

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.

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.