at the beginning of this (A50/B74), where Kant cannot avoid touching on the material content of empirical perception, he makes the first false step. . . .

'Our knowledge', he says, 'has two sources, namely, **a** receptivity of impressions and **b** spontaneity of concepts; the first is **a** the capacity for receiving presentations, the second is **b** the capacity for knowledge of an object through these presentations; through **a** the first an object is given to us, through **b** the second it is thought.'

That is false. It implies that the impression—for which alone we have mere receptivity, which thus comes from outside and is alone really 'given'—would already be a presentation, indeed already an object. But it is nothing beyond a mere sensation in the sense organ, and only by applying the understanding (i.e. the law of causality) and by bringing in space and time as perceptual forms does our intellect transform this mere sensation into a presentation that now stands as an object in space and time and can be distinguished from the object only to the extent that one is asking about the thing in itself, but is otherwise identical with it. . . . But with that the business of the understanding and *perceptual* knowledge is completed; there's no need in it for any concepts or any thought; which is why animals also have these presentations. If you add concepts, if

you add thought (to which spontaneity can of course be attributed), you abandon perceptual knowledge and admit into consciousness a wholly different class of presentations, namely non-perceptual abstract concepts. This is the work of reason; but it gets the entire content for its thinking only from previous perception and the comparison of that with other perceptions and concepts. Thus Kant already brings **thought into perception**, laying the ground for that hopeless confusion of intuitive knowledge with abstract knowledge which I am criticising here. But then on the other hand the object of thought is an individual real object, so that thought here forfeits its essential character of generality and abstraction, and instead of general concepts gets individual things for its object, so that Kant now brings **perception into thought**. This generates the hopeless confusion I have mentioned, and the consequences of this first false step extend over Kant's whole theory of knowledge. All through the latter there's a complete confusion of perceptual and abstract presentation, leading to something intermediate between the two, which he depicts as the object of knowledge through the understanding and its categories, knowledge that he calls 'experience'. It is hard to believe that Kant had the thought of anything fully determinate and really clear when he talked in this way about the 'object of the understanding'. I will now prove this—i.e. prove that he didn't—by revealing the monstrous contradiction that runs through the entire Transcendental Logic and is the real source of the obscurity that envelops it.

• ONE SIDE OF THE CONTRADICTION •

In the *Critique of Pure Reason* (A67–69/B92–4), (A89–90/B122–3) and further at (B135, 139, 153), he repeats and insists that

- the understanding is not a faculty for perception, its knowledge is not intuitive, but discursive;

- the understanding is the faculty for judging (A69/B94), and a judgment is indirect knowledge, presentation of a presentation (A68/B93);
- the understanding is the faculty for thinking, and thinking is knowledge through concepts (A69/B94);
- the categories of the understanding are emphatically not conditions under which objects are given in perception (A89/B122), and perception in no way needs the functions of thought (A91/B123);
- our understanding can only think, not perceive (B135, 139) .

Further, in *Prolegomena* §20 perception or perceptual apprehension belongs merely to the senses, judging involves only the understanding; and in §22 the business of the senses is to perceive, that of the understanding is to think, i.e. to judge.—Finally, in the *Critique of Practical Reason* the understanding is discursive, its presentations are thoughts, not perceptions. This is all in Kant's own words.

It follows from this that the perceptual world would exist for us even if we had no understanding at all, that it comes into our head in an entirely inexplicable manner, which he expresses with his strange expression 'perception is *given*', without further clarifying this vague and figurative¹ expression.

·THE OTHER SIDE OF THE CONTRADICTION·

Now, that is all contradicted in the most glaring manner by the whole of the rest of Kant's doctrine of the understanding, of its categories, and of the possibility of experience, as he explains these in the *Transcendental Logic*. At (A79/B105) the understanding brings unity into the manifold of perception through its categories, and the pure concepts of the understanding relate *a priori* to objects of perception.

At (A94/B126) 'the categories are a condition of experience, whether it be of the perception or of the thought that is to be met with in it.' At (B127) the understanding is the originator of experience. At (B128) the categories determine the perception of objects. At (B130) all of what we present to ourselves as combined in the object (which is of course a perceptual object and not an abstraction) has first been combined by an action of the understanding. . . . At (B136) we indeed find a highest principle of the possibility of all perception in relation to the understanding. At (B143) it even stands written at the head of a section that all sensory perception is conditioned by the categories. . . . At (B144) unity enters perception by means of the categories, through the understanding. At (B145) the understanding's process of thought is most strangely explained by saying that it synthesises, combines, and orders the manifold of perception. At (B161) experience is possible only through the categories and consists in the connecting of sensations, which are of course perceptions. At (B159) the categories are *a priori* knowledge of objects of perception in general.

Further, here and at (B163 and 165) one of Kant's main doctrines is expounded, namely, that *the understanding makes nature possible in the first place*, prescribing laws to it *a priori* and directing it with respect to its lawful character, etc. But now nature is something perceptual and not an abstraction; so according to this, the understanding must be a perceptual faculty. At (B168) the concepts of the understanding are said to be the principles of the possibility of experience, and that experience is the determination of phenomena in space and time in general, which phenomena then of course exist in perception. Finally, at (A189–211/B232–256) there stands the long invalid 'proof that the objective suc-

¹ [*bildlichen*, which could mean 'metaphorical'; the point is just that it is not to be taken strictly and literally.]

cession as well as the simultaneity of objects of experience is not perceived by sense, but only brought into nature by the understanding, thus making nature possible. But certainly nature—the sequence of events and the simultaneity of states of affairs—is something purely perceptual and not merely abstractly thought.

I challenge anyone who shares my respect for Kant to reconcile these contradictions, and to show that he had a thought that was entirely clear and determinate in his doctrine of the object of experience and of how it is determined by the activity of the understanding and its twelve functions. I am convinced that the contradiction I have pointed out, which runs through the entire *Transcendental Logic*, is the real source of the great obscurity in the latter's exposition. Kant was dimly conscious of the contradiction, inwardly battled with it, but wouldn't or couldn't clearly bring it to mind, and thus veiled it from himself and others, avoiding it by all kinds of subterfuges. Perhaps this is why he makes such a strange, complicated machine of the faculty of knowledge, with so many wheels—

- the twelve categories,
- transcendental synthesis of imagination,
- inner sense,
- transcendental unity of apperception,
- the schematism of the pure concepts of the understanding,

and so on. And despite this great apparatus, not once does he try to explain perception of the external world, which is after all the chief ingredient in our knowledge; rather, he pitifully dismisses the pressing demand for such an explanation always with the same empty, figurative expression 'Empirical perception is *given* to us.' At (B145) we learn in addition that it is given by the object; so the object must be something distinct from perception.

79. The source of the trouble

If we try to investigate Kant's innermost opinion, not clearly expressed by himself, we find that such an object—distinct from perception but in no way a concept—is for him the real object for the understanding; indeed that the strange assumption of such an object that can't be *presented* is really what 'supposedly' makes perception into experience in the first place. I believe that an old, deep-rooted prejudice in Kant, impervious to all investigation, is the ultimate basis for his assumption of such an *absolute object*, one that is an object *in itself*, i.e. even without a subject. It is not the perceived object; rather, it is conceptually added to perception by thought, as something corresponding to it, so that then perception is experience and has value and truth, which it consequently obtains only through its relation to a concept. (This is in diametrical opposition to my account, according to which concepts obtain their value and truth only from perception.) The real function of the categories is to add to perception this 'object' that can't be directly presented. 'The object is given only through perception, and is afterwards thought in accordance with the category' (A399). This is made especially clear by a passage at (B125): 'Now the question arises whether conceptions *a priori* don't also come first as conditions under which alone a thing can be, not perceived certainly, but yet thought as an object in general', which he answers in the affirmative.

Here we see clearly the source of the error and the confusion that envelops it. For the object as such always exists only *for* perception and *in* it; it can now be completed through the senses or in their absence through the imagination. What is *thought*, on the other hand, is always a general, non-perceptual concept, which can at best be the concept of some object or other; only indirectly, by means

of concepts, does thought refer to objects, which are and remain always perceptual. For our thought does not serve to give realness to perceptions; so far as they are capable of it, they have this realness by themselves. Rather, our thought serves for bringing together the common features and results of perceptions, so as to be able to preserve and more easily work with them. But Kant ascribes objects themselves to *thought*, in order to make experience and the objective world dependent on the *understanding*, but without having the understanding be a perceptual faculty. In this respect he does indeed distinguish perception from thought, but makes individual things partly objects of perception, partly objects of thought. But the perception itself can come into existence only by the application to sensation of knowledge of the causal nexus, which is the one function of the understanding. So perception is in reality intellectual, which is just what Kant denies.

The Kantian assumption criticised here can be found stated even more clearly in the *Critique of Judgment* (start of §36), and in *Metaphysical Foundations of Natural Science* (note to the first explanation of the phenomenology). But one finds it set out extremely clearly—with a naïveté that Kant would hardly have allowed himself on this questionable point—in two books by Kantians [AS gives the details]. There it is decisively shown how every thinker's pupils who don't think for themselves become a magnifying mirror for his mistakes. Having finally settled on his doctrine of the categories, Kant trod with a cautious step in expounding it, whereas his pupils went ahead boldly, thus exposing the falsity it contained.

In accordance with all this, the object of the categories is indeed not the *thing in itself* for Kant, but is its nearest relative: it is the *object in itself*—

- an object that has no need of a subject,

- an individual thing yet not in time and space because it is not perceptual,
- an object of thought but not an abstract concept.

Accordingly, Kant distinguishes three things: **1** the presentation, **2** the object of the presentation, **3** the thing in itself. The first **1** is a matter of sensibility, which for him includes sensation and the pure perceptual forms, space and time. The second **2** belongs to the understanding, which *thinks* it through its twelve categories. The third **3** lies beyond all possibility of knowledge. (As confirmation of this, see (A108–9)). But now there is no basis for the distinction between presentation and object of presentation. Berkeley had already proved this, and it proceeds from the whole of my exposition in the present work. . . .and indeed from Kant's own completely idealistic point of view in his first edition. But if you don't want to count the object of presentation as a presentation, you'll have to take it to be the thing in itself: this ultimately depends on what one means by the word 'object'. In any case, this much is certain: if we think clearly about the matter, nothing is to be found other than presentation and thing in itself. The source of Kant's errors is the unjustified interpolation of the hybrid *object of presentation*. But with its removal, the doctrine of the categories as *a priori* concepts also falls away, since they contribute nothing to perception and are not supposed to apply to the thing in itself, their only role being for us to think those 'objects of presentations' and thereby transform presentation into experience. For every empirical perception is already experience, and every perception that comes from sensation through the senses is empirical: the understanding refers this sensation to its cause, doing this by means of its single function (knowledge *a priori* of the law of causality); this cause is thereby displayed as an object of experience in space and time (forms belonging to pure

perception), as a material object persisting in space through all time, though it is always a presentation, as are space and time themselves. If we want to go beyond this presentation, that brings us to the question of the thing in itself, the answer to which is the theme of my entire work, as of all metaphysics in general. Connected with Kant's error that I have been discussing here is his failure (criticised earlier) to provide any theory of the origin of empirical perception; all he does is to say that it is *given*. He identifies it with mere sensation through the senses, to which he adds only the perceptual forms *space* and *time*, comprehending both under the term 'sensibility'. But from these materials no objective presentation arises. Such a presentation absolutely requires

- the relation of the presentation to its cause, and thus
- the application of the law of causality, and thus
- the understanding;

for without this the sensation remains always subjective, and doesn't take the form of an object in space, even if space is given with it. But for Kant, the understanding can't be employed for perception: it is supposed merely to think, so as to remain within the Transcendental Logic. This connects with another of Kant's failings: he has left it to me to carry out the only valid argument for the rightly recognised apriority of the law of causality, namely the argument from the possibility of objective empirical perception itself, and instead provided one that is obviously invalid, as I have shown in §23 of my treatise on the GP.

It is clear from the above that Kant's **2** 'object of presentation' is made up of what he has stolen from **1** presentation and from **3** the thing in itself.¹ If experience actually came about only through the understanding's employing **twelve**

distinct functions through that many *a priori* concepts to *think* objects that previously were merely *perceived*, then every real thing would have a number of determinations that (like space and time) could not be thought away, belonged essentially to the existence of the thing, yet couldn't be deduced from the properties of space and time. But only **one** such determination is to be met with, namely causality. This is the basis for materiality, because the essence of matter consists in action, and matter is through and through causality. . . . But materiality is all that distinguishes a real thing from a fantasised image, which is then of course only a presentation. For matter gives things a persistence through all time with respect to their matter, while their forms change in accordance with the law of causality. There is nothing more to the thing than •determinations of space or time, or •its empirical properties, which all go back to its activity and thus to more fine-grained determinations of causality. But causality has already come into empirical perception as a condition of it, so that such perception is a business of the understanding. The understanding does indeed make perception possible, but it contributes nothing beyond the law of causality to experience and its possibility. What fills the ontologies of old, beyond what has been stated here, is nothing further than relations of things to one another or to our reflection, and a farrago of nonsense.

80. The great difference between the Aesthetic and the Analytic

One sign of the groundlessness of the doctrine of the categories is already given in how it is stated. What a difference in this respect between the Transcendental Aesthetic and

¹ [See the use of **1-2-3** early in the preceding paragraph.]

the Transcendental Analytic! In the former, what clarity, definiteness, assurance, firm conviction that is openly pronounced and infallibly communicated! All is full of light, no dark hiding places are left: Kant knows what he wants and knows he is right. In the Analytic, on the other hand, all is obscure, confused, indefinite, vacillating, unsure, anxious in its exposition, full of excuses and appeals to what is yet to come, or indeed to what is *not* yet to come because it will be held back. The whole of sections 2 and 3 of the Deduction of the Pure Concepts of the Understanding is also utterly changed in B because Kant wasn't satisfied with it; it becomes entirely different from what it was in A, but no clearer. We see Kant actually battling with the truth so as to establish the doctrine he has finally decided on. In the Transcendental Aesthetic all his theorems are actually *proved* on the basis of undeniable facts of consciousness, whereas in the Transcendental Analytic we find mere *assertions* that this is how things are and must be. Thus here, as everywhere, the exposition bears the stamp of the thought from which it has proceeded; for style is the physiognomy of the mind.

It is also noteworthy that when Kant wants to give an example for more detailed discussion, he nearly always takes the category of causality for that purpose, and then what he says is quite correct; for the law of causality is the real form of the understanding; but it is its *only* form, the other eleven categories being only blind windows. The Deduction of the categories is simpler and less convoluted in A than in B. Kant tries *in B* to explain how, in accordance with perception given by sensibility, the understanding brings about *experience* by means of its thought of the categories. In the process, expressions are repeated to the point of exhaustion—'recognition', 'reproduction', 'association', 'apprehension', 'transcendental unity of apperception'—but

nothing clear is said. It is most noteworthy that in this discussion he doesn't touch even once on something that must surely occur first to everyone, the relation of sensation to its external cause. If he didn't want to recognise such a relation, he should have expressly said so; but he doesn't do this either. He merely creeps around it, and all the Kantians have likewise crept after him. The secret motive for this is that **(i)** he reserves the causal nexus, under the name 'ground of the phenomenon', for his false derivation of the thing in itself; and that **(ii)** if cause were brought into it, perception would become intellectual, which he could not grant. Moreover, he seems to have feared that **(iii)** if the causal nexus were allowed to hold between sensation and object, the object would at once become the *thing in itself* and lead to Lockean empiricism. But this difficulty is removed by the reflection that the law of causality is of subjective origin, just as much as sensation itself; and moreover that one's own body, so far as it makes its appearance in space, belongs among presentations. But his fear of Berkeleyan idealism prevented Kant from conceding this.

As the essential operation of the understanding by means of its twelve categories, 'combination of the manifold of perception' is repeatedly cited; but this is never properly explained, nor is it shown what this manifold of perception is before its combination by the understanding. Now time and space are *continua*, i.e. all their parts are originally not separated but combined. But they are the pervasive forms of our perception. Thus also everything that is displayed (is 'given') within them appears as already a continuum, i.e. its parts already appear as combined and have no need of an additional 'combination of the manifold'. If, however, someone tried to interpret that 'combining of the manifold of perception' as relating different sense-impressions to a single object—for example, perceiving a bell, I recognise that

what affects my eye as yellow, my hand as smooth and hard, my ear as sounding, is just one body—then I reply that this is rather a consequence of the knowledge *a priori* of the causal nexus (this actual and only function of the understanding), by virtue of which all those different effects on my different organs of sense lead me to one common cause of them, the nature of the body standing before me; so that my understanding, in spite of the variety of the effects, still apprehends the unity of the cause as a single object which is displayed through them.

In the fine recapitulation of his doctrine that Kant gives at (A719–26/B747–54) he explains the categories perhaps more clearly than anywhere else, namely, as ‘the mere rule for the synthesis of whatever perception has given *a posteriori*’. He seems to have in mind something like the fact that in the construction of a triangle the angles give us the rule for connecting the lines; at least this picture gives us the best way of understanding what he says about the function of the categories. The preface to the *Metaphysical Foundations of Natural Science* contains a long note which also provides an explanation of the categories; it says that they ‘are in no way distinct from the formal actions of the understanding in judging’, except that in judging, subject and predicate can always trade places; so judgment in general is then defined as ‘an action through which given presentations first become knowledge of an object’. According to this, since animals don’t judge they must also be absolutely incapable of knowledge of objects. Of *objects* in general, according to Kant, there are merely concepts, no perceptions. Whereas I say: objects exist first for perception, and concepts are always abstractions from this perception. Thus abstract thinking must be conducted in exact accordance with the world that is present in perception, since it is only in their relation to this that concepts have their content. . . . I accordingly demand

that we •throw eleven of the categories out the window and retain only that of causality, but •see that causal activity is already the condition of empirical perception, which is therefore not merely sensual but intellectual, and •see that the object thus perceived—the object of experience—is one with its presentation, from which nothing remains to be distinguished except the thing in itself.

81. The source of the Transcendental Logic

After repeated study of the *Critique of Pure Reason* at different stages of my life, a conviction about the origin of •the Transcendental Logic has forced itself upon me, and I now pass it on, as very helpful to an understanding of •it. Kant’s only discovery—based on objective comprehension and the highest human thought—is the apperçu that time and space are known to us *a priori*. Delighted by this happy find, Kant wanted to pursue its vein still further, and his love for architectonic symmetry gave him the lead, as follows.

As he had found a pure perception underlying empirical perception as its *a priori* condition, he supposed that in the same way certain pure concepts would surely lie within reach of our knowledge as a presupposition for empirically acquired concepts; and that actual empirical thought would first be possible only through a pure *a priori* thought, which however would in itself have no objects at all, but would have to take them from perception; so just as the Transcendental Aesthetic demonstrates an *a priori* foundation for mathematics, there must also be such a thing for logic, so that the Transcendental Aesthetic would get a symmetrical counterpart in a Transcendental Logic.

From then on Kant was no longer unbiased, no longer engaged in purely investigating and observing the deliv-

erances of consciousness; rather, he was directed by a presupposition and pursued a goal, namely to *find* what he had presupposed, in order to place on the Transcendental Aesthetic a symmetrically corresponding Transcendental Logic (so happily discovered!) as a second storey. Now for this purpose he hit upon the table of judgments, out of which he did his best to construct the table of categories, the doctrine of twelve pure *a priori* concepts that are supposed to be the conditions of our thought about the very things the perception of which is conditioned by the two *a priori* forms of sensibility; thus a pure understanding now corresponded symmetrically to a pure sensibility.

Then another consideration occurred to him, which offered a means of increasing the plausibility of what he was doing, namely the assumption of the *Schematism* of the pure concepts of the understanding. But just through this the unconscious cause of his procedure betrayed itself most distinctly. . . . When we occasionally try to return from •abstract thinking to •perceiving, we are really only trying to convince ourselves that our abstract thought has not removed itself far from the secure ground of perception and may be flying above it, or may even have become mere verbiage (something like when, walking in the dark, we occasionally reach out to touch the wall for direction). We go back in that case to perceiving, even if only tentatively and momentarily, by calling up in imagination a perception corresponding to the concept just then occupying us, though this image can never be entirely adequate to the concept but is a merely provisional *representative* of it. . . . Kant calls a fleeting mental image of this sort a *schema*, in contrast with images brought to completion in the imagination. He says that it is like a monogram of the imagination, and then maintains that if

such a thing stands in the middle between our abstract thought of empirically acquired concepts and our clear perception as it occurs through the senses, there must also exist

between pure sensibility's *a priori* perceptual faculty and pure understanding's *a priori* faculty of thought (thus the categories) such schemata of the pure concepts of the understanding.

He explains these schemata one by one, as monograms of pure *a priori* imagination, and assigns each of them to the corresponding category, in the amazing chapter 'On the Schematism of the Pure Concepts of the Understanding', which is notoriously obscure—no-one has ever been able to make anything of it. But its obscurity vanishes when it is considered from the standpoint I have provided; though this shines a brighter light than anything else does on the intentionally directed character of the procedure, and the previously adopted *decision to find* what corresponds to the analogy and could serve the architectonic symmetry—which is so much the case here that it becomes downright comical. For in assuming schemata of pure (contentless) *a priori* concepts of the understanding (categories), analogous to empirical schemata (or representatives of our actual concepts by way of the imagination), he overlooks the fact that the purpose of such schemata here entirely disappears. For the purpose of schemata in empirical (actual) thought entirely concerns the material content of such concepts: because these concepts have been drawn from empirical perception, we aid and orient ourselves in abstract thought by occasionally casting a fleeting glance back at the perception from which the concepts have been derived, to assure ourselves that our thought still has real content. This, however, presupposes that the concepts in question have originated from perception, and that we are merely glancing back at their

material content—a mere tool to help us in our weakness. But with *a priori* concepts, which don't yet have any content, this sort of thing obviously doesn't apply. For these concepts haven't come from perception, but rather come to meet it from within, in order to get content from it in the first place; so they haven't yet anything to glance back at.

I have dealt with this at length on this because it's the very thing that throws light on the secret process of Kantian philosophising, which consists in this:

After the happy discovery of the two *a priori* perceptual forms, Kant then, with analogy as his directing principle, tried to demonstrate an *a priori* analogue for every determination of our empirical knowledge,

...so that the seeming profundity of the exposition, and its difficulty, serve to conceal from the reader that its content remains an entirely indemonstrable and merely arbitrary assumption. But anyone who finally sees through the sense of this exposition of Kant's is easily misled into taking his laboriously attained understanding for a conviction of truth in the matter. If Kant had instead proceeded here (as he did with the discovery of *a priori* perceptions) in an unbiased and purely observational manner, he'd have been sure to find that when an empirical perception is made out of the pure perception of space and time, what is added to it is on the one hand **a** the sensation, and on the other hand **b** the knowledge of causality; the **b** latter changes the **a** mere sensation into objective empirical perception, but just for that reason it is not first derived and learned from **a** sensation, but exists *a priori*, and is indeed the form and function of the pure understanding. It is its only one, though it is so rich in results that all our empirical knowledge rests on it.

If, as has often been said, the refutation of an error is complete only when its mode of origination is shown in psychological terms, then I believe I have accomplished this here with respect to Kant's doctrine of the categories and their schemata.

·'SYNTHETIC UNITY OF APPERCEPTION'·

Having then introduced such great errors into the initial, simple outline of a theory of the faculty of presentation, Kant proceeds to various highly complex assumptions. To these belongs first of all *the synthetic unity of apperception*: a very strange thing, very strangely depicted: 'The *I think* must be able to accompany all my presentations.' Must be able: this is a problematic-apodictic¹ pronouncement; in plain terms, a proposition that takes with one hand what it gives with the other. And what is the sense of this proposition thus balancing on the head of a pin? That all presentational activity is thinking? That is not the case. And it would be dreadful if it were, for then there would be nothing but abstract concepts—and nothing like a pure perception free of reflection and will, such as that of the beautiful, the deepest grasp of the true essence of things, i.e. of their platonic ideas. Also, it would have to be the case that animals either think or don't even engage in presentation.

Or is the proposition perhaps supposed to mean: *no object without subject*? That would be a poor way of saying this, and it would come too late. If we assemble all of Kant's pronouncements, we'll find that what he understands by 'synthetic unity of apperception' is, as it were, the unextended centre of the sphere of all our presentations, the radii of which converge upon it. It is what I call the subject of knowing, the correlate of all presentations. . . .

¹ [These are old logical terms. A statement about what *may* (or is *able* to) be the case is 'problematic'; one about what *must* be the case is 'apodictic'. AS is calling attention to what he sees as the oddness of saying that something *must be able* to be the case.]

82. Kant's Table of Judgments

My rejection of the entire doctrine of the categories, counting it among the groundless assumptions that Kant burdened the theory of knowledge with, comes from **(i)** the critique of the doctrine I have been giving, from **(ii)** my proof that the Transcendental Logic contains contradictions, the source of which is the confusion of perceptual with abstract knowledge, and from **(iii)** my proof of the lack of any clear and determinate concept of the nature of the *understanding* and of *reason*, instead of which we found in Kant's writings only disconnected, conflicting, scanty, and inaccurate pronouncements regarding those two mental faculties. Finally, it comes from **(iv)** the explanations that I myself have given of those same mental faculties in the first Book. . . .and in greater detail in my treatise on the GP (§§21, 26, 34). Those explanations •are very determinate and clear, •obviously arise from consideration of the nature of our knowledge, and •perfectly agree with how the concepts of those two knowledge faculties show up (though not *clearly*) in the speech and writings of all times and all peoples. . . .

The Table of Judgments on which Kant bases his theory of thought and indeed his entire philosophy has in itself, on the whole, something right about it; so it is still incumbent on me to demonstrate how these universal forms of all judgments originate in our knowledge faculty, and to reconcile them with my account of it. In this discussion, I shall always attach to the concepts of understanding and reason the senses given to them in my explanation, which I therefore assume the reader is familiar with.

An essential difference between Kant's method and mine is that he starts from indirect, reflected knowledge, whereas I start from immediate, intuitive knowledge. He is like someone who measures the height of a tower by its shadow,

and I am like someone who applies the measuring rod to the tower itself. So for him philosophy is a science drawn *from* concepts, whereas for me it is a science *in* concepts, drawn from perceptual knowledge, the only source of all evidence, and comprehended and fixed in general concepts. He passes over this whole perceptual world that surrounds us—so multifarious and rich in significance—and confines himself to the forms of abstract thinking; and, although he never explicitly says so, this procedure is based on the assumption that reflection is a copy of all perception, so that anything that is essential in perception must be expressed in reflection, and expressed in very contracted forms and outlines, which are thus easily surveyed. Accordingly, the essential elements and lawful character of abstract knowledge should put into our hands all the strings by which the motley puppet-show of the perceptual world is set in motion before our eyes.

If Kant had only stated clearly this highest principle of his method and then consistently followed it, at least he'd have had to clearly separate the intuitive from the abstract, and we wouldn't have had to battle with irresolvable contradictions and confusions. But from his way of solving his problem we can see that this principle of his method was present in his mind only very unclearly, so that even after a thorough study of his philosophy we still have to guess at it.

As for the stated method and fundamental maxim itself, it has much to be said for it and is a brilliant thought. The nature of all science consists in our bringing the endless manifold of perceptual phenomena under comparatively few abstract concepts out of which we construct a system by that enables us to •have all those phenomena within the reach of our knowledge, to •explain past events and to •determine what is to come. The sciences, however, divide among them the wide domain of phenomena, on the basis of the latter's particular, manifold species. Now it was a bold and happy

thought to isolate •what is essential to concepts as such, apart from their content, in order to discover from •these forms of all thought found in this way what is also essential to all intuitive knowledge and consequently essential to the world as phenomenon in general; and because this would be found *a priori* because of the necessity of those forms of thought, it would be of subjective origin and would lead to just the ends Kant had in view.

Before going any further with this, one would have to inquire into

- what the relation is between reflection and perceptual knowledge (which of course presupposes the clean separation of the two, neglected by Kant);
- how reflection actually reproduces and represents perceptual knowledge, whether quite purely or by being taken up into reflection's own forms, transformed and partly disguised;
- whether the form of abstract, reflective knowledge is determined more by the form of perceptual knowledge or by the character attaching unalterably to reflective knowledge itself. . . .

But this inquiry would have shown that. . . reflection doesn't relate to perceptual knowledge as the surface of water does to the objects mirrored in it, but scarcely even as the mere shadow of these objects stands to the objects themselves. A shadow of an object repeats only a few of the object's external outlines, whereas reflection unites the greatest multiplicity into a single shape and depicts the greatest diversity with a single outline, so that there is no way to arrive on the basis

of it at a complete and sure construal of the things' internal structures.¹

The whole of reflective knowledge, or reason, has only one chief form, and this is the abstract concept. It belongs to reason itself and has no direct necessary connection with the perceptual world, which therefore also exists for animals that have no concepts; and there could be an entirely different world which the form of reflection would fit just as well. But the uniting of concepts into judgments has certain determinate and lawful forms which, found by induction, constitute the Table of Judgments. These forms are for the most part derivable from the nature of reflective knowledge itself, and thus immediately from reason, because they arise from the four laws of thought (which I call metalogical truths) and from the *dictum de omni et nullo*.² Others of these forms are based on the nature of perceptual knowledge, thus on the understanding; but just for this reason they don't point to an equal number of particular forms belonging to the understanding; rather, they are fully derivable from the understanding's one function, namely, immediate knowledge of cause and effect. Still others of those forms, finally, have arisen from the conjunction and combination of the reflective and intuitive modes of knowledge, or really from the latter being taken up into the former.

83. Getting down to the details

I shall now go through the moments³ of judgment individually, indicating the origin of each from the sources I

¹ [The original says *die Gestalten der Dinge* = 'the things' shapes', but this must be a slip.]

² [The traditional three 'laws of thought' are the principles of identity, of contradiction, and of excluded middle. AS counted the GP as a fourth. The *dictum de omni et nullo*—'maxim of all and none'—says that what is true (false) of a whole class is true (false) of every subclass within it.]

³ [*Momente*, apparently meaning something like 'chief characteristics'.]

have referred to; from which it follows that a deduction of categories from them is wanting, and the assumption of the categories is just as groundless as Kant's account of them is (so I have argued) confused and self-contradictory.

[i] The so-called **Quantity** of judgments stems from the nature of concepts as such, and thus has its ground solely in reason, having absolutely no direct connection with the understanding or with perceptual knowledge. As I explained in the first Book *chapter 9*, it is essential to concepts as such that they have an extension, a sphere, and that broader or less determinate ones include narrower or more determinate ones. The latter can be separated out, which can be done either **a** in such a way that one only characterises it in general terms as some undefined part of the broader concept or **b** in such a way that one defines and fully separates it out by giving it a special name. The judgment that carries out this operation is **a** in the first case called a particular judgment and **b** in the second case a universal judgment. For example, one and the same part of the sphere of the concept *tree* can be isolated by

- a** the particular judgment 'Some trees have gallnuts' or by
- b** the universal judgment 'All oak trees have gallnuts'.

You can see that the difference between the two operations is very small—indeed that the possibility of it depends on the richness of the language.¹ Yet Kant has declared that the difference reveals two fundamentally different actions, functions, categories of the pure understanding that determines experience *a priori* precisely through them. Or, finally, a concept can be used to arrive at a determinate, individual, perceptual presentation from which it was itself (along with many others) derived; this happens

c in a singular judgment such as 'This tree here has gallnuts'.

Such a judgment merely indicates the boundary between abstract knowledge and the perceptual knowledge to which it directly goes: Kant then made a special category out of this as well. After all I have said, no further polemics are needed here!

[ii] In the same manner, the **Quality** of judgments lies entirely within the domain of reason, and doesn't point to any law of the understanding that makes perception possible. The nature of abstract concepts. . . entails the possibility, as likewise explained in chapter 9, of uniting and separating their spheres; and this possibility is the basis for the general logical laws of identity and contradiction, to which I attribute *metalogical* truth because they originate purely from reason and are not further explicable. They determine that what has been united must remain united, what has been separated must remain separated, thus what has been posited cannot at the same time be nullified; thus they presuppose the possibility of combining and separating spheres, i.e. of judgment. The *form* of judgment, however, lies solely in reason, and is not—like the *content* of judgments—brought across from the understanding's perceptual knowledge, in which there is therefore no correlate or analogue to be sought for them. Once perception has arisen through the understanding and for the understanding, it exists complete, not subject to doubt or error, and accordingly knows neither affirmation nor negation; for it gives voice to itself and does not—as does the abstract knowledge of reason—have its value and content merely in relation to something outside it in accordance with the GP. It is therefore sheer *Realität* and all negation is foreign to its nature; negation can only be added by thought

¹ [He means that it's possible only in a language that happens to have a name for the class of oak trees.]

in reflection, and just for that reason always remains within the domain of abstract thought. To *affirmative* and *negative* judgments—two of the kinds Kant included under *Quality*—Kant adds *infinite* judgments, availing himself of an old scholastic whim, an ingeniously invented hole-plugger that didn't even need to be explained—a blind window like the many that Kant brought in for the sake of his symmetrical architectonic.

84. Relation

[iii] Under the very broad concept of **Relation** Kant brought together three entirely different properties of judgments. Because they are so different, our search for their origin must take them separately.

(a) The hypothetical judgment—taking it in general—is the abstract expression of that most universal form of all our knowledge, the GP. In my 1813 treatise on the GP, I show that it has four entirely distinct meanings, each originating from a different knowledge faculty, just as each concerns a different class of presentations. It is well enough established there that the origin of the hypothetical judgment as such—of this general form of thought—cannot merely be, as Kant would have it, the understanding and its category of causality, but that the law of causality (which I count as pure understanding's single form) is only one of the modes of the GP, which includes all pure or *a priori* knowledge which in each of its meanings has this hypothetical form of judgment as its expression.

Here we see clearly how cases of knowledge that are entirely different in their origin and their meaning nevertheless, when thought *in abstracto* by reason, appear in one and the same form of combination of concepts and judgments, and so in this form are no longer distinguishable; and to distinguish

them one must go back to perceptual knowledge, entirely abandoning the abstract. Therefore, the path struck by Kant—to find, from the standpoint of abstract knowledge, the elements and innermost workings of intuitive knowledge as well—was altogether perverse. The whole of my introductory treatise on the GP is to a certain extent to be viewed as a thorough discussion of the meaning of the hypothetical form of judgment; so I shan't linger on it here.

(b) The form of the categorical judgment is nothing other than the form of *judgment in general* in the most proper sense. For judging, taken strictly, means only thinking the combination or incompatibility of spheres of concepts. So hypothetical and disjunctive combinations are really not special forms of judgment; for they are only applied to judgments as already formed, in which the combination of concepts remains unalterably categorical; but they in turn connect these judgments, with the hypothetical form expressing the dependence of one on another, and the disjunctive their incompatibility. But mere concepts have only one kind of relation to one another, namely the one expressed in the categorical judgment. The subspecies of this relation are **a** intersection and **b** complete separation of conceptual spheres, i.e. **a** affirmation and **b** negation; from which Kant made special categories under an entirely different title, 'Quality'. Intersection and separation also have subspecies, according to whether the spheres intersect entirely or only partially, which determination constitutes the *Quantity* of judgments, from which in turn Kant made an entirely separate category-title. Thus he separated things that are quite closely related, indeed identical, the easily surveyable variants of the only possible relation among mere concepts, and on the other hand under this title of 'Relation' united things that are most distinct.

Categorical judgments have as their metalogical principle

the logical laws¹ of identity and contradiction. But the ground of the connection of concept-spheres that confers truth on a judgment. . . . may be of very different kinds, so that the truth of the judgment is either logical, empirical, transcendental or metalogical, as I explained in §§30–33 of the introductory treatise and need not repeat here. We can see from this how very diverse the cases of immediate knowledge can be, though all of them are presented *in abstracto* by the combination of the spheres of two concepts as subject and predicate; and we can also see that no single function of the understanding can be taken to correspond to and produce that combination. For example, the judgments

- ‘Water boils’,
- ‘The sine is the measure of the angle’,
- ‘The will decides’,
- ‘Occupations distract’,
- ‘Making distinctions is difficult’

all use the same ·subject-predicate· logical form to express the most diverse sorts of relation. This again confirms how perverse it is to adopt the abstract point of view when setting out to analyse immediate, intuitive knowledge.

Categorical judgment springs from knowledge on the part of the understanding (with this word understood properly, in my sense) only when causation is expressed by it; but this is the case with every judgment that refers to a physical quality. For when I say ‘This body is heavy, hard, fluid, green, acid, alkaline, organic’ etc., this always refers to its effect, and knowledge of this is possible only through pure understanding. Now, once this knowledge—

like much that is quite different from it, e.g. the subordination of highly abstract concepts

—was expressed by subjects and predicates *in abstracto*,

these merely conceptual relations were turned back to perceptual knowledge ·by Kant·, who supposed that the *subject and predicate* of judgment must have its own special correlate in perception, *substance and quality*. But I shall make it clear later that the only true content of the concept of *substance* is the concept of *matter*. But ‘qualities’ is entirely synonymous with ‘kinds of effect’, so that the supposed knowledge of substance and quality is never anything more than pure understanding’s knowledge of cause and effect. [AS then gives references to other places where he discusses these matters, and says that he’ll deal with them] more closely when I examine the principle that substance persists.

(c) Disjunctive judgments stem from the logical law of the excluded middle, which is a metalogical truth; so they are entirely the property of pure reason and don’t originate in the understanding. Kant’s derivation from them of the category of *community* or *interaction* is a glaring example of the violence against the truth that he sometimes allows himself so as to satisfy his desire for architectonic symmetry. [AS here cites two previous writers who have rightly criticised the derivation in question.]

What actual analogy is there between •a concept left open for determination by mutually exclusive predicates and •the thought of interaction? The two are even quite opposed to one another, since

- in disjunctive judgment the affirmation of one of the two alternative propositions is necessarily the negating of the other, whereas
- when one thinks two things in the relation of interaction, the positing of one is necessarily positing of the other, and vice versa.

So it’s indisputable that the real logical analogue of inter-

¹ [*Denkgesetze*, literally = ‘laws of thought’.]

action is the *vicious circle* in argument, in which—just as supposedly with interaction—the grounded is also in turn the ground, and conversely. And just as logic rejects the vicious circle, so also the concept of interaction should be banned from metaphysics. For I seriously intend now to show that there is no such thing as *interaction* in the true sense; this concept—so popular in use just because of the vagueness of the thought it conveys—when more closely considered turns out to be empty, false, and null. You should first reflect on what causality in general is [and he refers to others of his writings that could assist in this. He then continues:] Causality is the law in accordance with which occurrent *states* of matter have their positions determined in time. Causality is concerned merely with states, indeed merely with alterations, and not with matter as such or with persistence without alteration. Matter as such doesn't come under the law of causality, since it neither comes into existence nor goes out of existence; so the *thing* of matter (as they say) doesn't come and go but only its *states* do so. Furthermore, the law of causality has nothing to do with persistence; for where nothing is altered there is no effect-production and no causality, but rather an enduring resting-state. If this state is then altered, bringing a new state into being, either the new state persists or it doesn't, and if it doesn't it brings forth a third state, and the necessity with which this happens is just the law of causality, which is a mode of the GP and therefore can't be further explained because the GP is the principle of all explanation and all necessity. It's clear from this that cause-and-effect stands in an exact connection and necessary relation with before-and-after. For state A to be a cause and state B an effect of it, A must precede B in time. But the concept of *interaction* implies that each is both the cause and the effect of the other; which is to say that each is the earlier and yet also

the later one. Thus, an absurdity. For it is not possible for two states to exist simultaneously, and indeed necessarily simultaneously, because as necessarily belonging together and existing simultaneously they constitute only one state. The permanence of this state certainly requires the continued existence of all its determinations, but then we are concerned not with change and causality but with duration and rest; this state may lead to another, and that to yet another, which all happens merely in accordance with the simple law of causality, and does not establish a new law, that of interaction.

I also plainly assert that there are no examples that would validate the concept of interaction. Everything that might be adduced as such is either **(i)** a resting state to which the concept of causality—which has meaning only with respect to alterations—finds no application at all, or **(ii)** an alternating succession of mutually conditioning states that are given the same name, which can be fully explained by simple causality. An example of **(i)** is provided by pans of a scale brought to rest with equal weights: here no effect is produced because there is no alteration; things are in a resting state. Gravity is striving. . . ., but cannot show its force by any effect. The fact that removal of one of the weights leads to a second state that becomes at once the cause of the third, the sinking of the other pan, happens in accordance with the simple law of cause and effect, and doesn't need a special category of the understanding or even a special name. An example of **(ii)** is the continuous combustion of a fire. The combination of oxygen with the flammable body causes heat, and this in turn causes the renewed occurrence of that chemical combination. But this is nothing other than a chain of causes and effects, whose members are alternately given the same name, *combustion*. . . . [AS gives a further example—this time a geographical one—of a type-**(ii)** causal chain that

night be mistaken for interaction, and then continues:] It is just the same with the swinging of pendulums, indeed even the self-maintenance of organic bodies, in which every state leads to a new one that is of the same *kind* as the one that caused it, but is a new one *individually*; only here the affair is more complicated because the chain now consists of links of many kinds—not just of two—so that a ·kind of· link that is given the same name recurs only after several others have intervened. But still all we have here is an application of the single and simple law of causality, which gives us the rule for sequences of states—not something that would have to be grasped through a new and special function of the understanding!

[AS now (i) presents and refutes another possible argument for interaction, (ii) says that if there were real interaction then there could be a perpetual-motion machine, which we know there couldn't, and (iii) says that Aristotle denies that there is interaction, backing this with quotations from Aristotle's Greek. Between (ii) and (iii) he lashes out again at Kant:] In the *Metaphysical Foundations of Natural Science* Kant begins the proof of the fourth theorem of mechanics by saying 'All external action in the world is interaction'. How then can it be *a priori* true that **a** simple causality and **b** interaction involve two distinct functions in the understanding, and even that the real *succession* of things is possible and knowable only through **a** the former and their simultaneity only through **b** the latter? According to that, if all action is interaction, then succession and simultaneity would also be the same thing, and everything in the world would be simultaneous.

85. Modality

[iv] The categories of **Modality** have the advantage that what is expressed through each of them does actually correspond to the judgment-form from which it is derived, which is hardly ever the case with the other categories because they are mostly forced to come, through the most arbitrary deduction, from the judgment-forms.

Thus it is perfectly true that it's the concepts of the **a** possible, **b** actual and **c** necessary that are occasioned by the **a** problematic, **b** assertoric and **c** apodictic forms of judgment. But it is not true that those concepts are the understanding's separate, original, and non-derivative forms of knowledge. Rather, the concepts of contingency, possibility, impossibility and actuality arise only because reflection is applied to such forms of knowledge. So these concepts don't by any means spring from one faculty of the mind, the understanding, but arise through the conflict between abstract and intuitive knowledge, as will be seen right away.

I maintain that *being necessary* and *following from a given premise* are wholly equivalent concepts and utterly identical. We can never know (or even merely think) something to be necessary except by regarding it as a consequence of a given premise; and the concept of necessity contains absolutely nothing beyond this dependence, this fact of being posited by way of another and inevitably following from it. It thus derives and survives¹ simply and solely through application of the GP. Therefore, according to the different forms of this principle, there is

- physical necessity (of effects from causes),
- logical necessity (through knowledge-grounds in analytic judgments, inferences, etc.),

¹ [echoing the original's *entsteht und besteht*.]

- mathematical necessity (in accordance with the ground of being in space and time), and finally
- practical necessity, a phrase that I'm not using to mean anything like determination by a supposed 'categorical imperative', but rather actions that are necessitated for a given empirical character by the motives at hand.

Everything necessary is so only relatively, under the presupposition of the premise from which it follows; so 'absolute necessity' is a contradiction. . . .

The contradictory opposite, i.e. the denial of necessity, is *contingency*. The content of this concept is therefore negative, namely

merely the *lack* of the connection expressed by the GP.

Consequently, the contingent too is always only relative; something is contingent only with reference to something that is *not* its ground. Every object of any sort—e.g. every event in the actual world—is always necessary and contingent at once: necessary with reference to the one thing that is its cause, contingent with reference to everything else. For its contact with everything else in time and space is a mere coincidence without necessary connection. . . . So absolute contingency is as little thinkable as absolute necessity. [AS gives and lengthily develops reasons for this that are clearly implied by things he has said already. He sums up:] All of this ultimately derives from the fact that the modality of judgment indicates not so much the objective character of things as the relation of our knowledge to it. But since everything in nature comes from a cause, everything *actual* is also *necessary*. Though only so far as it is at this time, in this place, for that's as far as the law of causality extends. If we abandon perceptual nature and go over to abstract thought, then we can present ourselves in reflection with all natural

laws—some known to us *a priori*, some only *a posteriori*—and this abstract presentation contains everything that is in nature at any time in any place, but abstracting from any particular place and time; and such reflection leads us into the broad realm of *possibility*. But even here there's no place for the *impossible*. It is obvious that possibility and impossibility exist only for reflection—for abstract knowledge on the part of reason—and not for perceptual knowledge, although it is perception's pure forms that supply reason with the determination of the possible and impossible. Possibility and impossibility are **a** metaphysical or only **b** physical, depending on whether the natural laws that generate our thoughts about it are **a** *a priori* or **b** *a posteriori*.

From this account, which doesn't need proof because it rests immediately on knowledge of the GP and on the unfolding of the concepts of the necessary, actual, and possible, we see well enough •how entirely groundless it is for Kant to assume three separate functions of the understanding for those three concepts, and •that here again he has pursued architectonic symmetry without being disturbed by any doubts.

But in addition to this he made the great mistake—admittedly following the procedure of earlier philosophy—of confusing the concepts of *necessary* and *contingent* with one another. [AS offers to explain this, in a passage driven by the view that necessity, properly understood, 'is relative': If Q follows from P, then Q is necessary relative to P; but it doesn't make sense to say that a proposition is *absolutely necessary*, this being a concept that the earlier philosophy and then Kant 'snatched out of thin air'. AS cites passages in the *Critique of Pure Reason* where Kant falls foul of this and is led into self-contradiction and to confusing necessity with contingency. Here is some of the passage:] The earlier philosophers had misused abstraction in the following way.

It was obvious that something whose ground is posited follows inevitably, i.e. cannot not be, thus is necessary. They fastened exclusively on this latter feature, however, and said: that is necessary which cannot be otherwise, or the opposite of which is impossible. But they failed to attend to the ground and the root of such necessity, thus overlooking the relativity of all necessity, and thereby creating the entirely unthinkable fiction of something *absolutely necessary*, i.e. of something whose existence

- would be as inevitable as consequences that follow from grounds, but which
- would not be the consequence of any ground, and therefore
- would depend on nothing.

What that last clause postulates is just an absurdity, because it conflicts with the GP. With this fiction as a point of departure, they—in diametrical opposition to the truth—declared that everything that is posited through a ground is contingent, namely, seeing the relative character of its necessity and comparing it with that absolute necessity, contradictory in its concept, which had been snatched out of thin air. Even Kant retains this fundamentally perverse definition of the contingent and gives it as his explanation: *Critique of Pure Reason* B289–91, B301; A419, 458, 460; B447, 486, 488. This leads him into the most evident contradiction with himself, insofar as on B301 he says ‘Everything contingent has a cause’, and adds: ‘That is contingent whose non-being is possible.’ But what has a cause is something whose non-being is altogether impossible; thus it is necessary. . . .

86. More on modality

I take this opportunity to add some further comments on those concepts of modality.

[In this chapter AS repeatedly brings in two technical terms from the theory of syllogisms, namely ‘major premise’ and ‘minor premise’. His uses of these is obscure, confusing, and so inaccurate that one wonders whether he had even a novice’s grasp of this theory. In this version, all that will be silently filtered out.]

Since all necessity rests on the GP, and is therefore relative, all *apodictic* judgments are in their origin and according to their ultimate significance *hypothetical*. They become categorical only through the addition of an *assertoric* premise, thus in the conclusion of an inference.¹ If this second premise is still undecided, and this indecision is expressed, then this yields a *problematic* judgment.

[The next bit is obscurely written. It’s gist is this: A general law of nature (e.g. the law of gravity) is as it stands apodictic, but in application to any individual case (e.g. the fall of that apple) it is only problematic: there’s always the question of whether the apple’s circumstances were such as to make the law of gravity applicable to it. And conversely, every individual event is necessary through its cause, and thus reportable in an apodictic judgment, but a judgment bringing an individual event under a general law—e.g. saying that *that* fall of the apple was a case of gravity—must be problematic.]

This is all based on the fact that

- possibility exists only in the domain of reflection and for reason,
- the actual exists in the domain of perception and for the understanding; and

¹ [That phrase literally translates the German, but the text seems to be defective. AS surely meant to say that in such a case the judgment in question *appears as* the conclusion of an inference.]

•the necessary exists for both domains.

Indeed, the difference between necessary, actual, and possible exists only *in abstracto* and with respect to concepts; in the real world, all three collapse into one. For everything that happens, happens **necessarily**, because it happens from a cause, which in turn itself has a cause; so all of the world's processes form a strict chain of necessarily occurring events. Accordingly, everything actual is at once necessary, and there's no difference between reality and necessity, or between reality and possibility. For anything that hasn't *actually* come to be wasn't *possible*, because the causes without which it couldn't occur did not themselves occur, nor *could* they have occurred within the great chain of causes; so it was an **impossibility**. Thus every event is either necessary or impossible. But all this applies merely to the empirically real world, i.e. to the complex of individual things. . . .

If on the other hand we employ our reason to consider things in general terms, comprehending them *in abstracto*, then necessity, reality, and possibility are again separated. In that frame of mind we recognise as entirely possible everything that squares with laws belonging *a priori* to our intellect. What corresponds with the empirical laws of nature we recognise as possible in this world, even if it has never actually come to be; so we sharply distinguish the possible from the actual. The actual is indeed in itself always also necessary, but is comprehended as such only by someone who knows its cause; but apart from this it is, and is called, contingent.

[Here follows a passage discussing a supposed 'dispute' in which the two parties actually agree,¹ and dragging in tattered shreds of theory of syllogism. AS emerges from this

as follows (though with the syllogistic nonsense filtered out):] Every general proposition determines things with respect to reality only under a presupposition, hence hypothetically. The general proposition loads the cannon; the proposition stating the presupposition sets the fuse, and only then does the shot ensue, the conclusion. This holds everywhere of the relation between possibility and reality. Since the conclusion—which is the expression of reality—always ensues necessarily, it follows that everything actual is also necessary, which can also be seen from the fact that being necessary only means being the consequence of a given ground; this is for actual things a cause, thus everything actual is necessary. Accordingly, we here see the concepts of the possible, actual, and necessary coinciding. . . .

What holds them apart is the limitation of our intellect by the form of time; for time is the mediator between possibility and reality. The necessity of individual events can be made completely evident through knowledge of all of their causes, but the conjunction of all these various and mutually independent causes appears to us as contingent; indeed their mutual independence is precisely the concept of contingency. But since each of them was the necessary consequence of its cause, and the chain of causes has no beginning, this shows that contingency is a merely subjective appearance arising from the limits of our understanding's horizon, and as subjective as the optical horizon within which the heavens touch the earth.

Since *necessity* is the same as *consequence from a given ground*, it must make its appearance as a particular sort of necessity for each mode of the GP [remember that 'GP' is short for 'Grounding Principle'.] and also have its opposite in

¹ [AS presents the 'dispute' by making one party say 'Only what becomes actual was possible; and everything actual is also necessary.' and making the other say 'Much is possible that will never become actual; for only the necessary becomes actual.' Shadow-boxing!]

possibility and *impossibility*, which always first arise through reason's abstract consideration of objects. So the four sorts of necessity mentioned early in chapter 85 stand opposed to four sorts of impossibility:

- physical,
- logical,
- mathematical, and
- practical.

It may also be noted that if one keeps entirely within the domain of abstract concepts, possibility always attaches to the more general concept, necessity to the narrower one. For example: 'an animal *can* be a bird, fish, amphibian, etc.>'; 'a nightingale *must* be a bird, this an animal, this an organism, this a body.' This is because logical necessity, the expression of which is logical inference, proceeds from the general to the particular and never conversely.

On the other hand, in perceptual nature (presentations belonging to the first class) everything is really necessary by the law of causality. Only added reflection can see it as contingent, comparing it with that which is not its cause, and even as merely and purely actual by abstracting from all its causal connections. Only for this class of presentations does the concept of the actual really have any status. . . .

In the third class of presentations, that of pure mathematical perception, there is—if one keeps entirely within it—sheer necessity. Possibility arises here too only by reference to concepts of reflection, e.g. 'a triangle *can* be right-angled, obtuse, equilateral; it *must* have three angles that add up to two right angles.' Thus we reach the possible only by passing from the perceptual to the abstract.

After this exposition, which presupposes knowledge of what I said in the treatise on the GP and in the first Book of the present work, I hope there will be no further doubt about the true and very different sources of the forms

that the table of judgments sets before us, or about the inadmissibility and utter groundlessness of the assumption of twelve separate functions of the understanding to explain them. Many easily observable details indicate the falsity of the 'twelve functions' thesis. Someone who thought that an affirmative, a categorical, and an assertoric judgment are three fundamentally different things—so different that they justify assuming an entirely unique function of the understanding for each of them—would have to have a great love of symmetry and much trust in the path it leads to!

87. More about the list of categories

Kant himself betrays his awareness of the untenability of his doctrine of the categories when in the chapter on Phenomena and Noumena in B he omits several long passages from A. . . . which too openly displayed the weakness of that doctrine. For example, he says at A241 that he hasn't defined the individual categories because he couldn't define them even if he wanted to, as they are incapable of any definition; forgetting that at A82 he had said, 'I purposely refrain from the definition of the categories, even if I might be in possession of it.' So this was—pardon my language!—wind. But he let the later passage stand. So all those passages that were wisely omitted from B betray the fact that nothing clear can be thought with respect to the categories, the whole doctrine of which stands on feet of clay.

This table of categories is now offered as the principle that is to guide all metaphysical, indeed all scientific, thinking (*Prolegomena* §39). And in fact it is not only (as I have shown above) the basis for the entire Kantian philosophy and the pattern by which its symmetry is to be everywhere achieved, but it also truly became the procrustean bed into which Kant forces every possible inquiry, with a violence that I will now

consider in somewhat more detail. . . .

Kant entirely sets aside and forgets the *meanings* of the expressions designating the rubrics,¹ and the forms of judgments and categories, holding only to the *expressions* themselves. These originate partly in Aristotle's *Prior Analytics*, but are arbitrarily chosen. Surely the extension of concepts could have been labelled by something better than 'Quantity', though this word suits its object better than do the other rubrics for the categories. The word 'Quality' was obviously chosen only from the custom of contrasting quantity and quality; for in the case of affirmation and negation the label 'Quality' is quite inappropriate. But with any consideration in which he engages, any quantity in time and space and any possible quality of things, physical, moral, etc., is brought by Kant under those Categorical rubrics, on the basis not of the faintest fittingness but only of arbitrary nomenclature. One has to bear in mind all the esteem that one otherwise owes to Kant, not to give harsh expression to one's displeasure at this procedure.

The next example is provided for us by the 'pure physiological table' in the *General Principles of Natural Science*. What on earth does the Quantity of judgments have to do with the fact that **a** every perception has an extensive magnitude? What does the Quality of judgments have to do with the fact that **b** every sensation has a degree? The **a** former actually rests on the fact that space is the form of our outer perception, and the **b** latter is nothing more than an empirical and indeed entirely subjective observation, drawn merely from considering the character of our sensations.²

Further, in the table (A344) that gives the basis for 'rational psychology', the soul's *simplicity* is introduced under Quality; but simplicity is a quantitative property with absolutely no relation to affirmation and negation in judgment. Quantity was supposed to include the soul's *unity*, which is already comprised in its simplicity. Then Modality is forced in in a ridiculous way, by saying that the soul is related to possible objects. But relatedness belongs to Relation,³ except that this is already taken over by the concept of substance. Then the four cosmological ideas, which are the material for the Antinomies, are traced back to the rubrics for the categories; I'll say more about this when I examine the Antinomies. Several still more glaring examples are provided by the table of the categories of freedom in the *Critique of Practical Reason*; in the first Book of the *Critique of Judgment*, which examines judgments of taste according to the four rubrics for the categories; and finally in the *Metaphysical Foundations Principles of Natural Science*, which is entirely tailored to the table of categories: see at the end of chapter 1 how the unity, plurality, totality of the directions of lines are supposed to correspond to the categories that are so named in accordance with the Quantity of judgments! This may be the main source of the element of falsity that is mixed in here and there with what is true and excellent in this important work.

¹ [The German is *Titel*; it refers to the general headings under which Kant groups his trios of judgment-forms and categories: 'Quantity', 'Quality', 'Relation' and 'Modality'.]

² [The German has *Sinnesorgane* = 'sense-organs', but that was surely a slip.]

³ [In the German, relatedness is *Verhältniß* and relation is *Relation*.]

88. The persistence of substance

The principle of **a** the *persistence of substance* is derived from the category of **b** subsistence and inherence. But we know **b** this only from the form of categorical judgments, i.e. from the combination of two concepts as subject and predicate. To make **a** that great metaphysical principle depend on **b** this simple, purely logical form—what a lot of force has to be used! But it is done for the sake of symmetry. The proof that Kant gives here for **a** this principle makes no use of its supposed origin from the understanding and from **b** the category, and is drawn from the pure perception of time. But this proof is also completely wrong. It is false that there is any simultaneity or duration in mere time; these presentations come from the uniting of *space* with time, as I have already shown in my treatise on the GP (§18) and further explained in chapter 4 of the present work; knowledge of those two discussions is required for an understanding of what follows. It is false that in all change time itself *remains*; on the contrary, it is just time itself that is fleeting; a permanent time is a contradiction. Kant's proof is untenable, strenuously though he supports it with sophisms. Indeed it gets him into the most blatant contradiction: after (A177/B219) wrongly setting forth simultaneity as a mode of time, he quite rightly says (A183/B226) 'Simultaneity is not a mode of time, in which no parts are simultaneous, but rather all in succession'.

In truth, simultaneity involves space as much as it does time. For if two things are simultaneous and yet not *one*, they are distinct by virtue of space; if two states of *one* thing are simultaneous (e.g. the glowing and the heat of an iron bar), then they are two simultaneous effects of one thing, and therefore presuppose matter which presupposes space. Strictly speaking, 'simultaneous' is a negative characterisation, which merely says that two things or states are *not*

distinct by virtue of time, and so their difference is to be sought elsewhere.

But of course our knowledge of the persistence of substance, i.e. of matter, has to rest on an *a priori* insight; for it is elevated above all doubt, and so cannot be drawn from experience. I derive it from the fact that the principle of all becoming and passing away—the law of causality of which we are *a priori* conscious—essentially concerns only alterations, i.e. successive *states* of matter; so it is limited to the *form* but leaves the *matter* untouched. So matter stands in our consciousness as the foundation of all things, not subject to any becoming or passing away, hence always having been and always remaining. A deeper grounding of the persistence of substance. . . . can be found in chapter 4 above, where it is shown that the essence of matter consists in completely uniting space and time, which is possible only by means of the presentation of causality; . . . so that there is never knowledge of matter otherwise than as through and through causality. . . . So causality, matter and reality—as an intimate uniting of space and time—are one thing, and the subjective correlate of this is the understanding. Matter must bear within itself the conflicting properties of the two factors (space and time) from which it comes; and it's the presentation of causality that eliminates the contradiction between the two and makes their conjunction comprehensible to the understanding. Matter exists only through and for the understanding, the entire capacity of which consists in knowledge of cause and effect; for it, therefore,

- the insubstantial flow of time, coming to the fore as change in qualities,

is united in matter with

- the rigid immobility of space, which displays itself as the persistence of substance.

For if substance passed away like qualities, then phenomena

would be torn loose from space and belong only to mere time. The world of experience would be dissolved, with the annihilation of matter.

Thus the principle of the persistence of substance, which everyone recognises as *a priori* certain, has to be based on the part played by space in matter, i.e. in all the phenomena of reality; space being the contrary and opposite of time and therefore in itself knowing no change at all. The persistence principle couldn't be based on mere time, to which Kant for this purpose absurdly imputes a lasting character. . . .

I would have many other particulars to refute in the further course of the Transcendental Analytic, but I fear it would try the reader's patience and therefore leave him to his own thoughts. But we are repeatedly confronted in the *Critique of Pure Reason* with that fundamental failing of Kant which I criticised in detail above, the lack of any distinction between •abstract, discursive knowledge and •intuitive knowledge. This is what constantly spreads obscurity over Kant's whole theory of the faculty of knowledge, and never lets the reader know what he is really talking about at any point; so the reader, instead of *understanding*, always only *conjectures*, alternately trying to understand what is said at any point as a statement about thought or a statement about perception, and is constantly left hanging. In the chapter 'On the Distinction of all Objects into Phenomena and Noumena' Kant's incredible lack of reflection on the nature of the difference between perceptual perception and abstract presentation brings him (as I am about to explain in more detail) to the monstrous assertions **(i)** that without thought—and thus without abstract concepts—there would be no knowledge of an object, and **(ii)** that because perception is not thought, it is not any kind of knowledge and in general nothing but mere sensation! Indeed even further (A253/B309) **(iii)** that perception without concepts is

entirely empty, while concepts without perception are always something. Now **(iii)** is the exact opposite of the truth. For concepts obtain all their meaning, all their content, from their reference to the perceptual presentations from which they have been abstracted by omitting everything inessential; so that when the foundation of perception is withdrawn they are empty and null. Perceptions, on the other hand, have immediate and very great meaning in themselves. . . .; they represent themselves, give voice to themselves, don't have a merely borrowed content as concepts do. For the GP holds sway over perceptions only as the law of causality, determining only their position in space and time; but the GP doesn't condition their content and their meaningfulness, as is the case with concepts, where it serves as the ground of knowledge. In one place Kant seems to be getting at a distinction between perceptual and abstract presentation; it is where he objects against Locke and Leibniz that the former made everything into perceptual presentations and the latter made everything into abstract presentations. But no distinction is forthcoming; and if Locke and Leibniz made those mistakes, Kant himself is burdened by a third mistake that encompasses them both, namely confusing the perceptual with the abstract to such an extent that a monstrous hermaphrodite arose from the two of them, an absurdity that can't be clearly presented and that was therefore bound to confuse students, stun them, and set them quarrelling with one another.

Certainly, thought and perception are separated in the chapter 'On the Distinction of all Objects into Phenomena and Noumena' more than they are anywhere else; but the way the distinction is made in this chapter is fundamentally wrong. It says:

'If from my empirical knowledge I remove all thought (through categories), no knowledge of any object

remains; through mere intuition nothing at all is thought; and the occurrence in me of this sensory event—the one that remains when all thought is removed from an item of empirical knowledge—doesn't amount to a representation of any object.' (A253/B309)

To a certain extent this sentence contains all of Kant's errors in a nutshell, because it shows clearly that he has misconceived the relation between¹ sensation, perception, and thought, and has accordingly identified perception—whose form is supposed to be space in all three dimensions—with mere subjective sensation in the sense organs, while having knowledge of an object first added on by thought as distinct from perception. I on the other hand say: objects are first of all objects of perception, not of thought, and all knowledge of objects is originally and in itself perception; but this is emphatically not mere sensation, because the understanding is already active in it. The thought that is an added element in human beings but not in animals

- is a mere abstraction from perception,
- yields no fundamentally new knowledge, and
- . . . merely changes the form of knowledge already won by perception, converting it into abstract knowledge in concepts.

Perceptibility is lost by this, but on the other hand it enables items of knowledge to enter into combinations that immeasurably broaden the range of their applicability. The material of our thought, on the other hand, is nothing but our perceptions themselves, and *not* something that isn't contained in perception and would have to be brought to it by thought; and so the material for everything that happens in our thought must be capable of verification in our perception, for otherwise the thought would be empty.

Although this material is variously processed and transformed by thought, it must be possible to recover it from there and lead thought back to it—like what happens when a piece of gold is recovered from all its solutions, oxidations, sublimations, and compounds, and is set before us again pure and undiminished. This couldn't be the situation if thought itself had added something, indeed the principal thing, to the object.

89. The Amphiboly chapter

The entire chapter that follows this one, 'On the Amphiboly', is merely a critique of Leibnizian philosophy and as such it is mainly accurate, though its over-all shape is merely a product of a preference for architectonic symmetry, which here again provides the directing principle. [In a rather complicated way, AS says that Kant's wish to echo Aristotle leads him to focus on *four* aspects of every concept, which AS says] are altogether arbitrarily assumed, and ten others could with equal right be added. But the number *four* corresponds to the rubrics for the categories, so Kant does the best he can to divide the main Leibnizian doctrines among them. Also, by this critique certain errors of reason are stamped (so to speak) as natural, though they were merely false abstractions on the part of Leibniz, who—rather than learning from his great philosophical contemporaries, Spinoza and Locke—served up his own strange inventions. In the chapter on the Amphiboly of Reflection, it is finally said that there could be a kind of perception quite different from ours though our categories were applicable to it. So the objects of that supposed perception would be noumena, things that can merely be thought by us, but since the

¹ [Thus the German; but he should have said 'the relations amongst'.]

perception that would give meaning to this thought would be lacking—indeed would be altogether problematic—so the ‘object’ of that thought would also be merely a quite indeterminate possibility. I have shown that Kant, in total contradiction with himself, presents the categories sometimes as a condition of perceptual presentation, sometimes as a function of merely abstract thought. In the chapter now under discussion, they appear exclusively in the latter role, and it really seems as if he would ascribe merely discursive thought to them. But if this really is Kant’s opinion, he should have opened the Transcendental Logic by characterising thought in general, *before* going on at length about the various functions of thought. This would have involved him in distinguishing thought from perception, and showing what sort of knowledge mere perception provides and what new sort is added in thought. Then we’d have known what he is really talking about; or rather he would have talked quite differently, speaking at one point about perception and at another about thought, instead of (as he does) always talking of an intermediate thing which is an absurdity.¹ Then there wouldn’t be that great gap between the Transcendental Aesthetic and the Transcendental Logic, where, after his account of perception’s mere form, he simply brushes off its content—perceptual apprehension as a whole—with a mere ‘it is given’, and doesn’t ask how it is given, *whether with or without understanding*, but goes across in a *leap* to abstract thought, and not even to thought in general, but immediately to certain forms of thought, and doesn’t say a word about what thought is, what a concept is, what the relation is between the abstract and discursive and between the concrete and intuitive, how the knowledge of human beings is unlike that of animals, and what reason is.

[AS goes on to say that the terms ‘noumena’ and ‘phenomena’ (or their Greek equivalents) were used by ancient and medieval philosophers for sober purposes, whereas] Kant irresponsibly ignored the meanings those words already had, and took charge of them—as though they were still unclaimed—as labels for his things in themselves and his appearances.

90. What are the forms of thought?

Having had to reject Kant’s doctrine of the categories, just as he rejected Aristotle’s, I want here to suggest here a third way of saying what they were trying to get at. What they were both seeking under the label of ‘categories’ were the most general concepts under which all things, however diverse, have to be subsumed and through which therefore everything that exists would ultimately be thought. That is why Kant conceived of them as the *forms* of all thought.

Grammar relates to logic as clothes relate to the body. So shouldn’t these very highest concepts—

this ground-bass of reason that is the foundation of all more particular thought, and so has to be at work if any thought is to happen

—because of their extreme generality, be expressed not by individual words but by entire classes of words? The point is that any word whatever will have one of those forms already thought along with it, so that the word’s meaning would have to be sought not in the dictionary but in grammar. In fact, shouldn’t they be those differences among concepts by virtue of which the word expressing them is either a noun or an adjective, a verb or an adverb, a pronoun, a preposition, or some other particle—in short, the ‘parts of speech’? For

¹ [In German ‘intermediate thing’ is *Mittelding* and ‘absurdity’ is *Unding*; middle thing and non-thing.]

undoubtedly these denote the forms which all thought primarily assumes, and in which it directly moves; so they are the essential forms of speech, the fundamental constituent elements of every language, so that we can't imagine any language that didn't consist of at least nouns, adjectives and verbs. Subordinated to •those basic forms would be the forms of thought that are expressed through inflections of •them—thus through declension and conjugation—and it doesn't matter to our main concern whether these are indicated by articles and pronouns. But I want to examine the matter in more detail and ask again: what are the forms of thought?

(i) Thought consists throughout of judgments; judgments are the threads of its entire fabric. For without the use of a verb, our thought doesn't *move*, and whenever we do use a verb, we judge.

(ii) Every judgment consists in recognition of a relation between subject and predicate, which it separates or unites with all sorts of restrictions. It unites them beginning with

- recognition of the actual identity of two concepts, which can occur only with equivalent concepts; then
- in recognition that one concept is *always* also thought in the other, but not conversely, in a universal affirmative proposition; and finally
- in recognition that one concept is *sometimes* also thought in the other, in a particular affirmative proposition.

Negative propositions follow the contrary course. Accordingly, it must be possible to find subject, predicate, and (affirmative or negative) copula in every judgment, even if each is not designated by its own word, though usually it is. [AS now speaks of cases where each part of speech doesn't have its own separate word, especially in Latin, and says that

this is unimportant, because]: often one word designates predicate and copula, as in 'Gaius ages,' sometimes one word all three, as in *concurritur*, i.e. 'the armies are engaging.' From this it becomes evident that the forms of thought are not after all to be so directly and immediately sought in words, nor even in the parts of speech, since the same judgment can be expressed in various languages, indeed even in the same language, through various words and even through various parts of speech, but the same thought nonetheless remains, consequently also its form; for the thought could not be the same with a difference in the very form of the thought. But with the same thought with the same form the verbal construction can surely differ; for it is merely the outer clothing of the thought, whereas the thought is inseparable from its form. So grammar explains only the *clothing* of the forms of thought. The parts of speech can thus be derived from the original forms of thought independently of all languages: their work is to express these forms with all their modifications. They are the instrument—the clothing—of the forms of thought, and have to be fitted exactly to their structure so that the structure is recognisable in them.

(iii) These actual, unalterable, basic forms of thought are of course those of Kant's *logical Table of Judgments*, except that this Table has blind windows—created by Kant's wish for symmetry and by his table of categories—which need to be dropped; and there is a false ordering •which needs to be remedied•. Thus, for example:

(a) **Q**uality. Affirmation or negation, i.e. combination or separation of concepts: two forms, •whereas Kant says there are three•. This attaches to the copula.

(b) **Q**uantity. The subject concept is taken entirely or in part: universality or plurality. To the first of these also belong individual subjects: 'Socrates' means 'every Socrates'.

Thus only two forms, ·in contrast again with Kant's supposed three·. This attaches to the subject.

(c) Modality does actually have three forms. It determines the quality as necessary, actual, or contingent. So it also attaches to the copula.

These three forms of thought arise from the logical laws of contradiction and identity. But from the GP and the law of excluded middle there arises:

(d) Relation. This comes on the scene only when someone makes a judgment about independently available judgments, and can only consist either in •stating the dependence of one judgment on another. . . ., hence combining them in a hypothetical proposition, or else •in stating that the judgments exclude one another, hence separating them in a disjunctive proposition. This attaches to the copula, the role of which here is to separate or combine independently available judgments.

The parts of speech and grammatical forms are ways of expressing the three constituents of a judgment

subject — predicate — copula

and their possible relations, thus the forms of thought just listed and their finer determinations and modifications. Noun, adjective, and verb are therefore essential basic constituents of language in general; so it must be possible to find them in all languages. But we can imagine a language in which adjective and verb are *always* fused, as is *sometimes* the case in all languages. Provisionally, it can be said that

- the role of expressing the subject is that of nouns, articles, and pronouns;
- the role of expressing the predicate is that of adjectives, adverbs, prepositions;
- the role of expressing the copula is that of verbs, though these (with the exception of *esse* ·= Latin for 'to be'·) already contain a predicate.

Philosophical grammar describes the exact mechanism of the *expression of* forms of thought, just as logic describes operations involving the forms of thought themselves.

[AS adds a 'warning' against one writer's 'unsuccessful attempt to construct the categories on the basis of grammatical forms'.]

91. The Transcendental Dialectic

I return to the Kantian philosophy, specifically to the Transcendental Dialectic. Kant opens it with an explanation of *reason*, the faculty that will play the main role in it, whereas until now only *sensibility* and *understanding* have been on the stage. I have already spoken of the explanation of reason he gives here (he also has others), 'that it is the faculty for principles'. So now he is telling us that all of the previously considered cases of *a priori* knowledge, which make pure mathematics and pure natural science possible, provide mere rules but no principles; for they come from perceptions and forms of knowledge, but not from mere concepts, which is required for anything to be called a 'principle'. So a principle is supposed to be knowledge from mere concepts and yet to be synthetic. But this is downright impossible. Nothing can come from mere concepts except analytic propositions. If concepts are to be combined synthetically and yet *a priori*, this combination *must* be mediated by a third factor, by a pure perception of the formal possibility of experience; just as synthetic *a posteriori* judgments are mediated by empirical perception; so a synthetic *a priori* proposition can never come from mere concepts. But nothing at all is known to us *a priori* beyond the GP in its various modes, and no synthetic judgments are therefore possible *a priori* except ones that come from what gives the GP its content.

In the meantime Kant finally comes up with a supposed

principle of reason corresponding to his demands, but indeed only with this *one*, from which other principles follow as consequences. It is the proposition that Chr. Wolff presents and elucidates in two of his works [details are given]. Just as under the rubric ‘Amphiboly’ mere Leibnizian philosophical theses were taken to be necessary aberrations of reason and criticised as such [see chapter 89], precisely the same happens here with Wolff’s philosophical theses. Kant’s exposition of this ‘supposed’ principle of reason is still obscure because of its indistinctness, indefiniteness, and fragmentation (B364, B379). Stated clearly, however, it is this: ‘If the conditioned is given, the totality of its conditions must also be given, as must also the *unconditioned*, by which alone that totality is made complete.’ To get a vivid sense of the seeming truth of this proposition, picture the conditions and the conditioned as links of a hanging chain, the upper end of which is not visible and therefore might go on ad infinitum; but since the chain doesn’t fall, there must be one link up there that is the first and is somehow fixed. Or more briefly:

- reason would like a point of attachment for the infinitely ascending causal chain; that would be a comfort to •it. But I want to examine the proposition not in pictures but in itself. It is synthetic, to be sure; for nothing more follows analytically from the concept of the conditioned than that of a condition. But it has no truth *a priori* nor even *a posteriori*, but rather smuggles in its semblance of truth in a subtle manner which I must now expose. We have immediately and *a priori* the knowledge expressed by the GP in its four modes. All abstract expressions of the GP are derived from this immediate knowledge and are thus ‘not immediate but mediated, which also holds for their consequences. I have explained in chapter 84 how *abstract* knowledge often unites manifold cases of *intuitive* knowledge into one form or one concept in such a way that they become indistinguishable;

thus abstract knowledge relates to intuitive knowledge as a shadow relates to the real things whose great multiplicity it reproduces through one all-encompassing outline. Now Kant’s supposed ‘principle of reason’ makes use of this shadow. In order to infer the unconditioned from the GP, which it flatly contradicts, it shrewdly abandons

- immediate, perceptual knowledge of the content of the GP in its individual modes,

and makes use only of

- abstract concepts, which are drawn from it and have value and significance only through it,

in order—somehow or other—to smuggle its ‘unconditioned’ into the broad domain of those concepts. What is going on here is clearest when it is dressed in dialectical clothing, thus: ‘If the conditioned exists, its condition must also exist, and indeed fully, thus completely, thus the totality of its conditions must exist; consequently, if they constitute a series, the entire series must exist, consequently also its first beginning, thus the unconditioned.’

92. The absurd search for the Absolute

It is false that the conditions of something conditioned can form a series. Rather, the totality of conditions for anything conditioned must be contained in its *nearest* ground, which immediately leads to it and wouldn’t be a sufficient ground if it didn’t. The various determinations of the state that is its cause must all come together before the effect occurs. But the series, e.g. the chain of causes, arises only because we consider in turn as something conditioned what was just now the condition, in which case the entire operation starts over again and the GP appears anew with its demand. But there can never be a truly successive series of conditions for something conditioned. . . .; it is always an alternating

series of conditions and things conditioned. With every link that we pass, the chain is interrupted and the GP's demand is paid in full; it arises anew when the condition is made into something conditioned. So the GP always demands only completeness of the *immediate* condition, never completeness of a series. [AS now repeats all of that at greater length, adding only the statement that what leads people to think of the alternating series of causes and effects as a uniform series of conditions is their retreating into the *abstract* way of thinking in which the difference between cause and effect disappears. He concludes:] The abstract principle of reason then steps boldly forth with its demand for the unconditioned. But to recognise its invalidity, there is no need for

- a critique of reason by means of Antinomies and their resolution,

but only for

- a critique of reason understood in my sense,

namely, an examination of the relation between **a** abstract knowledge and **b** immediately intuitive knowledge, by means of a descent from the indeterminate generality of **a** the former to the solid determinateness of **b** the latter. From such a critique it emerges that the essence of reason in no way consists in the demand for something unconditioned; for as soon as reason proceeds with fully thoughtful awareness, it is bound to find that something unconditioned is a downright absurdity. As a faculty of knowledge, reason can only deal with objects; but all objects for a subject are necessarily and irrevocably subordinated and subject to the GP, both with respect to what precedes and with respect to what follows. The validity of the GP is so firmly embedded in the form of consciousness that we are absolutely unable to imagine any

object of which no further Why? is to be demanded—any such idiocy as an absolute Absolute. The fact that this or that person's comfort enjoins him to stop at some point and assume such an Absolute at his pleasure is of no avail against that incontrovertible *a priori* certainty, even when he puts on most elegant airs in doing so.

In fact, all of that talk about the Absolute, this almost exclusive theme of the philosophies attempted since Kant, is nothing but the cosmological proof *incognito*. [This refers to what Kant called the 'cosmological argument' for the existence of God.] This argument, having lost all its rights and been declared an outlaw as a result of the trial conducted against it by Kant, can no longer show itself in its true shape; so it appears in all sorts of disguises, sometimes in elegant ones, cloaked in intellectual perception or pure thought, sometimes as a suspect vagabond who makes his demands—half begging, half defiant—in more modest philosophical theses. If men absolutely want an Absolute, then I'll give them one that much better satisfies the demands on such a thing than their visionary phantoms: it is **matter**.

- It has no beginning,
- it is imperishable,
- it is really independent and
- it exists through itself and is conceived through itself,¹
- everything comes from its womb and everything returns to it.

What more can one demand of an absolute? . . .

Incidentally, the fact that regress to an unconditioned cause, to a first beginning, is in no way grounded in the nature of reason is practically proved by the fact that Brahmanism and Buddhism—the primordial religions of our race, which even now have the most adherents—do not know or

¹ [AS gives this in Latin; he is quoting Spinoza's definition of 'substance'.]

admit such assumptions, but carry the series of successively conditioning phenomena to infinity. . . .

Kant himself denies objective validity to his supposed principle of reason, but he seeks to prove it as *subjectively* necessary, doing this by way of a shallow sophism (B364). Namely: because we seek to bring every truth that we know under a more general truth, so long as we can, this is nothing but the hunt for the unconditioned, which we have presupposed. But actually we are merely applying reason—

the faculty of abstract, general knowledge that distinguishes thoughtfully aware, linguistically gifted human beings from animals, which are slaves to the present

—using it to simplify our knowledge enabling us to survey it. For the use of reason consists just in our

- taking knowledge of the particular by way of the general,
- taking individual cases by way of rules, and
- taking rules by way of more general rules,

so that we are seeking the most general points of view. Such overviews make our knowledge so highly facilitated and perfected that it creates the great difference between the course of an animal life and that of a human life, and in turn between the life of an educated man and that of an uneducated one. Now of course the series of grounds of knowledge—which exists only in the domain of the abstract, the domain of reason—always finds an end

- in something unprovable, i.e.
- in a presentation that is not further conditioned according to this mode of the GP, and thus
- in the *a priori* or *a posteriori* directly perceptual ground of the highest proposition in the inferential chain.

I have already shown in my treatise on the GP that here the

series of grounds of *knowledge* really passes over into the series of grounds of *becoming* or of *being*. . . .

So it is utterly false that our search for higher grounds of knowledge, for more general truths, arises from the presupposition of an object unconditioned with respect to its existence. . . . How indeed is it supposed to be essential to reason to presuppose something that reason is bound to recognise as an absurdity as soon as it reflects on it? Rather, the origin of that concept of the unconditioned is to be found only in the laziness of the individual who wants it to free him from all further questions—his own or other people's—though without any justification.

Now Kant himself denies all *objective* validity to this supposed principle of reason, but presents it as a necessary *subjective* presupposition, thus introducing an irremediable split into our knowledge—a split which he soon allows to appear more clearly. He further articulates that 'principle of reason' (B379) in accordance with his favoured method of architectonic symmetry. From the three categories of Relation arise three kinds of inferences, each of which provides the directing principle for the search for a special unconditioned, of which there are therefore three:

soul — world — God,

where the world is conceived as an object in itself and a closed totality. Here we should note a major contradiction which Kant doesn't notice because it would be very dangerous for the symmetry: two of these 'supposedly' unconditioned items are in fact conditioned by the third; that is, soul and world are conditioned by God, who is their productive cause. So those two don't have in common with God the predicate

'is unconditioned',

though this is supposed to be the point here. They have in common with God only the predicate

'is inferred according to the principles of experience, and is beyond the possibility of experience'.

93. 'Three unconditioned beings'

Setting this aside, we recognise

- the three ·supposedly· unconditioned beings which Kant says that all reason must arrive at if it follows its own essential laws

as being

- the three main subjects around which the whole of philosophy under the influence of Christianity has revolved, from the scholastics on down to Christian Wolff.

Accessible and familiar as those concepts have become through all those philosophers and now through philosophers of mere reason, that doesn't mean that they were bound to arise—even without revelation—from the development of everybody's reason, as a product peculiar to its very nature. To settle whether this is so, we would have to resort to historical investigation, inquiring into whether

ancient and non-European peoples (especially the Hindustani) and many of the earliest Greek philosophers had actually arrived at those ·three· concepts,

or whether instead

in too congenial a spirit we merely ascribe these concepts to them, just as the Greeks recognised their gods everywhere, by wrongly translating the *Brahma* of the Hindus and the *Tien* of the Chinese as *theos*.

If the latter is the case, real theism is to be found only in the Jewish religion and the two that have arisen from it, whose adherents have for that reason grouped the followers of all the world's other religions under the name of 'heathens'—a most simplistic and crude expression, incidentally, which

should at least be banned from the writings of the learned, because it equates Brahmanists, Buddhists, Egyptians, Greeks, Romans, Germans, Gauls, Iroquois, Patagonians, Caribbeans, Tahitians, Australians and many others, dumping them in one bag. Such an expression is fitting for **priests**, but in the world of **the learned** it should be shown the door at once; it can travel to England and settle in Oxford.

[AS develops this theme. He says that it is 'entirely settled' that Buddhism contains no theism, and gives complicated reasons for thinking that Plato's 'occasional touches of theism' are owed to the Jews, reporting that 'Numenius called him "the Greek-speaking Moses"', and adding this:] Clement of Alexandria often returns to the claim that Plato knew and made use of Moses [AS gives references], including one place where—after monkishly scolding and mocking all the Greek philosophers because they were not Jews—he praises Plato exclusively and erupts into sheer joy over the fact that, just as he learned his geometry from the Egyptians, his astronomy from the Babylonians, magic from the Thracians, and much from the Assyrians, so he learned his theism from the Jews. . . . According to Plutarch and Lactantius, Plato thanked nature that he was born a human being and not an animal, a man and not a woman, a Greek and not a barbarian. Now we find in Isaak Euchel's *Prayers of the Jews* a morning prayer in which they thank God that he who is giving thanks has been born a Jew and not a pagan, a free person and not a slave, a man and not a woman.

Such an historical investigation would have saved Kant from a jam that he gets into by saying •that those three concepts necessarily arise from the nature of reason, while also •demonstrating that they are untenable and cannot be supported by reason. In this way he turns reason itself into a sophist [here = 'a purveyor of an invalid argument'], saying (B397):

'They are sophistries not of men but of reason itself,

and not even the wisest of men can free himself from them. If he works hard at it, he may be able to guard himself against actual error; but he'll never be able to free himself of the illusion, which incessantly torments and mocks him.'

According to that, these Kantian 'ideas of reason' would be comparable to the focus in which the rays reflected from a concave mirror converge some inches in front of its surface; in consequence of which, by an inevitable process of the understanding, we are presented with an object which is a thing without reality.

But the term 'idea' for those three supposedly necessary products of pure theoretical reason was unfortunately chosen. It was snatched from Plato, who used it to refer to the imperishable forms which—when multiplied through space and time—become imperfectly visible in countless individual perishable things.¹ Plato's ideas are thus altogether perceptible, as indeed the word that he chose definitely indicates—a word that could fittingly be translated as 'perceptibles' or 'visibles'. And Kant appropriated it to designate what lies so far from all possibility of perception that even abstract thought can only halfway attain to it! The word 'idea' has through 22 centuries kept the meaning that Plato (who first introduced it) gave to it; for not only all ancient philosophers, but also all the scholastics—and indeed the Church Fathers and the theologians of the Middle Ages—used it only in that Platonic sense, the sense of the Latin word *exemplar* [= 'model', 'pattern', 'example']. . . . That Englishmen and Frenchmen were later led by the poverty of their languages to misuse this word is bad enough, but not important. Kant's misuse of the word 'idea', giving it a new significance introduced through the slender thread of *not being an object of experience*—which it

has in common with Plato's ideas but also with every possible chimera—is thus altogether unjustifiable. Now, since the misuse of a few years is not to be considered against the authority of many centuries, I have always used the word in its old, original, Platonic significance.

94. The concept of *soul*

The refutation of rational psychology is much more detailed and thorough in A, the first edition of the *Critique of Pure Reason*, than in later editions; so we must tackle it entirely in terms of A. This refutation has on the whole very great merit and much that is true. I am quite convinced, however, that it is merely because of his love of symmetry that Kant •derived the necessity of the concept of the soul from the paralogism ·of substantiality· by applying the demand for the *unconditioned* to the concept of substance, which is the first category of relation, and accordingly •maintained that the concept of a soul arose in this way in every exercise of speculative [see Glossary] reason. If it really arose—·as he said it does—·from the presupposition of an ultimate subject of all the predicates of a thing, then we would have to assume a soul not only in human beings but also in every lifeless thing, since such a thing also requires an ultimate subject of all its predicates. Anyway, Kant makes use of an entirely inadmissible expression when he speaks of a Something that 'can exist only as subject and not as predicate' (e.g. *Critique of Pure Reason* (A323); *Prolegomena* §§46–7), although a precedent for this can be found in Aristotle's *Metaphysics* IV, ch. 8. Nothing at all exists as **subject** and as **predicate**; for these expressions belong exclusively to logic, and designate relations among abstract concepts.

¹ [AS means not that the individual things are imperfectly visible but that the ideas are imperfectly visible *in* them.]

Their correlate or representative in the perceptual world is supposed to be **substance** and **accident** [see Glossary]. But then we need look no further for something that exists only as subject and never as quality; we have it immediately with *matter*. It is the substance for all the properties of things, which are its qualities. If we want to retain the phrase of Kant's that I have just criticised, we can say that matter is the 'ultimate subject' of all the predicates of every empirically given thing, namely, what remains after removal of all its predicates of every sort. This holds for human beings as much as for animals, plants, or stones, and it is so evident that not to see it requires a determined will not to see it! . . .

a Subject and predicate, however, are related to **b** substance and accident as **c** the GP in logic is related to **a** the law of causality in nature; and it is as impermissible to run **a** and **b** together as it is to conflate **c** with **d**. But Kant pushes the latter conflation to the highest degree in *Prolegomena* §46, in order to get the concept of the soul to arise out of the concept of ultimate subject of all predicates and out of the form of a categorical inference. To expose the sophistry of this section, one need only reflect on the fact that *subject* and *predicate* are purely logical determinations that simply and solely concern •abstract concepts and •their inter-relation in judgment; whereas *substance* and *quality* relate to the perceptual world and the understanding's grasp of it, and even there are identical with *matter* and *form*. More on this soon.

The assumption of two fundamentally different substances, body and soul, has arisen from the contrast between objective and subjective. If someone looks at himself ·objectively· in outer perception, he finds a spatially extended and entirely corporeal being; whereas if he apprehends himself in mere self-consciousness, thus purely subjectively, he finds something merely engaged in willing and presentation,

free from all the forms of perception, thus without any of the properties of bodies. Now he forms the concept of *the soul*, as he does all of the transcendent concepts that Kant calls 'ideas', by applying the GP, the form for all objects, to something that is not an object—in this case, to the subject of knowing and willing. Specifically, he considers knowing, thinking, and willing as effects for which he is seeking a cause; he can't accept the body as such a thing, so he posits a cause for them entirely distinct from the body. This is how the first dogmatist (Plato in the *Phaedrus*) and the last one (Wolff) argue for the existence of the soul, namely by taking thinking and willing as the effects that point us to that cause. Only after the concept of an immaterial, simple, indestructible being had arisen in this manner, through hypostasizing a cause corresponding to the effect, did scholastics develop and demonstrate the cause in terms of the concept of *substance*. But before that they had formed this concept specially for this purpose by the following **trick**, which is worthy of notice.

With the first class of presentations—i.e. those of the perceptual, real world—the presentation of matter is also given, because the law of causality dominating that world determines changes of *states*, which presuppose something persisting in which the changes occur. With reference to the principle of the persistence of substance, I showed above that this presentation of matter arises because time and space are intimately united in the understanding (for which alone matter exists) by the law of causality. . . . and space's share in this product is displayed as the persistence of matter, while the share of time is displayed as the change of its states. Naked matter can only be thought *in abstracto*; it can't be perceived, for it never appears in perception except clothed in qualities. *Substance* is a further abstraction from this ·already abstract· concept of matter; so it is a higher genus,

which arose in this way. Of the concept of matter, only the predicate of persistence was allowed to remain, while all its other essential properties—extension, impenetrability, divisibility, etc.—were thought away. Like every higher genus, the concept of substance thus contains less *in* itself than the concept of matter, but it doesn't correspondingly contain more *under* itself, as every other higher genus does, because it doesn't include several lower genera besides matter. Rather, matter remains the single true subspecies of the concept of substance, the single thing through which its content can be demonstrated as realised and confirmed. So there is no place here for the purpose for which reason elsewhere produces a higher concept through abstraction, namely so as to think several subspecies at once, distinguished by secondary determinations. So that abstraction—the one that goes up from *matter* to *substance*—is either entirely without purpose and idly undertaken, or it has a secret secondary purpose. The secret purpose (the **trick** referred to above) comes to light when, under the concept of substance its genuine subspecies *matter* gets a second one coordinated with it, namely *immaterial, simple, indestructible substance: soul*. But the smuggling in of the concept of the soul depended on a previous unlawful and illogical way of forming the 'supposedly' higher concept of substance. When reason behaves properly, it forms a higher generic concept only by juxtaposing the concepts of several 'lower' species, then . . . by omitting their differences and retaining their points of agreement, obtaining the more encompassing but less contentful generic concept; from which it follows that concepts of species must always precede the concept of the genus 'that contains them'. In the present case, the process is reversed. Preceding the generic concept *substance* there was only the concept *matter*, which was idly formed from it without any justification, by arbitrarily omitting all but one

of its determinations. Only then was the second, inauthentic subspecies, 'soul', juxtaposed with the concept of matter and thus smuggled in. But for the formation of this concept all that was needed was an *explicit* denial of that which had previously been *tacitly* left out of the higher generic concept, namely, extension, impenetrability, divisibility. So the concept of substance was formed merely to be the vehicle for smuggling in the concept of immaterial substance. It is consequently very far from being able to count as a Category or necessary function of the understanding. Rather, it is a thoroughly dispensable concept, because its only true content already lies in the concept of matter, besides which it contains only a great void that can be filled only by the smuggled-in subspecies of *immaterial substance*, the inclusion of which was the only reason for forming it in the first place. For this reason, in all strictness, the concept of substance is to be entirely rejected and everywhere replaced by the concept of matter.

95. Three kinds of inference

The categories were a Procrustean bed for every possible thing, but the three kinds of inferences are such a bed only for the three so-called 'ideas'. The idea of *soul* was forced to find its origin in the *categorical* form of inference. Now it is the turn of the dogmatic ideas regarding the universe, conceived as an object in itself between the two limits—

- the smallest (an atom) and
- the greatest (the extent of the world in time and space).

These ideas now have to arise from the *hypothetical* form of inference. No great force is needed to achieve this. For the hypothetical judgment gets its form from the GP, and in fact all of the so-called 'ideas'—not only the cosmological ones—arise from

- applying the GP in an unreflective, indeterminate way, and then
- setting it aside at one's pleasure.

Specifically, they arise by virtue of the fact that, in accordance with the GP, only the dependence of one object on another is ever sought, until the exhaustion of the imagination finally creates a terminus¹ for the journey; which ignores the fact that every object—indeed the whole series of them, and the GP itself—are much more dependent on something that is closer to them, namely the knowing subject for whose objects, i.e. presentations, the GP is alone valid. . . .

Thus, since the form of knowledge from which only the cosmological ideas are here derived—namely the GP—is the origin of all of the dreamed-up hypostases, there is no need for any sophisms; but they are all the more needed for classifying the cosmological ideas in accordance with the four rubrics for the categories.

(i) The cosmological ideas with respect to time and space, thus the ideas of the spatio-temporal limits of the world, are boldly viewed as determined by the category of **quantity**, though they obviously have nothing in common with that except the chance fact that in logic the extension of the subject-concept in a judgment is called its 'quantity', a metaphorical expression doing work for which some other word would have served equally well. But this is enough for Kant, in his love of symmetry, to exploit this happy accident of wording and attach to 'quantity' transcendent dogmas about the world's extent.

(ii) Even more boldly, Kant attaches to **quality**, i.e. affirmation or negation in a judgment, transcendent ideas about matter. This can't even be explained by accidental facts of verbal similarity; for the mechanical (not chemical) divisibility

of matter is related to its quantity, not its quality. [AS goes on to say that this idea of divisibility does not belong at all among inferences in accordance with the GP, from which, as the content of the hypothetical form, all cosmological ideas are supposed to flow. This is] because Kant is here relying on the claim that the relation of parts to the whole is that of condition to conditioned. . . .

The part/whole relation actually rests on the principle of contradiction: the whole doesn't exist by way of the parts, nor do they exist by way of the whole; rather, they necessarily coexist because they are one thing, and their separation is only an arbitrary act. So in accordance with the principle of contradiction if the parts are thought away the whole is also thought away, and conversely; but it doesn't imply that the parts condition the whole as ground to consequence, a view that would require us in accordance with the GP to seek *ultimate parts* as the ground of the whole. So great are the difficulties that are overcome by the love of symmetry!

Under the rubric of **relation** would then quite properly come (iv) the idea of the first cause of the world. But Kant has to save this for the fourth rubric, that of **modality**. Otherwise there would be nothing for modality to do, so Kant forces it to take in this 'first cause' idea by saying that whatever is contingent. . . . is made necessary by the first cause. So what appears as a third idea here, for the sake of symmetry, is (iii) the concept of freedom. But this—as the Note on the Thesis of the Third Conflict clearly states—is really meant as the idea of the cause of the world. . . .

The third and fourth conflicts are therefore fundamentally tautologically the same.

¹ [Ziel, which can mean 'goal'.]

96. The Antinomy a sham battle

But beyond all this I find and assert that the whole Antinomy is a mere game of mirrors, a sham battle. Only the assertions of the *antitheses* actually rest on the forms of our faculty of knowledge, i.e. (to put it in objective terms) on necessary, *a priori* certain, universally general natural laws. So only their proofs are set out on the basis of objective grounds. By contrast, the assertions and proofs of the *theses* have only a subjective ground, rest solely on the weakness of the thinking individual, whose imagination—tired in the face of an infinite regress—puts an end to it with arbitrary assumptions that he does his best to smooth over, and whose judgment in this matter is additionally paralysed by early and firmly instilled prejudices. So in each of the four conflicts, the ‘proof’ of the thesis only a sophism, while the proof of the antithesis is an unavoidable rational inference from laws of the world as presentation, laws that we know *a priori*. Kant needed a great deal of effort and skill to get the theses to make a semblance of attacking opponents that are endowed with real power. His first and pervasive artifice here is that he does not

like someone conscious of the truth of the proposition he is defending, emphasise the core of his argument, presenting it in as isolated a way—as nakedly and clearly—as he can;

but rather

sets it out on both sides hidden under, and mixed with, a torrent of superfluous and prolix sentences.

Now the conflict between Kant’s theses and antitheses recall the opposing propositions that Socrates brings into conflict in Aristophanes’ *Clouds*. [AS now sneers at those who think that these ‘speculative’ [see Glossary] issues have implications for morality; and continues:] I shall not, how-

ever, accommodate myself to such limited and perverse little minds but shall—honouring not them but the truth—reveal Kant’s ‘proofs’ of the individual theses as sophisms, whereas his proofs of the antitheses are set out honourably, properly, and on the basis of objective grounds. I assume that in this examination the reader will always have the Kantian antinomy before him.

·THE FIRST ANTINOMY·

To grant that the ‘proof’ of the thesis in the first conflict is sound would be prove too much, for it applies as much to time itself as to change in time, and ‘if valid’ would prove that time itself must have a beginning, which is absurd. In any case, the sophism consists in this: instead of the lack of a beginning of the series of states that was originally in question, suddenly its lack of an end (infinite) is interpolated, and then it is proved that this is logically incompatible with completeness (which no-one doubts) and yet every present completes the past. The end of a series with no beginning can always be thought, however, without contradicting its lack of a beginning: just as, conversely, the beginning of an endless series can be thought. Against the actually correct argument for the **·time-**related part of the antithesis, however—that alterations in the world absolutely necessarily presuppose an infinite series of alterations going back—nothing at all is brought forth. The possibility that the causal series will some day end in an absolute standstill is thinkable by us, but the possibility of an absolute beginning clearly isn’t.

With respect to the spatial limits of the world, it is ‘proved’ from

•‘The world counts as a *given whole*’

that

•The world must have limits.

The inference is valid, but its premise is just what needed proving, and remains unproved. Totality presupposes limits, and limits presuppose totality, but here both together are arbitrarily presupposed.

But we are not provided with as satisfying a proof for the antithesis in this *·space-related part of·* the antinomy, because the law of causality yields necessary determinations merely with respect to time, not to space. It imparts to us the *a priori* certainty that no filled time could ever border on an empty time preceding it. . . ., but not that a filled space cannot have an empty one alongside it. So far no *a priori* decision on the spatial issue would be possible. However, the difficulty of thinking the world in space as limited lies in the fact that space itself is necessarily infinite, and therefore a limited finite world within it—however large it may be—becomes *·by comparison with the whole·* an infinitely small magnitude; the imagination finds an insuperable obstacle in this lack of proportion, so it has to choose between thinking of the world as infinitely great and thinking of it as infinitely small. The ancient philosophers already saw this [and AS cites some of them, including one who produces ‘the sense of the Kantian argument for the antithesis, except that he disfigured it with a scholastic, convoluted delivery’. He moves on into a somewhat jumbled series of remarks about limits in time and in space, citing Giordano Bruno and Aristotle. He adds:] Kant himself asserts seriously, and upon objective grounds, the infinity of the world in space in his *Universal Natural History and Theory of the Heavens*.

·THE SECOND ANTINOMY·

In the second conflict, the *·proof of the·* thesis begins with a blatant *petitio principii* [see Glossary], beginning: ‘Every

composite substance consists of simple parts.’ It has no trouble ‘proving’ simple parts from this arbitrarily assumed premise about composition. But the proposition ‘all matter is composite’, which the issue comes down to, is a groundless assumption and remains unproved. The opposite of the simple is not the composite but rather the extended, that which has parts, the divisible. It is here silently assumed here that the parts existed before the whole and were brought together: thereby the whole arose; for this is what the word ‘composite’ means.¹ But this can’t be asserted any more than its opposite can. Divisibility means merely the possibility of breaking the whole up into parts; it doesn’t at all mean that it was composed of those parts and originated from them. . . . There is no essential temporal relation between the parts and the whole. Rather, they condition one another and are thus always simultaneous; for only so far as both exist does the spatially extended exist. So Kant’s statement (in his Note to the Thesis) that ‘One should really call space not a compositum, but a totum’ applies also to matter, which is merely space that has become perceptible.

On the other hand, the infinite divisibility of matter, which the antithesis asserts, follows *a priori* and incontrovertibly from the infinite divisibility of the space that matter fills. Nothing can be objected against this proposition. Kant indeed depicts it as an objective truth at B541, where he is speaking seriously and in his own person, no longer as a spokesman for the Thesis. Likewise, in his *Metaphysical Foundations of Natural Science* the proposition ‘Matter is infinitely divisible’ stands as a settled truth at the head of the proof of the first theorem of mechanics, having earlier been proved as the fourth theorem of dynamics. Here, however, he

¹ [‘composite’ here translates *zusammengesetzt* = ‘placed together’, which is also the meaning of the Latin words that are the origin of the English ‘com-posite’.]

ruins the proof of the antithesis with the greatest confusion of exposition and a useless torrent of words, with the sneaky intention of not letting the evidentness of the antithesis too greatly overshadow the sophisms of the thesis.

Atoms are not a necessary thought of reason, but merely a hypothesis for explaining differences in the specific weight of bodies. That we can also explain this otherwise—and even better and more simply than through atomic theory—Kant himself has shown in the Dynamics of his *Metaphysical Foundations of Natural Science*; before him, however, there was Priestley's *On Matter and Spirit*; and indeed the fundamental idea is already to be found in Aristotle's *Physics*.

•THE THIRD AND FOURTH ANTINOMIES•

The argument for the third thesis is a very subtle sophism; it is really Kant's supposed 'principle of pure reason' itself, entirely unadulterated and unaltered. It tries to prove the finiteness of the series of causes from the premise that a cause, in order to be *sufficient*, must contain the complete sum of the conditions from which the consequent state, the effect, proceeds. The argument then quietly replaces

- completeness of the conditions that are present *together* in the state that is the cause

by

- completeness of the *series* of causes through which that state itself has first come into reality;

and because completeness implies closure, which in turn implies finiteness, the argument infers from this a first cause—hence an unconditioned cause—as the start of the series. But the sleight of hand is obvious. To conceive of state A as a sufficient cause of state B, I assume that it contains the totality of the determinations required to make it inevitable that state B will ensue. This entirely satisfies the demand for a sufficient cause; and it has no

direct connection with the question how state A itself has come about—a question that concerns state A's role as an effect, not as a cause of B. The presupposition of the finitude of the series of causes and effects, and therefore of a first beginning, gives no appearance of being necessary, any more than the present moment's presence has a beginning of time itself as a presupposition; rather, that 'beginning' is first added by the laziness of the speculating individual. That the former presupposition lies within the assumption of a cause as sufficient ground is thus smuggled in and false, as I showed late in chapter 92 in considering the Kantian principle of reason, in part coinciding with this thesis.

In illustration of the assertion of this false thesis, Kant is not ashamed to give *his rising from his chair* as an example of an unconditioned beginning; as if it were not as impossible for him to stand up without a motive as for balls to roll without cause! . . .

The proof of this antithesis is unobjectionable, as were the preceding ones.

The fourth conflict is, as I have already noted, really tautologically the same as the third. And the proof of its thesis is in its essentials the same as that of the third. Kant's assertion that everything conditioned presupposes a series of conditions that is complete and therefore terminated 'at its beginning' with the unconditioned, is a *petitio principii* [see Glossary] that one simply has to reject. Everything conditioned presupposes nothing but its condition; that this is in turn conditioned introduces a new consideration that is not immediately contained in the first.

The antinomies are not to be denied a certain plausibility; yet no part of the Kantian philosophy has encountered as little contradiction, indeed has found as much acceptance, as this exceedingly paradoxical doctrine. Almost all philosophical parties and textbooks have accepted and repeated

it, and of course elaborated upon it; while nearly all Kant's other doctrines have been attacked—indeed, there has never been a lack of wrongheaded individuals who rejected the Transcendental Aesthetic. The undivided approval that the Antinomies have found, by contrast, may come in the end from the fact that certain people derive inner contentment from contemplating the point where the understanding would so truly come to a standstill, having run up against something that simultaneously is and is not. . . .

97. Kant's conclusion about the antinomies

Kant's ensuing 'Critical Solution of the Cosmological Dispute' is not what it gives itself out as being, namely

- resolution of the dispute revealing •that the two sides are both wrong in the first and second antinomies because they start from false presuppositions, and
- that both sides are right in the third and fourth;

rather, it is

- confirmation of the antitheses by explaining what they say.

In this 'solution' Kant first asserts, obviously wrongly, that both sides start from the premise that when anything conditioned is given the complete (and thus closed) series of its conditions is also given. Only the thesis based its assertions on this proposition, which is Kant's pure 'principle of reason'; whereas the antithesis everywhere explicitly denied it and asserted the opposite. Further, Kant burdens both sides with the presupposition that the world exists in itself, i.e. independently of its being known and of the forms of this knowledge, but again this is a presupposition made only by the thesis; whereas the assertions of the antithesis are so far from based on it that they downright contradict it. For the concept of an infinite series utterly rules out the

series' being given in its entirety; so it's essential to it that it exists only in passage through it and never independently of that. On the other hand, the presupposition of determinate limits includes the presupposition of a whole that exists in a self-subsistent manner and independently of the process of completely measuring it. Thus only the thesis makes the false presupposition of a world-whole that is self-subsistent, i.e. given in advance of all knowledge, to which knowledge would merely be added on. The antithesis is from the outset in dispute with this presupposition. For the infinitude of the series that it merely asserts under the direction of the GP can exist only if the regress is actually carried out. Just as any object at all presupposes the subject, so too the object determined as an endless chain of conditions presupposes in the subject the kind of knowledge corresponding to this, namely the constant following of the links of the chain. But this is just what Kant provides as a resolution of the dispute, and so often repeats: 'The infinity of the world's size exists only *through* the regress, not *before* it.' This 'supposed' resolution of the conflict is thus really only a decision in favour of the antithesis, the assertion of which already contains this truth, just as it is entirely incompatible with the assertions of the thesis. . . . Thus only the thesis involves the presupposition that Kant says has led both sides astray.

It is in fact a doctrine of Aristotle's [in his *Metaphysics* XI] that something infinite can never exist *actu*, i.e. actually and as given, but merely *potentia*. . . . He elaborates on this at length in his *Physics III*, where he to a certain extent provides the entirely correct resolution of all the Antinomies. He presents the Antinomies in his terse way, and then says: 'An arbiter must be called in'; after which he provides the resolution that the infinity of the world—in space as well as in time and in division—never exists *before* the regress or progression

but rather *in it*. . . . So this truth already lies in a correct grasp of the concept of the infinite. Someone who supposes that he is thinking of any infinite as something objectively existent and complete is simply misunderstanding his own thought.

If indeed one goes in the opposite direction from Kant's, *starting* from what he offers as the conflict's resolution, the proof of the antithesis follows directly just from that. Here is how. If

the world is not an unconditioned whole and exists not in itself but only in presentation, and its series of grounds and consequences exist not *before* but only *through* the regress of presentations of them,

then

the world cannot contain any determinate and finite series, because any such determination and limitation would have to be independent of the presentation;

so all of its series must be endless, i.e. not exhaustible by any presentation. . . .

I can't decide whether Kant himself knew that his 'critical solution' of the dispute was really a pronouncement in favour of the antithesis. That depends on whether what Schelling somewhere most aptly called Kant's 'system of accommodations' extends that far, or rather that Kant's mind is here unconsciously accommodating itself to the influence of his time and surroundings.

98. Freedom

The resolution of the third antinomy, whose topic was the idea of freedom, is particularly noteworthy for us because it is here with the idea of freedom that Kant has to speak more extensively of the *thing in itself*, which was previously seen only in the background. I find this easy to understand,

having having recognised the thing in itself as *will*. This is the point where Kant's philosophy leads to mine, or where mine comes from his as from its stem. You'll be convinced of this if you attentively read the *Critique of Pure Reason* (B564–5), and compare that passage with this from the introduction to the *Critique of Judgment*: 'The concept of freedom can present its object (that is the will) to the mind as a thing in itself, but not in perception; whereas the concept of nature can present its object to the mind in perception but not as a thing in itself.' In particular, however, read what §53 of the *Prolegomena* says about the resolution of the antinomies, and then honestly answer the question whether all that doesn't sound like a riddle to which my doctrine is the answer. Kant did not complete his thought; I have merely carried the matter through for him: I have carried what he said of the human phenomenon alone over to all phenomena, which differ from the human phenomenon only in degree, holding that their nature in itself is something absolutely free, i.e. a will. My work shows how fruitful this insight is when combined with Kant's doctrine of the ideality of space, time and causality.

Kant never gave a separate discussion or clear derivation of the thing in itself. Rather, whenever he needs it, he introduces it through the inference that the phenomenon—and thus the visible world—must have a reason, an intelligible cause, which would not be a phenomenon and so could not belong to any possible experience. He does this after incessantly •emphasising that the categories—including the category of causality—can be applied only to possible experience, are the understanding's mere forms that serve to spell out the phenomena of the sensory world, beyond which they can have no meaning at all, and so on, therefore •forbidding the application of them to things beyond experience, and •rightly explaining and overturning all earlier dogmatism as

a violation of this prohibition. The incredible inconsistency that Kant fell into here was soon noted by his first opponents and used for attacks against which his philosophy had no defence. For we do indeed, in an utterly *a priori* way and prior to all experience, apply the law of causality to alterations sensed in our sense organs; but that only shows that this law has as subjective an origin as do these sensations themselves, and so doesn't lead to the thing in itself. The truth is that on the path of presentation one can never get beyond presentation; it is a closed-off whole that has within its own resources no clue leading to the nature of the thing in itself, which is *toto genere* different from it. If we were merely beings engaged in presentation, the way to the *thing in itself* would be entirely closed off to us. Only the other side of our own nature can give us insight into the other side that is the nature *in itself* of things. This is the path I have followed. But Kant's inference to the thing in itself, contrary as it is to his own teaching, obtains some excuse from the following circumstance. He does not simply and absolutely, as the truth demands, take

- the object to be conditioned by the subject and conversely,

but only takes

- the mode and manner of the object's appearance to be conditioned by the subject's forms of knowledge,

—forms that therefore enter our consciousness *a priori*. But what we know merely *a posteriori* is for him an immediate effect of the thing in itself, which becomes a phenomenon only in passing through those *a priori* given forms. From this point of view it is to some extent explicable how he could miss the fact that objectivity as such belongs to the form of the phenomenon and is conditioned by subjectivity as such, just as much as the object's manner of appearance is conditioned by the subject's forms of knowledge; and that therefore if

a thing in itself is to be assumed, it cannot be an object at all (as Kant always assumes that it is) but must rather lie in a domain *toto genere* distinct from presentation (from knowing and being known); so that it couldn't be inferred in accordance with laws governing the interconnection of objects.

It has gone in exactly the same way for Kant with the establishment of the thing in itself as with the establishment of the apriority of the law of causality: both doctrines are correct, but their proof is wrong; so they belong to the class of true conclusions from false premises. I have retained them both, but given them an entirely different and secure grounding. I haven't •smuggled in the thing in itself, or •inferred it through laws that exclude it because they apply rather to its phenomenon, or •reached it by roundabout paths of any sort. Rather, I have immediately established it in the place where it immediately lies, in the will that is revealed immediately to each person as the *in-itself* of his own phenomenal being.

The concept of freedom enters human consciousness from each person's immediate knowledge of his own will. For of course *will*—as world-creating, as thing in itself—is free from the GP and thereby from all necessity, thus completely independent, free, indeed omnipotent. But this applies only to will *in itself*, not to its phenomena, to individuals, which are indeed—precisely through it, as its phenomena in time—unalterably determined. In common consciousness unpurified by philosophy, however, a will is at once confused with **b** its phenomenon, and what belongs to **a** it alone is attributed to **b** the latter; which gives rise to the illusion of the individual's unconditioned freedom. Spinoza says rightly that the stone that one throws, if it had consciousness, would believe it flew of its own free will. For of course the in-itself of the stone is also the one and only free will, but, as in all

its phenomena, here too where it makes its appearance as a stone, it is utterly determined. But enough has already been said about all of this in the main part of this work.

Kant, having failed to recognise this immediate origin of the concept of freedom in every human consciousness, now (B561) takes that concept to come from a most subtle speculation in which the unconditioned, at which reason is always supposed to be aiming, leads us to hypostasise the concept of freedom, and it is in this transcendent idea of freedom that the practical concept of it is also supposed to be initially grounded. In the *Critique of Practical Reason* §6, however, he derives the practical concept in yet another way, from the premise that the categorical imperative presupposes it: that speculative idea is thus the original source of the concept of freedom. . . . This is wholly wrong, for the delusion of a complete freedom of the individual in his particular actions is liveliest in the belief-system of the crudest human being who has never engaged in reflection, so it is not grounded in any speculation, although others have often speculated about it. Only philosophers (especially the deepest ones) and the most thoughtful and enlightened writers of the church are free of that delusion.

It follows from all I have said that the real origin of the concept of freedom is in no way an inference from •the speculative idea of an unconditioned cause or from •the supposition that the categorical imperative presupposes it. Rather, it springs immediately from that consciousness in which everyone is aware of himself as *will*, i.e. as that which, as *thing in itself*, does not have the GP for its form and which itself depends on nothing—on which rather all else depends. [The rest of this long sentence is horribly complex. The gist of it is that the ordinary person gets into a philosophical muddle as a result of which] instead of recognising his entire existence as an act of will's freedom, rather seeks freedom

in his individual actions. On this, I refer to my work *On the Freedom of the Will*.

Now if Kant had, as he here pretends to do and also apparently did in earlier cases, merely *inferred* the thing in itself, doing that with an inference that he himself had absolutely forbidden, what a strange coincidence it would then be that here—where for the first time he approaches the thing in itself and illuminates it, he at once recognises it as *will*, the free will that makes itself known in the world only through temporal phenomena! I really think from this, though it can't be proved, that whenever he spoke of **the thing in itself** Kant was in the darkest depths of his mind always thinking unclearly of **will**. A confirmation of this is provided in the *Critique of Pure Reason* at Bxxvii–xxviii.

99. Further developments in the Antinomies

In any case, it is this intended resolution of the third supposed conflict that gives Kant the occasion for the most beautiful expression of the deepest thoughts of his entire philosophy. Thus the whole of the 'Sixth Section of the Antinomy of Pure Reason', but above all the discussion of the contrast between empirical and intelligible character (A534–50) which I count among the finest things ever said by a human being. . . .

It is all the more regrettable that this is not the right place for it, because **(i)** it is not found on the path where the exposition says it is, and so is not derived in the way it was supposed to be, and because **(ii)** it doesn't fulfill the purpose for which it exists, namely, to resolve the supposed antinomy. An inference is made from the phenomenon to its intelligible ground, the thing in itself, through the inconsistent employment of the category of causality beyond all phenomena. In this case the will of man (which Kant

calls 'reason', with an unpardonable breach of all use of language) is set up as the thing in itself, with an appeal to an unconditioned *ought*, the categorical imperative, which is postulated without more ado.

Now instead of all this, the sincere and open way would have been to start directly from will, establish it as the *in-itself* of our own phenomenal being, which we recognise without any mediation, and then to give that account of empirical and intelligible character, demonstrate how all actions, although necessitated by motives, are necessarily and absolutely ascribed—both by their author and by other people—to their author alone, as depending only upon him and as constituting the basis for assigning guilt and merit to him.

This was the only direct path to knowledge of that which

- is not phenomenon, and so
- is not found through the laws of the phenomenon, but rather
- is revealed, becomes knowable, is objectified through the phenomenon, namely

the will for life. Then it would have to be exhibited, merely by analogy, as the *in-itself* of every phenomenon. But then of course it couldn't have been said (A546/B574) that in lifeless or even animal nature no faculty is thinkable that isn't conditioned by the senses. . . .

The whole concept of *thing in itself* was falsified by the improper position and correspondingly circuitous derivation that Kant gave of it. He relates will, or the thing in itself, to the phenomenon as cause to effect; but that relation exists only *within* the phenomenal world, and can't connect that world with something that lies beyond it and is *toto genere* different from it.

Further, the proposed purpose, namely resolution of the third antinomy through the decision that both sides, each in

its own sense, are right, is not achieved at all. For neither thesis nor antithesis says anything at all about the thing in itself; they speak only of the phenomenon, the objective world, the world as presentation. It is of this and nothing else that the thesis—in the invalid argument I have displayed—tries to demonstrate that it contains unconditioned causes, and it is also this of which the antithesis rightly denies the same thing. So the whole account given here in justification of the thesis of transcendental freedom of the will so far as it is a thing in itself, however good it is in itself, is really just a changing of the subject. For the depicted transcendental freedom of the will is emphatically not the unconditioned causality of a cause that the thesis asserts, because a cause must be a phenomenon, not something *toto genere* different lying beyond all phenomena.

When speaking of cause and effect, the relation of the will to its phenomenon (or of the intelligible character to the empirical) must never be brought in, as is done here; for it is altogether wholly different from the causal relation. In this resolution of the antinomy it is correctly said that a human being's empirical character, like that of every other cause in nature, is rigidly determined, so that its actions necessarily happen in accordance with external influences; and therefore also—

despite all transcendental freedom, i.e. independence of the will in itself from the laws governing the inter-connection of ·the parts of· its phenomenon

—no human being can begin a series of actions of himself, which the thesis says he *can* do. So freedom has no causality. For the only free thing is *the will*, which lies outside nature or the phenomenon; the latter is the objectification of the will, but is not causally related to it. The causal relation is met with only *within* the phenomenon, thus presupposes it, and cannot connect the natural world with something

that is not a phenomenon. The world itself is explicable on the basis of *will* (since it *is* the will insofar as it makes its appearance), and not on the basis of causality. But *within the world* causality is the single principle of explanation: everything happens in accordance with laws of nature. Thus right lies entirely on the side of •the Antithesis, which **a** keeps to the subject under discussion and **b** employs the principle of explanation that is applicable to it, and has nothing to apologize for. Whereas the Thesis is supposed to be pulled out of its difficulty with an apology that **a** makes a *leap* to something entirely different from what is in question, and then **b** adopts a principle of explanation that is not applicable there.

The fourth conflict is (I repeat) in its innermost sense tautologically the same as the third. In its resolution, Kant elaborates still further on the untenability of the thesis. But he gives no arguments for its truth and for its supposed consistency with the antithesis, just as he can't bring any against the antithesis. He apologetically introduces the assumption of the thesis, calling it (A562/B590) an arbitrary presupposition whose object might well be in itself impossible; and merely displays a really feeble effort to provide it with a spot somewhere secure from the sweeping power of the antithesis. He is doing this only so as to avoid exposing the nullity of the entire presumption—so dear to him—of a necessary Antinomy in human reason.

100. The 'Transcendental Ideal' chapter

Now follows the chapter on the 'Transcendental ideal', which suddenly sets us back into the rigid scholasticism of the middle ages. You would think you were listening to Anselm of Canterbury himself! The

*ens realissimum*¹ = the sum total of all realities = the content of all affirmative propositions

steps forward, along with the claim that is a *necessary* thought on the part of reason! I for my part must confess that such a thought is *impossible* for my reason, and that I can't have any determinate thought in connection with the words that ·supposedly· designate it.

I am sure that Kant was compelled to this chapter—strange and unworthy of him as it is—by his liking for architectonic symmetry. The three main objects of scholastic philosophy (which, broadly understood, can be regarded as continuing up to Kant) are the **a** soul, **b** the world, and **c** God. They are supposed to be derived from the three possible major premises of inferences, though obviously their only possible source is the undisciplined application of the GP. After **a** the soul was forced into the categorical judgment, and the hypothetical was employed for the **b** world, there remained nothing for **c** the third idea but the disjunctive major premise. Fortunately there existed a previous work in this direction, the *ens realissimum* of the Scholastics, together with the ontological proof of the existence of God, set up in a rudimentary form by Anselm of Canterbury and then perfected by Descartes.² This was joyfully made use of by

¹ [Latin for 'the most real being'.]

² [Very briefly, the argument runs like this: 'God has every possible reality (true by definition). Existence is one kind of reality (self-evident). Therefore God exists.']

¹ [The phrase 'sacrifice *to*' reflects the translator's hunch that AS is thinking of sacrifices laid on the altar of a god.]

Kant, surely with some reminiscence of an earlier Latin work of his youth. But the sacrifice to his beloved architectonic symmetry that Kant makes in this chapter is enormous.¹ In defiance of all truth, what has to be called the *grotesque* idea of a sum total of all possible realities is taken to be an essential and necessary thought on the part of reason! To 'prove' this, Kant employs the fiction that our knowledge of individual things arises through a progressive limiting of general concepts, and thus also of an absolutely most general concept containing all *Realität* within itself. This contradicts his own doctrine as much as it contradicts the truth. For the truth is that all general concepts arise through abstraction from real, individual, perceptually recognised things; and this abstraction can be continued on to the absolutely most general concept, which then includes everything *under* itself but almost nothing *within* itself. So Kant has here stood the procedure of our faculty of knowledge on its head, and could well be accused of having led to the philosophical charlatanism that has become famous in our time, which

instead of recognising concepts as thoughts abstracted from things, takes concepts to come first and sees things only as concrete concepts

—bringing its inverted world to market like a philosophical parade of fools, which naturally met with great applause.

Even if we assume that reason must, or at least that it *can*, attain to the concept of God without revelation, this obviously—so obviously that it needs no proof—happens only by following the thread of causality. Therefore Chr. Wolff, in the preface to his *Cosmologia generalis*, says: 'In natural theology we soundly demonstrate the existence of the divine from cosmological principles. The contingency of the universe and of the natural order, together with the impossibility of pure chance, are the steps on which we ascend from the visible world to God.' [AS quotes this in Latin, and also

quotes, in French, two short passages in which Leibniz says the same thing.] In contrast to this, the thought worked out in this chapter is so far from being essential and necessary to reason that it is rather to be regarded as a prime exhibit among the monstrous productions of an age which through strange circumstances fell into the most singular aberrations and perversities. I'm talking about the age of scholasticism, an age that has no parallel in world history, and can never return.

This scholasticism did of course, when it reached its final form, 'prove' the existence of God mainly from the concept of the *ens realissimum*, bringing in the other proofs only incidentally, as accessories; but this is merely a matter of pedagogy and proves nothing about the origin of theology in the human mind. Kant has taken the procedure of scholasticism here to be the procedure of reason—something that he often does. If it were true that the idea of God comes—obeying the essential laws of reason—from disjunctive inference in the shape of an idea of the absolutely most real being, then surely this idea would also have turned up among the philosophers of antiquity. But there is no trace of the *ens realissimum* in any of the ancient philosophers, although some of them teach of a creator of the world, but only as a form-giver for matter that exists independently of him. . . ., and they argue for him simply and solely through the law of causality. . . .

101. Kant's refutation of speculative theology

Regarding the detailed refutation of speculative [see Glossary] theology that now follows, I have only to note that—

like the entire critique of the three so-called ideas of reason generally, and thus like the entire 'Dialectic of Pure Reason'

—it is the goal and purpose, so to speak, of the entire work. But this polemical part doesn't have—as has the preceding doctrinal part, i.e. the Aesthetic and Analytic—a quite general, lasting, and purely philosophical interest; its interestingness relates to a particular time and place, relating to the main features of philosophy holding sway in Europe up to Kant, though its overthrow by Kant's polemic gained him immortal credit. He eliminated theism from philosophy, because philosophy—understood as a body of knowledge and not a doctrine of faith—can make room only for what is empirically given or established by valid proofs. I'm talking here only about real philosophy, taken seriously, directed solely towards truth; and not about the joke philosophy of the universities, in which, after Kant as before him, speculative theology plays the main role and the soul appears without ceremony as a familiar character in it. For that is the philosophy which, lavished with stipends and honoraria and even with courtly titles, has looked proudly down from its heights for forty years, ignoring folk like me, and would love to be rid of the old Kant with his critiques so that heartfelt toasts may be raised to Leibniz!

It should also be noted here that, just as Kant says he was led to his doctrine of the *a priori* status of the concept of causality by Hume's scepticism regarding that concept, so also his critique of all speculative theology may have been prompted by the critique of all popular theology in Hume's *Natural History of Religion*, and also by his *Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion*—both very well worth reading. Indeed, Kant may to some extent have intended to provide a complement to that critique. For Hume's first-cited work is really a critique of *popular* theology which •aims at displaying its pitiable character and •respectfully refers us to *rational or speculative* theology as genuine theology. But then Kant exposes the groundlessness of rational theology, leaving

popular theology untouched and even setting it up in a nobler form as a faith that is supported by *moral feeling*. Pseudo-philosophers later twisted that faith into intake by reason, consciousness of God, or intellectual perception of the supersensible, of divinity, etc.; whereas Kant, demolishing venerable errors and knowing the danger of doing so, had merely wanted to use moral theology to interpose a few weak temporary supports, so that when the collapse came he would have time to get out of the way.

[In this paragraph we'll be dealing with three arguments that Kant undertakes to invalidate: **a** one from the concept of existence, **b** one from the premise that *something* exists, and **c** one from premises about *what* exists.] As for carrying this out, there was no need for a critique of reason for a refutation of **a** the ontological proof of God's existence, because it is very easy—even without presupposing the Aesthetic and Analytic—to show clearly that the ontological proof is nothing but a subtle play of concepts with no power to convince. In Aristotle's *Posterior Analytics* we find 'Existence is never part of the essence of anything' (chapter 7 of Book 2); which is so perfectly adequate for refuting the onto-theological proof that one might think it had been written for that purpose. The refutation of **b** the cosmological 'proof' of God's existence is an application to a given case of the doctrine of the *Critique* expounded up to that point; and there is nothing to be said against it. And **c** the physico-theological argument for God's existence is merely an amplification of the cosmological proof, which it presupposes, and in fact finds its detailed refutation only in the *Critique of Judgment*. . . .

In his critique of these proofs, Kant was concerned merely with speculative [see Glossary] theology, and limited himself to academics. If he had also had in mind life and popular theology, he'd have had to add to the three 'proofs' a fourth one, which for the great mob is the really effective one and

would fittingly be called, in Kant's technical terminology, the ceraunological proof.¹ It is the argument based on man's •feeling of helplessness, impotence, and dependence in the face of natural forces that are infinitely superior, inscrutable, and largely menacing, paired with his •natural tendency to personify everything, to which is added his •hope of accomplishing something through pleading and flattering, and of course gift-giving. In short, in every human undertaking there is something that isn't in our power and doesn't enter into our calculations; and the desire to win this over is the origin of the gods. An old truth from Petronius: 'Of all the things in the world, fear first made the gods.' Hume, who appears throughout to be a forerunner of Kant, is mainly criticising this •fourth• 'proof' in the works I have cited.

But Kant's critique of speculative theology set into lasting embarrassment the philosophy professors: their salaries paid by Christian regimes, they couldn't leave the main article of their faith in the lurch. So how do these gentlemen help themselves? They just say that the existence of God is self-evident. So! After

- the ancient world, at the cost of its conscience, worked wonders to prove it, and
- the modern world, at the cost of its understanding, presented ontological, cosmological, and physico-theological proofs,

to these gentlemen it is self-evident! And on the basis of this self-evident God, they then explain the world: that is their philosophy.

Until Kant came along there was a real dilemma between **a** materialism and **b** theism, i.e. between **a** the assumption that the world came into being through blind chance and **b** that this happened through an intelligence working from

without according to purposes and concepts; there was no third possibility. So atheism and materialism were the same thing. Hence the doubt whether there really could be an atheist, i.e. a man who really could attribute to blind chance the disposition of nature, so full of design, especially organic nature; see, for example, Bacon's essay on Atheism. In the opinion of the great mass (the mob) of people—and of Englishmen, who all belong to the mob in such things—that is still how matters stand, even among their most famous scholars. Just look at the preface of Richard Owen's *Ostéologie comparé* of 1855, where he is still confronting the old dilemma between Democritus and Epicurus on the one hand and, on the other hand, an intelligence in which 'knowledge of a being such as man existed before man appeared on the scene'. It did not occur to him even in his dreams to doubt that all purposiveness must have come from an intelligence. Writing for the *Académie des Sciences*, he with childlike naiveté equates *la téléologie* with *la théologie scientifique*—these are immediately one thing for him! If something in nature is purposive, then it is a work of intention, of reflective consideration, of intelligence. Well of course, what does the *Critique of Judgment*—or for that matter my book on will in nature—mean to such an Englishman or to the *Académie des Sciences*? These gentlemen don't go as deep as that. These *illustres confrères* scorn metaphysics and *philosophie allemande* [French phrases, meaning 'illustrious colleagues' and 'German philosophy']; they adhere to old woman's philosophy. But the validity of that dilemma between materialism and theism rests on the assumption that the world lying before us is that of things in themselves, so that the only order of things is the empirical one. But after the world and its order became (through Kant) a mere

¹ [That borrows jokingly from Greek, and has to be translated as something like 'the thunderboltological argument for God's existence'.]

phenomenon, the laws of which mainly depend on the forms of our intellect, there was no longer any need •to explain the existence and essence of things and of the world by analogy with alterations in the world that we perceive or bring about, or •to think that things we apprehend as means and ends have arisen through means-end thinking. Thus in removing the foundation of theism with his crucial distinction between phenomenon and thing in itself, Kant opened the way to entirely different and deeper explanations of existence.

In the chapter on the 'final purpose of the natural dialectic of reason', Kant says that the three transcendent ideas are valuable as *regulative principles* for the advancement of knowledge of nature. But he can hardly have been serious about this. No natural scientist will doubt the opposite thesis, namely that those presuppositions limit and deaden all natural investigation. To test this with an example, consider how the assumption of a soul—as an immaterial, simple, thinking substance—would have related to the truths that Cabanis has so beautifully set forth, or to the discoveries of Flourens, Marshall Hall, and Charles Bell: would it have been conducive to them or rather in the highest degree obstructive with respect to them? Indeed, Kant himself says (*Prolegomena* §44) that 'the ideas of reason are a positive obstacle to reason's knowledge of nature'.

It is not the least of Frederick the Great's merits that under his regime Kant was able to develop and permitted to publish the *Critique of Pure Reason*. A salaried professor would hardly have dared such a thing under any other regime. Kant indeed had to promise the great king's successor that he would write no more.

102. Kant's ethical views

I could regard criticism of the ethical part of Kantian philosophy as superfluous here, because in my *Two Fundamental Problems of Ethics*—22 years after the first edition of the present work—I provided a more detailed and thorough criticism than I do here. Still, what I retain here from the first edition, which for the sake of completeness could not be dropped, can serve as a suitable introduction to that later and much more thorough criticism, to which I refer the reader for the main points.

Because of Kant's love of architectonic symmetry, *theoretical* reason was bound to have a *practical* counterpart. The 'practical intellect' of scholasticism, which in turn stems from Aristotle's 'practical principle', provides the language for it ready-made. But to them it meant merely

reason directed toward means and ends,

whereas for Kant 'practical reason' is the source and origin of the undeniable ethical significance of human action, just as of

•all virtue, all generosity, and every achievable degree of saintliness.

According to this, all these good things would come from mere *reason* and would require nothing else. To act reasonably¹ would be the same thing as acting virtuously, generously, in a saintly manner; and to act selfishly, maliciously and viciously would be merely acting unreasonably. But all times, all peoples, all languages have always taken the two to be entirely distinct things. So today does a everyone who knows nothing of the language of the 'new school', i.e. the whole world except for b a handful of German scholars: the a former always mean two entirely different things by

¹ [Other translators put 'rationally', but the German is *vernünftig*, and it seems best to retain the connection with *Vernunft* = 'reason'. Similarly for all future uses of '(un)reasonable(ness)'.]

'virtuous ways' and 'a reasonable course of life'. To say that the sublime author of the Christian religion, whose course of life is set before us as the paradigm of all virtue, was *the most reasonable human being* would be called a most unbecoming and indeed blasphemous way of talking, as would saying that his precepts contained only the best directions for an entirely reasonable life. Take the case of someone who acts according to these precepts: instead of thinking ahead about himself and his own future needs, he always only relieves the greater needs of others without any further motive; indeed he gives all his possessions to the poor, in order then to proceed—destitute of all means of subsistence—to preach to others the virtue that he himself practises. Everyone rightly honours this; but who would venture to praise it as the height of *reasonableness*? . . .

Contrast this with a man who from his youth onwards thinks with unusual care about how to acquire the means for a carefree subsistence, for the support of his wife and children, for a good name among people, for external honour and distinction, and who is not distracted in this by

- the charm of present pleasure, or by
- the thrill of defying the arrogance of the powerful, or by
- the desire to avenge insults or undeserved humiliation that he has undergone, or by
- the tug of thought about impractical aesthetic or philosophical matters and of travels to interesting lands.

This man is not distracted by things like this, and never lets

himself be misled into losing sight of the goal, but works solely toward it with the greatest consistency. Who ventures to deny that such a philistine—even if he avails himself of some unpraiseworthy though not dangerous means—is quite extraordinarily reasonable? Then consider the case of a villain who, with deliberate shrewdness and following a well thought-out plan, •helps himself to riches, to honours, even to thrones and crowns, then •ensnares neighbouring states with subtle cunning, overpowers them one by one and now becomes a world-conqueror, and •doesn't let himself be distracted by any thought of right or humanity, but with harsh consistency •tramples and crushes everything that opposes his plan, unfeelingly plunges millions into misfortune of every sort, millions into blood and death, yet •royally rewards and always protects his followers and helpers, never forgetting anything, and in this way reaches his goal. Who doesn't see that someone like this must have gone to work in a thoroughly *reasonable* manner, that just as a powerful understanding is required for the laying of plans, complete mastery of reason—indeed genuinely *practical* reason—is needed for carrying them out? Or are even the precepts given to the prince by the shrewd, consistent, reflectively thoughtful, and far-seeing Machiavelli not reasonable?¹

Just as wickedness is quite consistent with reason—indeed isn't really dreadful without it—nobility is sometimes found combined with unreason. Take the case of Coriolanus: after spending all his force for years to get revenge against the Romans, now that the time has finally come he lets himself be softened by the pleas of the senate and the tears

¹ As an aside: Machiavelli's problem was to answer the question of how the prince could maintain himself *unconditionally* on the throne, despite internal and external enemies. His problem was not the ethical one of whether a prince as a human being should wish to do such a thing, but the purely political one of how he might carry it out *if* he wants to. He answers this in the manner in which one writes directions for playing chess, where it would be foolish to feel the lack of an answer to the question of whether it is morally advisable to play chess at all. Reproaching Machiavelli for the immorality of his work is like reproaching a fencing master for not starting his lessons with a moral lecture against murder and manslaughter!

of his mother and wife, abandons the revenge he has for so long prepared for. Indeed, calling down on himself the righteous anger of the Volscians, he dies for those Romans whose ingratitude he knows and has so intensely wanted to punish.

Finally, for the sake of completeness I should mention that reason can most surely be combined with a lack of understanding. That's what happens when a stupid maxim is chosen and followed out consistently. For example, Princess Isabella, daughter of Philipp II, swore that she would wear no clean underclothes until Ostend was conquered, and kept her word for three years! All *vows* belong here: they stem from a lack of insight as regards the law of causality, i.e. a lack of understanding; but it is reasonable to fulfill them if one has so little understanding as to make them.

In keeping with the examples I have cited, we also see writers appearing even shortly before Kant contrast *conscience*, as the seat of moral stirrings, with *reason*. [AS gives several quotations from Rousseau's *Émile*, ending with (in French): 'In all difficult moral problems, I have always found them easier to solve by the dictates of my conscience than by the insights of my reason.' He then provides (in Greek) quotations from Aristotle to the same effect.]

103. Ethics and reason

I have explained reason as the faculty for ·handling· concepts. It is this unique class of general, non-perceptual presentations, symbolised and fixed only by words, that distinguishes men from animals and gives men dominion over the earth. Animals are slaves to the present, know no

motives except immediately sensory ones, so that when such a motive is presented to an animal, the animal is drawn to it or repelled by it as iron in the case of a magnet; whereas in man thoughtfulness—deliberation—has dawned through the gift of reason. This enables him easily to survey—looking forward and back—his life and the course of the world as a whole, makes him independent of the present, lets him go to work with deliberation, with planning, and with caution, for evil as well as for good. But anything he does, he does with complete self-consciousness: he knows exactly how his will decides, what he chooses in each case, and what other choice was possible in that situation; and from this self-conscious willing he comes to know himself and to act in ways that reflect his nature. In all of these relations to human action, reason is to be called *practical*: it is *theoretical* only when the objects it is concerned with have a merely theoretical interest and no relation to the thinker's conduct—though very few people are capable of this. What is called **practical reason** in this sense is pretty much what is designated with the Latin word *prudencia*, which Cicero says is a contraction of *providencia*; whereas *ratio*, when used to label a mental power, usually signifies true **theoretical reason**, although the ancients did not strictly observe the distinction between these.

In nearly everyone reason has an almost exclusively practical orientation. If this is abandoned, however, thought loses its control of action, leading to:

- 'Scio meliora, proboque, deteriora sequor'¹ or
- 'Le matin je fais de projets; le soir je fais des sottises.'²

So that a man lets his action be directed not by his thought but by present impressions, almost like an animal. Such a

¹ [Ovid: 'I see the better and I try ·to do it·, I do the worse'.]

² [Voltaire: 'I make plans in the morning and commit stupidities in the evening'.]

man is called ‘unreasonable’ (without being thereby accused of moral badness), though what he lacks is not reason but rather the application of reason to his conduct; one could to a certain extent say that his reason is merely theoretical and not practical. He may be a truly good person, like many who can’t see someone unfortunate without helping him, even with sacrifices, while leaving their own debts unpaid. Such an unreasonable character can’t possibly commit great crimes, because those require planning, dissimulation, and self-control, and these are impossible for him. But he will also be unlikely achieve any very high level of virtue. For even if his nature strongly inclines him toward the good, he’ll be subject to the upsurges of vice and malice that beset every human being; and they are bound to become deeds if he doesn’t have practical reason to oppose them with unalterable maxims and firm intentions.

A final point: Reason manifests itself as genuinely *practical* in those reasonable characters who are called ‘practical philosophers’ in common life, and who are distinguished by

- an uncommon equanimity in disagreeable circumstances as well as in pleasant ones,
- a balanced state of mind, and
- determined perseverance in acting on decisions once made.

In fact it is the predominance of reason in them, i.e. knowledge that is more abstract than intuitive—and therefore their surveying of life by over-all conceptual means—that has enabled them to recognise once and for all

- the deception of momentary impressions,
- the inconstancy of all things,
- the brevity of life,
- the emptiness of pleasures,
- the fickleness of fortune, and
- the big and little tricks of chance.

So whatever comes to them was expected, and what they know *in abstracto* doesn’t surprise them or make them lose

their composure when it confronts them in reality and in individual cases. In this they are unlike less reasonable characters, who are so dominated by the present, the perceptual, the actual, that cold, colourless concepts fade into the background of consciousness; forgetting intentions and maxims, these people are prey to emotions and passions of every sort.

At the end of my first Book I presented my view that Stoic ethics was originally nothing but directions for a life that is truly *reasonable* in this sense. [AS goes on to refer to Horace’s frequent praise of this kind of life, and lengthily—with references also to Cicero and Democritus—corrects a common misunderstanding of one sentence of Horace’s:] To translate *Nil admirari* as ‘Do not marvel at anything’ is entirely wrong. This Horatian maxim doesn’t concern the theoretical as much as the practical, and really means: ‘Prize no object unconditionally, don’t fall in love with anything, don’t believe that owning anything can bring happiness; every inexpressible desire for an object is only a mocking chimera, which can be swept away by clear knowledge just as well as by owning the object—just as well but much more easily.’ . . . Virtue and vice are really not in question with such reasonableness in one’s conduct; but this practical employment of reason is what gives human beings pre-eminence over animals, and only with reference to it is talk about ‘the dignity of man’ intelligible and permissible.

In all the depicted cases and in all thinkable ones, the difference between **a** reasonable and **b** non-reasonable action reduces to the question whether the motives are **a** abstract concepts or **b** perceptual presentations. So my explanation of reason exactly agrees with •the linguistic usage of all times and peoples. And you’ll surely not regard •that as something accidental or arbitrary, but rather see that it has come from the difference that every man is conscious

of between distinct mental faculties; this consciousness governs how he speaks, but of course he doesn't elevate it to the clarity of an abstract definition. It is not the case that our ancestors created the words without giving them a determinate sense, so that they could lie ready for philosophers who might come centuries later to determine what thought they should convey; rather, they used them to designate entirely determinate concepts. So the words are no longer abandoned; and to attribute to them a sense entirely different from the one they previously had is to misuse them, introducing a license by which any word could be used in an arbitrary sense, inevitably creating endless confusion. Locke has already shown in detail that most disagreements in philosophy come from the mistaken use of words. As an illustration of this, just look at how shamefully today's barren-minded pseudo-philosophers misuse the words 'substance', 'consciousness', 'truth', etc. [With an explosion of references to Plato, Cicero, Locke and Leibniz, AS maintains that 'all philosophers before Kant spoke of reason in general in my sense, even if they couldn't explain its nature in a completely clear and determinate way.' He goes on with references to writings that show what was meant by 'reason' shortly before Kant. Then:] If on the other hand one reads how in recent times 'reason' is spoken of under the influence of the Kantian mistake—an influence that has grown like an avalanche—one is forced to assume that all the sages of antiquity, and all philosophers before Kant, were completely deprived of reason; for the recently discovered immediate perceptions, intuitions, apprehensions, presentiments on the part of reason were as foreign to them as the sixth sense of bats is to us! [AS declares his own lack of these supposed gifts of reason, and goes on to sarcastically praise them, concluding with sarcasm *crescendo*:] This, however, must be said in favour of the invention (or discovery) of a kind

of reason that immediately perceives what-have-you in an instant, in defiance of all the *Kants* with their critiques of reason: it is an incomparable expedient for—in the easiest way in the world—pulling oneself and one's favourite fixed ideas out of trouble. The invention, and the reception that it found, does honour to our times!

Though the essential character of

Vernunft, ratio, raison, reason

is on the whole and in general terms accurately recognised by all philosophers of all times, although not sharply enough determined or traced back to a single point, on the other hand the nature of

Verstand, intellectus, esprit, intellect, understanding

has not been so clear to them. So they often confuse it with reason, which is why they don't achieve an entirely complete, pure, and simple explanation of reason's essence. Among Christian philosophers, the concept of reason acquired an entirely foreign secondary meaning, in contrast with revelation, and on this basis many of them rightly hold that knowledge of a duty of virtue is possible from mere reason, i.e. without revelation. This consideration has had an influence even on Kant's doctrine and terminology. But the reason/revelation contrast is only of historical significance, and should be kept out of philosophy.

One might have expected that Kant, in his critiques of theoretical and practical reason, would start with an account of the nature of reason in general and then, having thus determined the genus, proceeded to explain the two species, showing how one and the same reason manifests itself in two such different ways while retaining its principal characteristic that defines the genus. But we find nothing like that. I have already shown how inadequate, vacillating, and conflicting are the explanations of the faculty he is critiquing in the *Critique of Pure Reason*—explanations that

he scatters randomly in that work. Practical reason turns up unannounced in the *Critique of Pure Reason*, and afterwards stands in the *Critique of Practical Reason* as something already established. No further account of it is given; and no hearing is allowed to the linguistic usage of all times and peoples or to the conceptual definitions of the greatest earlier philosophers; indeed, all of this is merely trampled under. In a general way, we can gather from individual passages that Kant's opinion goes something like this: the **essential character of reason** is knowledge based on *a priori* principles; knowledge of the ethical significance of action is not of empirical origin, so it too must be an *a priori* principle and accordingly stems from reason, which is then to that extent *practical*.

I have already said enough about the incorrectness of this **account of reason**. But even apart from that, how superficial and unfounded it is to use the single attribute of *independence from experience* to unite the most heterogeneous things while ignoring the enormous differences among them. For even supposing (though I don't grant it) that knowledge of the ethical significance of action originates from an imperative lying within us, from an **unconditioned Ought**, how fundamentally different this would be from the general forms of knowledge that Kant in the *Critique of Pure Reason* shows that we are *a priori* conscious of, a consciousness that enables us to pronounce in advance an **unconditioned Must** that is valid for all possible experience. The difference between this *Must*, this necessary form for all objects that is already determined in the subject, and that *Ought* of morality is so huge and so evident that laying them together under the attribute 'non-empirical form of knowledge' may count as

a clever comparison, but not as a philosophical justification for equating their origins.

Anyway, the birthplace of this child of practical reason, the *absolute ought* or *categorical imperative*, is not in the *Critique of Practical Reason* but is already in the *Critique of Pure Reason* (B830). It is a forced birth and is brought about only by means of the forceps of a **Therefore** which—boldly and brashly, one might even say shamelessly—connects as 'supposed' ground and consequence two propositions that are wildly foreign to one another and have no connection. The premise from which Kant starts is that we are determined not only by perceptual motives but also by abstract ones:

'Not merely what stimulates, i.e. immediately affects the senses, determines human choice, but through presentations of that which is itself more remotely useful or harmful, we have a faculty for overcoming impressions on our faculty of sensory desire. These reflections on that which is desirable with respect to our entire state, i.e. good and useful, rest on reason.'

(Perfectly correct: if only he always spoke of reason so reasonably!) He goes on:

'So this **therefore** also yields laws that are imperatives, i.e. objective laws of freedom which say what ought to happen, even if it perhaps never does.'¹

Thus without any further accreditation the *categorical imperative* leaps into the world, to rule there with its unconditioned *Ought*—which is a square circle [see footnote in chapter 53]. For the concept of *Ought* everywhere implies the thought of threatened punishment or promised reward, a thought without which the concept has no meaning; so an *unconditioned ought* is a contradiction in terms. I had to

¹ [AS adds an exclamation-mark to this whole sentence, and also to the 'therefore' contained in it. He is expressing his contempt for the 'argument' of Kant's that he is describing.]

criticise this mistake because it is related to Kant's great achievement in ethics, which consists in his freeing ethics from all principles of the world of experience—namely from any doctrine that refers directly or indirectly to happiness—and actually showing that the realm of virtue is not of this world. This achievement is all the greater because the peripatetics, stoics, and epicureans—that is, all the ancient philosophers except Plato—tried by very different devices

- to make virtue and happiness interdependent in accordance with the GP, or even
- to identify them with one another, in accordance with the law of contradiction.

The same criticism applies just as much to all philosophers of recent times, up to Kant. So this is a very great achievement of his; yet justice also demands recalling here that **(i)** his exposition and development often don't correspond to the tendency and spirit of his ethics, as we shall soon see; and that **(ii)** he is not the first to have cleansed virtue of all principles of happiness. For Plato explicitly teaches that virtue is to be chosen only for its own sake, even if unhappiness and shame are inevitably connected with it; he expounds this especially in the *Republic*, of which it is the main tendency. But Christianity even more preaches a perfectly unselfish virtue, which is practised not for the sake of reward, even reward in a life after death, but entirely disinterestedly, from love for God; with the proviso that ·virtuous· works do not justify; only faith does that; it accompanies virtue like a mere symptom of it, and therefore enters the scene independently and free of charge. [AS adds a reference to a work of Luther's, and to Indian works that depict the hope for reward as 'the path of darkness'.]

We don't however find Kant's doctrine of virtue to be so

pure; his account of it has remained far behind the spirit, and has indeed fallen into inconsistencies. In the 'highest good' that he discusses later, we find virtue tied to happiness. The *ought* that was originally so unconditioned is later said to have a condition, really so as to rid itself of the inner contradiction the burden of which it cannot live with.¹ The happiness contained in the 'highest good' is not, to be sure, really supposed to be the motive for virtue; yet there it stands, like a secret clause whose presence turns all the rest into a mere pseudo-contract: it is not really virtue's reward, but yet a voluntary gift for which virtue, having done its work, secretly holds out its hand ·for reward· Kant's whole moral theology has the same tendency; so that through it morality really self-destructs. For, I repeat, all virtue that is in any way practised for the sake of reward rests on a shrewd, methodical, far-seeing egoism.

Now the content of the absolute *ought*, the fundamental law of practical reason, is the famous:

'Act in such a way that the maxim of your will could always at the same time count as a principle for a general legislation.'

This principle sets for anyone who wants a rule for his own will the task of finding one for the will of everybody. Then the question arises of how such a rule is to be found. Obviously, to find the rule for my own behaviour I am supposed to consider not myself alone but the totality of all individuals. And then my aim becomes not my own well-being but the well-being of everyone, without distinction. But that is still well-being. So I find that all can be equally well off only if everyone sets the egoism of others as a limit to his own. From this it follows of course that I should harm nobody, because if this principle is generally accepted I won't be

¹ [This refers to the contradiction that AS says is inherent in the notion of unconditioned *ought*.]

harmed either; but this is the only reason I have—not yet *having* a moral law but still *seeking* one—for wanting this to be made a general law. But obviously this means that the source of this ethical principle is the desire for well-being, i.e. egoism. That would be a splendid basis for political theory, but as a basis for ethics it is worthless. Anyone wanting to meet that moral principle's task of establishing a rule to guide the will of *everyone* needs a rule for *himself*; otherwise, everything would be indifferent to him. But this rule can only be his own egoism, since it is only this that is affected by the conduct of others; and therefore it is only by reference to this egoism that each person can have a will concerning the conduct of others. Kant himself very naively acknowledges this in his *Critique of Practical Reason*, where he carries out the search for maxims for the will thus: 'If everyone viewed the need of others with utter indifference, and you belonged to such an order of things, would you agree to it?' *Quam temere in nosmet legem sancimus iniquam!*¹ would be the rule for the agreement in question. Similarly in the *Foundation for the Metaphysics of Morals*: 'A will that resolved not to support anyone in need would be in conflict with itself, because cases can arise where *it* needs the love and sympathy of others', and so on. This principle of ethics—which when seen clearly turns out to be an indirect and covert expression of the ancient, simple principle 'What you don't want **a** done to yourself, don't **b** do to others' [AS quotes this in Latin]—thus refers first and immediately to **a** the passive element, *undergoing*, and then only through that to **b** *doing*. So it would (I repeat) be quite useful as a guide for the constitution of a state, which is directed toward preventing **a** the suffering of wrong, and aims to provide for all and each

the greatest sum of well-being. But in ethics—

where the object of inquiry is **b** action as action and in its immediate significance for the agent, but not its consequence, **a** suffering, or its relation to others

—that consideration is inadmissible because it amounts fundamentally to a principle of happiness, and thus to egoism.

So we can't share Kant's pleasure in the fact that his principle of ethics is not a *material* one, i.e. one that posits an object as motive, but rather a merely *formal* one, making it correspond symmetrically to the formal laws with which the *Critique of Pure Reason* has made us familiar. It is of course not a law but only the formula for finding one. But **(i)** we already had this formula more briefly and clearly in 'What you don't want done to yourself, don't do to others'; and **(ii)** analysis of this formula shows that its content comes simply and solely from the reference to one's own happiness, so that it can only serve reasonable egoism, to which indeed every legal constitution owes its origin.

(iii) Another mistake which offends everyone's feelings, is often criticised, and is parodied in an epigram by Schiller,² is the pedantic rule that a deed can't be truly good and meritorious unless it is done solely

out of respect for recognised law and the concept of duty, and in accordance with a maxim which reason is conscious of *in abstracto*,

and not

from any inclination, from a feeling of benevolence for others, from softhearted sympathy, compassion, or emotional upsurges, which (according to the *Critique of Practical Reason*) are very burdensome to

¹ [Horace's Latin, meaning: 'How thoughtless to endorse a rule that is harmful to oneself!']

² ['Gladly I serve my friends, but unfortunately from inclination. So it eats at me often: I am not one who has virtue.']

right-thinking persons because they confuse their reflectively considered maxims.

Rather, the deed must be done reluctantly and with self-compulsion. Recall that hope for reward is supposed to have no influence in the matter, and consider the great absurdity of the demand. But what is more to the point is that this is precisely opposite to the genuine spirit of virtue: what is meritorious in virtue is not the deed but the gladness to do it, the love from which it proceeds and without which it is dead work. Thus Christianity rightly teaches that all outward works are worthless if they don't come from the genuine disposition that consists in true good-will and pure love; and that what blesses and redeems is not *works* but rather *faith*—the genuine disposition which the Holy Spirit alone confers and which the free, deliberative will, having only the law in view, does not produce.

Kant's demand •that every virtuous action should be done from pure, reflectively considered respect for the law and in accordance with its abstract maxims, coldly and without (indeed in opposition to) all inclinations, is exactly on a par with maintaining •that every genuine work of art has to arise through a well-considered application of aesthetic rules. One demand is as perverse as the other. The question (already treated by Plato and Seneca) as to whether virtue can be taught is to be answered in the negative. We will eventually have to make up our minds to face the fact—which was also the source of the Christian doctrine of election by grace—that as regards its chief characteristic and its inner nature, virtue is to a certain extent inborn, as is •artistic• genius; and that just as

•all the professors of aesthetics, with their forces united, can't give anyone the ability to produce gen-

uine works of art, so also

•all the professors of ethics and preachers of virtue can't transform an ignoble character into a virtuous and noble one,

the impossibility of the latter being even more obvious than the impossibility of converting lead into gold. And the search for an ethics and a supreme principle thereof that would have a practical influence and actually transform and improve the human race is just like the search for the philosophers' stone.¹ But I have already spoken in detail at the end of Book IV [chapter 69] of the possibility of a complete change of a person's disposition not by means of abstract knowledge (ethics), but by means of intuitive knowledge (efficacious grace); the content of that Book relieves me of any need to dwell on it longer here.

That Kant didn't in any way penetrate to the real significance of the ethical content of actions is shown eventually by his doctrine of the highest good as the necessary union of virtue with happiness, and that to be virtuous is to be worthy of happiness. This lays him open to a logical objection: the concept of *worthiness* that provides the standard in this case can't serve as a point of departure because it presupposes that an ethics is already in play.

The upshot of my Book IV [chapter 68] was that all genuine virtue, having achieved its highest degree, leads eventually to a state of total renunciation in which all willing comes to an end; whereas happiness is satisfied willing. So the two are fundamentally incompatible. Anyone who has been enlightened by my exposition won't need any further explanation of the complete perverseness of this Kantian view of the highest good. And, independent of my positive exposition, I have no further negative exposition to give.

¹ [A mythical substance that was supposed to turn base metals into gold, and to perform other wonders.]

We meet Kant's love of architectonic symmetry also in the *Critique of Practical Reason*, which he has tailored entirely according to the *Critique of Pure Reason*, using the same rubrics and forms in an obviously arbitrary way; this is particularly evident in the table of the 'categories of freedom'.

The *Philosophy of Law* is one of Kant's latest works, and is so poor that, although I entirely disagree with it, I think a polemic against it is superfluous, since its own weakness must lead it to die a natural death, just as if it were the work not of this great man but of an ordinary mortal. Therefore, with this work I give up the negative mode of procedure and refer to the positive, that is, to the short outline of it given in my Book IV. A few general remarks on Kant's *Philosophy of Law* may be made here. The errors which I have condemned in considering the *Critique of Pure Reason*, as clinging to Kant throughout, appear in the *Philosophy of Law* in such excess that one often believes one is reading a satirical parody of the Kantian style, or at least listening to a Kantian. The two main ones are the following. (i) He wants (and many since him have wanted) to separate the doctrine of right sharply from ethics, but nonetheless not to make the former dependent on human legislation, i.e. voluntary compulsion, but rather to have the concept of right stand pure and *a priori* on its own.¹ But this is not possible. For action, beyond its ethical significance and beyond its physical relation to others, and thereby to external compulsion, does not admit of a third point of view even as a mere possibility. Consequently, when he says that 'A duty of right is that duty which can be coerced', this *Can* is either to be understood physically—and then all right is positive and a matter of choice, and any choice that can be put into effect is in turn right—or the *Can* is to be understood ethically,

and we are in the domain of ethics again. With Kant the conception of legal right hovers between heaven and earth, and has no ground on which to stand; with me it belongs to ethics. (ii) His definition of the concept of right is entirely negative, and thus insufficient:

'Right is that which is compatible with the coexistence of individual freedoms in accordance with a general law.'

Freedom (here empirical, i.e. physical freedom, not moral freedom of the will) means the state of *not* being obstructed, and is thus a mere negation. The coexistence of freedoms has precisely the same meaning in turn. We thus remain with mere negations and obtain no positive concept, indeed do not learn at all what is really in question if we don't already have knowledge of it from elsewhere.

In elaborating on this, the most perverse views are subsequently developed, such as that in the state of nature, i.e. outside of the political state, there is no right to property, which really means that all right is man-made, so that natural right rests on man-made right, whereas it should be the other way around. Further,

- the grounding of rightful acquisition by way of initial occupancy,
- the ethical obligation to construct a civil constitution,
- the basis for the right to punish, etc.

all this, I repeat, I regard as altogether unworthy of a separate refutation. . . .

104. The *Critique of Judgment*

After what I have said, I can deal very briefly with the *Critique of Judgment*. One has to marvel at how Kant—

¹ [At this point we run into the fact that the German word *Recht* can mean either 'law' or 'right'.]

- to whom art surely remained most foreign,
- who apparently had little receptivity for the beautiful,
- who indeed probably never had the opportunity to see a significant work of art, and finally
- who seems to have had no knowledge of Goethe, the only person of his century and his nation who was fit to stand beside him as a fellow giant

—was able to achieve great and lasting merit for his philosophical treatment of art and the beautiful. Here is what explains this achievement.

•Much as men had reflected on the beautiful and on art, they had always considered these only from the empirical point of view, investigating on a basis of facts what quality distinguishes the object of any kind that was called *beautiful* from other objects of the same kind. On this path they arrived first at quite specialised principles and then at more general ones. They tried to distinguish genuine from spurious artistic beauty, and discover the marks of this genuineness which could then serve as rules.

- What pleases us as beautiful, what doesn't;
- what is therefore to be imitated, to be striven for, what is to be avoided;
- which rules, at least negative ones, are to be established; in short,
- what the means are to the arousal of aesthetic satisfaction,
- i.e. what its conditions are that lie **in the object**,

—that was almost exclusively the theme of all discussions of art. Aristotle opened this path, and we still find on it in most recent times, Home, Burke, Winckelmann, Lessing, Herder, and so on. To be sure, the general run of the discovered aesthetic principles led back eventually to **the subject**, and it was noted that if the effect in the subject were properly known, we could then determine in an *a priori* manner the

cause that lies in the object, this being the only way the considerations in question could achieve the sureness of a science. This led to psychological discussions here and there, but Alexander Baumgarten in particular presented a general aesthetics of the beautiful with this aim, starting from the concept of perfection in knowledge through the senses and thus in perceptual knowledge. But for him once this concept has been presented, the subjective part is done with, and he moves to objective matters and practicalities relating to them.

•But for Kant was reserved the merit of inquiring seriously and deeply into the very arousal that leads us to call the object that causes it 'beautiful', in order to discover, as far as possible, its constituents and conditions within our mind. So his inquiry took an entirely subjective direction. This was obviously the right way to go. For to explain a phenomenon that is given in its effects, one must first have exact knowledge of the effects, so as to determine the character of the cause in a thorough way. Kant's merit in this, however, didn't extend much further than •indicating the right path and •occasionally offering approximate examples of how to follow it. What he provided can't be regarded as objective truth and real gain. He provided the method for the inquiry and broke the ground, but fell short of the goal.

We can't help noticing that in the *Critique of Aesthetic Judgment* Kant retains the method which is peculiar to his entire philosophy and which I have considered in detail above. I mean the method of starting from **a** abstract knowledge, as a basis for understanding **b** perceptual knowledge, so that **a** the former serves him as a *camera obscura* (so to speak) in which to capture and survey **b** the latter within it. Just as in the *Critique of Pure Reason* the forms of judgment are supposed to give him insight regarding our entire perceptual world, so too in this *Critique of Aesthetic Judgment* he starts not

from **b** the beautiful itself, from the perceptually, immediately beautiful, but from **a** *judgment* regarding the beautiful, to which he gives the ugly title 'judgment of taste'

His attention is especially aroused by the circumstance that such a judgment obviously expresses something occurring within the subject, but is of such general validity that it's as though it concerned a property of the object. This is what struck him, not the beautiful itself. He always starts from the statements of others, from *judgment* regarding the beautiful, not from the beautiful itself. So it's as though he knew it only by hearsay, not immediately, just as a highly intelligent blind person could construct a theory of colours from accurate statements about them that he has heard. We can indeed consider Kant's philosophical theses about the beautiful almost purely in those terms. Doing so, we will find that his theory is most ingenious—indeed that some of its general observations are striking and true. But his real resolution of the problem is so unsatisfactory, remains so far below the dignity of its subject, that it can't occur to us to take it for objective truth; so I regard myself as spared the need to refute it, and here again I refer to the positive part of my work.

His book as a whole originated from the idea of having found the key to the problem of the beautiful in the concept of *purposiveness*. The idea is deduced, which is never a difficult matter, as we have learned from Kant's successors! Thus arises the baroque union of knowledge of the beautiful with knowledge of the purposiveness of natural bodies, within one cognitive faculty called *judgment*, and the treatment of these two different subjects in one book. With these three cognitive powers—reason, judgment, and understanding—a variety of symmetrically architectonic amusements are subsequently undertaken. Kant's fondness for these is displayed throughout this book by the way whole thing is forcibly tailored to

the fit the *Critique of Pure Reason*, but especially by Kant's dragging the 'Antinomy of Aesthetic Judgment' in by the hair. One could also accuse him of major inconsistency because

- after it was incessantly repeated in the *Critique of Pure Reason* that the **understanding** is the faculty for judging, and
- after the forms of that faculty's judgments have been made the cornerstone of all philosophy,

now we are introduced to another quite unique power of **judgment** which is totally different from that. Anyway, what I call judgment—namely, the capacity for carrying **a** perceptual knowledge over into **b** abstract knowledge, and for accurately applying **b** the latter in turn to **a** the former, is explained in the positive part of my work.

Kant's theory of the sublime is by far the best part of the *Critique of Aesthetic Judgment*. It is incomparably more successful than his theory of the beautiful. It doesn't just provide (as the other does also) the general method of inquiry, but also indicates a portion of the right path to a solution, doing this so well that although it doesn't provide the real solution of the problem it brushes past it very closely.

In the *Critique of Teleological Judgment*, the simplicity of the material enables one to recognise, perhaps more than anywhere else, Kant's rare talent for turning a *thought* this way and that and expressing it manifold ways, until it becomes a *book*. The book as a whole would say only this:

Although organic bodies necessarily appear to us as though they had been assembled according to a pre-existing conceptualised purpose, this doesn't entitle us to assume that this is how things stand objectively. For our intellect, to which things are given from outside and indirectly—so that it never knows anything about the inner element by which they arise and survive, but merely about their outside—has to

use an analogy to grasp a certain peculiar character of products of organic nature; what it does is to compare them with works intentionally produced by human beings, the character of which is determined by conceptualised purpose. This analogy is sufficient to enable us to grasp the agreement of all the parts with the whole, thus giving us the clue to their investigation; but it must not on this account be made the actual ground of explanation of the origin and existence of such bodies. For the necessity of their appearing to us in that way is subjective in origin.

That is roughly how I would summarise Kant's doctrine regarding teleology. He had already presented its main part in the *Critique of Pure Reason* (A692–702). But in his knowledge of *this* truth we again find David Hume as Kant's illustrious forerunner: he too had sharply disputed the assumption in question,¹ in the second part of his *Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion*. What distinguishes the Humean from the Kantian critique of the assumption is mainly that Hume criticises it as something that is based on experience whereas Kant criticises it as something that is held *a priori*. Both are right, and their accounts complement one another. [And then a reference to a commentary on Aristotle in which the essence of Kant's doctrine of teleology was anticipated.]

Kant is completely right in this matter. After showing that the concept of effect and cause can't be used to explain the existence of nature as a whole,

it was also necessary to show that

nothing in the character of nature is to be conceived as the effect of a cause directed by motives (concepts of purpose).

If we bear in mind the great seeming-truth of the physico-

theological proof, which even Voltaire took to be irrefutable, it was of the greatest importance to show that the subjective element in our apprehension, which Kant claimed for space, time, and causality, also extends to our judgments of natural bodies; so that the compulsion we feel to think of them as premeditated in accordance with concepts of purpose, and thus as having arisen in such a way that their presentation preceded their existence, has an origin that is just as subjective as our perception of that space which is so objectively displayed to us; so it can't be validated as objective truth. Kant's discussion of the matter, apart from the wearying verbosity and repetition, is superb. He rightly says that we'll never be able to explain the character of organic bodies on the basis of merely mechanical causes, by which he means the unintentional and lawful working of all general natural forces. But here I find another gap. He denies the possibility of such an explanation merely with respect to the purposiveness and seeming intentionality of *organic bodies*; but even where those are not involved, explanatory grounds from one domain of nature can't be brought over into another, but rather abandon us when we set foot in a new domain, and new fundamental laws take their place, laws that we can't hope to explain in terms of the laws of the previous domain. Thus in the domain of the truly mechanical, the laws of gravity, cohesion, rigidity, fluidity, elasticity hold sway. They stand on their own as expressions of forces that can't be further explained (apart from my explanation of *all* natural forces as lower levels of the objectification of will). In that domain they constitute principles for all further explanation, which merely consists in reducing things to them. When we leave this domain and come to the phenomena of chemistry, electricity, magnetism and crystallization, those principles cease to be

¹ [This refers to the assumption 'that this is how things stand objectively'.]

of any use to us; indeed those laws no longer apply, those forces are overcome by others and the phenomena develop in direct contradiction to them [i.e. in contradiction to the laws of the previous domain], in accordance with new fundamental laws which—just like the former ones—are basic and inexplicable, i.e. can't be reduced to more general laws. Thus, for example, we will never succeed in using the laws of true mechanism to explain even the dissolving of a salt in water, let alone more complex chemical phenomena. All of this is already presented more thoroughly in Book II of the present work. It seems to me that a discussion of this sort would have been very useful in the Critique of Teleological Judgment, spreading much light on what was said there. Such a discussion would have been especially favourable to Kant's splendid insight that a deeper knowledge of the *essence in itself* of which natural things are the phenomenon would reveal one and the same ultimate principle in both the mechanical (lawful) and the seemingly intentional operation

of nature, a principle that might serve as a common ground for explaining both. I hope I have provided this by presenting *will* as the real *thing in itself*, and in accordance with it—in Book II of the present work and the supplements to it,¹ but especially in my work *On the Will in Nature*—the insight into the inner nature of the apparent design and of the harmony and agreement of the whole of nature has perhaps become clearer and deeper. So I have nothing more to say about it here.

The reader interested in this critique of Kantian philosophy ought not to neglect reading the supplement to it, provided in the essay in *Parerga and Paralipomena* entitled 'Further Elucidations of Kantian Philosophy'. For it has to be remembered that my works, few in number as they may be, were composed successively, over the course of a long life and with long intervals between them; so that it mustn't be expected that everything I have said on a subject stands together in one place.

¹ [Meaning the supplements in volume 2 of the present work, not offered on the website from which the present text came.]