

BEYOND
GOOD

& **EVIL**

Prelude to a
Philosophy of
the Future

Translated, with
Commentary, by

Walter
Kaufmann

F R I E D R I C H
NIETZSCHE



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Translator's Preface

Nietzsche was controversial to the marrow. He sought controversy and is still controversial. But the area of agreement about him is growing. What the Germans and the French have known for some time is gradually being recognized in the English-speaking world as well: Nietzsche was one of the greatest German writers and philosophers of all time and one of the most interesting and influential Europeans of the nineteenth century. *Beyond Good and Evil* is one of his most important books, and its nine parts with their descriptive subtitles are designed to give the reader a comprehensive idea of Nietzsche's thought and style.

For all that, the book, like all of Nietzsche's best volumes, is easily misunderstood. For readers who come to it with no previous knowledge of Nietzsche or with erroneous preconceptions about him, I have ventured to offer something of a commentary in the form of copious footnotes. *All of the footnotes are mine; none are Nietzsche's.*

I have chosen to use notes for elucidation of major and minor points in the text rather than a long introduction or interlarded commentaries because such notes can provide immediate clarification or interpretation for the reader who requires such assistance. On the other hand, the reader can skip the notes if he wishes, and read Nietzsche straight through without the intrusion of the editor's commentaries.

Another possibility would have been to offer the commentary on facing pages, as I myself have done in the case of Hegel's long Preface to the *Phenomenology*. But Nietzsche's book is not *that* difficult: one can read it like an ordinary book, and many pages require no elucidation. Everything considered, then, it seemed best to offer the commentary in the form of notes—none on some pages, several on others.

To keep down the length of the commentary and to avoid excessive repetition of material available elsewhere, I have referred to detailed discussion of many points in my own *Nietzsche* volume.

2

A word about the text: it was originally published in 1886, following *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, which is generally and rightly regarded as Nietzsche's first attempt to present his whole philosophy. All of his previous works had been stages in his development: with *Zarathustra* the final phase begins; a comprehensive vision has been attained but is far from easy to communicate. *Zarathustra*, though much of the work consists of apparently direct preaching, is a form of "indirect communication," to use Kierkegaard's term: the form is literary and there is an abundance of symbolism. For those who know the author well, the book is a stunning epitome of his thought; for those who do not, some other approach is needed. It was with this in mind that Nietzsche wrote *Beyond Good and Evil*. And on September 22, 1886, he wrote Jacob Burckhardt: "Please read this book (although it says the same things as my *Zarathustra*, but differently, very differently—)."

The first edition was the only one that Nietzsche himself supervised. In a letter to his friend Franz Overbeck, he wrote: "I am making the experiment of having something published at my expense: assuming 300 copies will be sold, my expenses will be covered and I might be able to repeat the experiment some time. The firm of C. G. Naumann permits the use of its highly respectable name. This between us. The neglect by Schm.¹ was monstrous: for ten years now no copies distributed to bookstores; neither any review copies . . . no promotion—in short, my writings beginning with *Human, All-Too-Human* are 'anecdota.' Of *Zarathustra* 60–70 copies each² have been sold, etc., etc."³

¹ Ernst Schmeitzner had been Nietzsche's publisher.

² The reference is to the first three parts, published separately in 1883 and 1884. Of Part Four, only forty copies had been printed privately, and only seven were distributed among friends.

³ Written from Sils Maria, summer 1886; Number 255 in *Friedrich Nietzsches Briefwechsel mit Franz Overbeck* (Friedrich Nietzsche's correspondence with Franz Overbeck), Leipzig, 1916, p. 341.

The book of which Nietzsche had hoped to sell 300 copies was *Beyond Good and Evil*, but a year later, June 8, 1887, he writes Peter Gast: "This time, for *Bey. G. & E.*, everything necessary (and even a little more than that) has been done as far as the book trade is concerned: so Herr Schmeitzner cannot be blamed any more, as I had done so far. *In spite of all this*—the result is the same as with Schmeitzner: rather, it is still worse! Altogether only 114 copies have been sold (while 66 copies have been given away to newspapers and journals).

"Instructive! Namely, one simply does not want my literature; and I—may no longer afford the luxury of print."⁴

By 1903, 17,000 copies were in print; by 1906, 36,000. Since then new editions and translations into other languages have mushroomed.

The first edition has become a great rarity and has never been reprinted exactly as published in 1886. All subsequent editions contain a few very minor deviations. Karl Schlechta's edition of Nietzsche's works in three volumes⁵ is widely considered vastly superior to all previous editions, at least philologically, although it contains much less of Nietzsche's *Nachlass*⁶ than some earlier editions; and Schlechta claims unequivocally that he has followed the original edition, published by C. G. Naumann (Leipzig, 1886),⁷ but he has not. Where the standard editions differ from the original edition, he follows the later editions.⁸ No matter of philosophical substance is involved; the deviations are very small; but the fact remains astonishing. Notwithstanding all sorts of sensational claims, none of the scholarly corrections of the older editions of Nietzsche's writings, published since World War II, are important philosophi-

⁴ *Friedrich Nietzsches Briefe an Peter Gast* (Friedrich Nietzsche's letters to Peter Gast), Leipzig, 1908.

⁵ *Werke in drei Bänden*, Munich, 1954-56; *Nietzsche-Index*, Munich, 1965.

⁶ The notes, fragments, lectures, and drafts he had not published himself. Moreover, the three volumes include only 278 of Nietzsche's thousands of published letters and none of his early scholarly articles.

⁷ "Philological Postscript," in Vol. III, p. 1,387.

⁸ Sections 65a, 73a, 186, 237, 247, 269, and 270.

cally, and it is ironical that the editions of Schlechta and Podach⁹ are by no means models of belated philological soundness.¹⁰ This translation follows the first edition. In my footnote commentary, deviations of the later editions are pointed out.

I have taken two liberties. Nietzsche occasionally uses dots, usually four, as a punctuation mark; for example, but by no means there alone, at the end of sections 62 and 227. In serious works in the English-speaking world dots are so generally taken to indicate omissions that it did not seem advisable to follow Nietzsche's usage. Dashes have therefore been used instead. Moreover, Nietzsche often employs dots or dashes in the middle of lengthy paragraphs. In such cases I have often begun a new paragraph to mark the break; and beyond that, I have generally broken up long paragraphs. The reader may always assume that in the original a numbered section constitutes a single paragraph; even if it is as long as the whole Preface or sections 25, 26, and 28.

3

Beyond Good and Evil has been translated into English twice before. The first translator, Helen Zimmern, was an English writer who had met Nietzsche in Sils Maria in the summer of 1886—the period when the book was completed, printed, and published. Indeed, Nietzsche mentions her in the margin of the letter to Franz Overbeck previously cited: "Till the middle of September I shall stay here. There is no dearth of old acquaintances . . . Miss Helen Zimmern . . ."

In the index of names at the end of Nietzsche's *Briefe an Peter Gast*, Helen Zimmern is identified as an "English writer"; in the index to *Briefe an Mutter und Schwester* (letters to mother and sister, Leipzig, 1909), as "engl. Litteratin," which is less respectful. Neither volume mentions that she translated *Beyond Good and Evil*. What Nietzsche wrote (September 19, 1886) about her to his

⁹ *Friedrich Nietzsche Werke des Zusammenbruchs* (the work of Nietzsche's collapse), Heidelberg, 1961.

¹⁰ See W. Kaufmann, "Nietzsche in the Light of His Suppressed Manuscripts," *Journal of the History of Philosophy*, October 1964.

mother or sister was: "I had the privilege of introducing this 'champion of women's rights' (Frä. von Salis) to another 'champion' who is my neighbor at meals, Miss Helen Zimmern, who is extremely clever, incidentally not an Englishwoman—but Jewish. May heaven have mercy on the European intellect if one wanted to subtract the Jewish intellect from it."¹¹ In 1885, the year before, Nietzsche's sister had married Bernhard Förster, one of the leaders of the German anti-Semitic movement.¹²

Helen Zimmern (1846–1934), two years Nietzsche's junior, had published *Arthur Schopenhauer: His Life and His Philosophy* (1876) and *Gotthold Ephraim Lessing: His Life and His Works* (1878); she also published many other books and translations, including several from the Italian. About her version of *Beyond Good and Evil*, Dr. Oscar Levy reported in 1913 in a short essay on "The Nietzsche Movement in England" (in the last volume, the eighteenth, of his edition of *The Complete Works*): "But in 1907 the party had somewhat recovered its spirit, and as a last experiment brought out a translation of *Beyond Good and Evil*—this time at private risk, for no publisher could be induced to take up an author twice repudiated. This translation was one which had been made nearly ten years ago, but until then had never seen, and was never expected to see, the light of publicity. It turned out to be a success—a half-hearted success perhaps, but one that at last told the few inmates of the Nietzschean ark that the waters of democracy had diminished, and that at least some higher peaks of humanity were free from the appalling deluge. The success encouraged them once more to take up their old project of the publication of the complete works. . . ."

¹¹ Cf. the similar remarks about her in letters to Gast, July 20, 1886, and January 6, 1888: "Of course Jewish:—it is terrific to what extent this race now holds the 'spirit [Geistigkeit]' in Europe in its hands," and, "the clever Englishwoman (resp., Jewess) who introduced Schopenhauer to the English. . . . (Summer before last she was in Sils Maria, sitting next to me at meals)."

¹² Cf. Kaufmann, *Nietzsche: Philosopher, Psychologist, Antichrist*, Chapter I, section III, where Nietzsche's letters about the marriage and his opposition to anti-Semitism are quoted. For full-length portraits of the Försters see E. F. Podach, *Gestalten um Nietzsche* (persons around Nietzsche, Weimar, 1932), Chapter 4.

The "inmates" in England were a very different lot from those who were by then writing about Nietzsche in Germany and France: English professional *philosophers*, for example, had developed curious versions of Hegelianism after Hegel had gone into eclipse on the continent, and at the beginning of the twentieth century the young G. E. Moore and Bertrand Russell were trying to emancipate philosophy from the influence of the leading Idealists, F. H. Bradley and J. M. E. McTaggart. The tone of the English Nietzscheans, in turn, helped to create a public image of Nietzsche that did not attract philosophers to him.

It was over fifty years after *Beyond Good and Evil* had originally appeared in 1886 that professional philosophers began to publish studies of Nietzsche's philosophy in English.

Meanwhile, the Zimmern translation of *Beyond Good and Evil* found its way into the Modern Library, and it was until 1955 the only version through which myriads of readers knew the book. In preparing the present edition, I hoped at first that I might merely revise her version, modernizing her somewhat Victorian prose and correcting mistakes; but I soon gave up. The mistakes were too numerous, and in Nietzsche's case nuances are so important that it would be difficult to say at what point an infelicitous rendering becomes downright wrong.

The second translator, Marianne Cowan, is not a philosopher either. Her version is modern and very readable. But the merits are somewhat offset by errors of understanding, and therefore I have pointed out a few such instances in my notes.

Often it seems helpful to call the reader's attention to crucial passages in some of Nietzsche's other works. These are cited in each instance according to sections, to enable the reader to find them in any edition; but in the case of material included in a volume of Nietzsche translations that I published in 1954¹³ I have also given the page numbers in parentheses.

¹³ *The Portable Nietzsche*, which contains complete versions of *Zarathustra*, *Twilight of the Idols*, *Antichrist*, and *Nietzsche contra Wagner*, as well as selections from Nietzsche's other books, his notes, and his letters.

4

About the title of the book: like many of Nietzsche's titles, phrases, and coinages, it is brilliant, unforgettable, and usually misconstrued. The following sections of the book are relevant to an understanding of what Nietzsche meant by "beyond good and evil": the author's Preface and sections 2, 4, 32, 33, 56, 153, 164, 202, 212, the end of 241, 260, and 284. This is not to say that the other sections are not relevant nor that the reader would be best advised to look up these passages first. Rather, it would be well to read the book with an open mind and a readiness to distinguish the many connotations of its striking title. And it might be helpful to read the editor's note for section 250 at the start.

To an extent at least it may help many readers to relate several themes of the book to other great writers, and some such comparisons will be found in the notes. One theme, however, should be stated here at the outset. Ibsen's Dr. Thomas Stockmann says at the end of *An Enemy of the People*: "He is the strongest man in the world that stands alone." This leitmotif of the play illustrates Kierkegaard's influence on Ibsen, to which Georg Brandes referred in a letter to Nietzsche, March 7, 1888: "Intellectually, he has been very dependent on Kierkegaard." We may recall Kierkegaard's remarks on "That Individual"¹⁴ with its refrain "The crowd is untruth." The fourth act of Ibsen's play could almost be subtitled "Variations on a Theme by Kierkegaard." Witness Dr. Stockmann's words:

The most dangerous enemy of truth and freedom among us—is the compact majority. Yes, the damned, compact, liberal majority . . .

The majority has *might*—unfortunately—but *right* it is not. Right—are I and a few others. The minority is always right. . . .

I have a mind to make a revolution against the lie that the majority is in the possession of truth. What kind of truths

¹⁴ Included in *Existentialism from Dostoevsky to Sartre*, ed. Walter Kaufmann (New York, Meridian Books, 1956), pp. 92-99.

are those around which the majority usually gathers? They are truths that have become so old that they are on the way toward becoming shaky. But once a truth has become that old, it is also on the way toward becoming a lie . . . A normally constituted truth lives, let us say, as a rule seventeen or eighteen years; at most twenty, rarely more. But such aged truths are always exceedingly thin. Nevertheless it is only at that stage that the majority makes their acquaintance . . . All these majority truths . . . are rather like rancid, spoiled . . . hams. And that is the source of the moral scurvy that rages all around us. . . ."

A generation later, Freud said on the second page of his autobiographical *Selbstdarstellung* (Leipzig, 1925) that, as a Jew at an anti-Semitic university, "I learned early to know the lot of standing in opposition and being placed under a ban by the 'compact majority.' Thus the ground was laid for a certain independence of judgment."

One reasonable perspective for *Beyond Good and Evil* is to see it somewhere between Kierkegaard and Ibsen on the one hand and Freud and Sartre on the other. And considering how much Nietzsche has to say about "nobility" in this book, it is good to recall that the old Freud said in a letter about Nietzsche: "In my youth he signified a nobility which I could not attain."¹⁵

Such sections as 212 and 296, to name only two among a great many, invite comparison with some of the phrases cited here. But it would be pointless to attempt a long list, for what is at stake is not just a verbal similarity here or there but rather one way of seeing the whole book. There are many others.

It would be foolish for a translator, and even for a commentator, to attempt to foist his own estimate of a book with which he has been living for some time on those who will henceforth share his experience to some extent. But in the spirit of Zarathustra's

¹⁵ Included by Ernest Jones in his *Life and Work of Sigmund Freud* (New York, Basic Books, 1957), III, 460. For details of the image of Nietzsche communicated to Freud in the early eighteen-eighties by his friend Dr. Paneth who met Nietzsche in Nice, see Kaufmann, *From Shakespeare to Existentialism* (Garden City, N. Y., Anchor Books, 1960), pp. 323f.

"This is *my* way; where is yours?"¹⁶ I shall venture a suggestion.

This is one of the great books of the nineteenth century, indeed of any century, despite much with which the modern reader might disagree. There is much in it with which I too do not agree; but that is also true of Plato's and Aristotle's writings, of all great philosophical works and, making due allowances for the different genre, of Dante's and Dostoevsky's ideas and of the Bible. There are some passages that strike me as blemishes without which the book would be better; for example, the tedious remarks about women, the mercifully briefer comments on the English, and the poem at the end.

It is possible to say briefly what makes the book great: the prophetic independence of its spirit; the hundreds of doors it opens for the mind, revealing new vistas, problems, and relationships; and what it contributes to our understanding of much of recent thought and literature and history. Readers might ask, for example, about the relation of various passages to psychoanalysis, to analytical philosophy, or to existentialism. But even a far longer list would not do justice to the book. There remains another dimension. This is one of those rare books in which one encounters not only a great thinker but also a fascinating human being of exceptional complexity and integrity.

One final caution. *Beyond Good and Evil* is not a collection of aphorisms for browsing. Each of the nine major parts, with the possible exception of part four, is meant to be read straight through. Each pursues one complex of problems, and what is said in one section is frequently qualified decisively in the next, or a few pages later. The often surprising developments of an idea constitute one of the major charms of this work. And it is in part on their account that this book, like all great books—for this is part of their definition or, as Nietzsche might say, a criterion for the order of rank—needs to be read more than once. It is a book to reread and live with.

September 1965

W. K.

¹⁶ End of the chapter "On the Spirit of Gravity" in Part III (*Portable Nietzsche*, p. 307).

Acknowledgments

But for Jason Epstein, this volume would never have come into being. He urged me for years to make more new translations of Nietzsche, before I finally consented to go over some of the old versions to eliminate outright errors. This proved to be a thankless, endless, and all but impossible undertaking. So I gave up and began some more new translations, of which this is the first to appear. The commentary, not anticipated, took form as the translation progressed.

But for Berenice Hoffman, this volume would be much less satisfactory. As an editor, she went far beyond the call of duty, putting me in mind of my not altogether literal translation of the conclusion of Goethe's *Faust*:

The Eternal-Feminine
Lures to perfection.

As for the Index, almost all of the work on that was done by Stephen Watson. Sonia Volochova made many additions to the Index and greatly increased its value.

It was often extremely difficult to decide what phrases in the text required notes. Mr. Watson, as a University Scholar at Princeton University, called to my attention many points on which he thought students needed help, and he also helped me with the proofs. I am grateful to him and to Princeton's excellent program of undergraduate research assistantships.

WALTER KAUFMANN

Bibliographical Note

Nietzsche's works are generally cited by section numbers, as these are the same in all editions. But *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, *Twilight of the Idols*, and *Nietzsche contra Wagner* are not composed of consecutively numbered sections; on the other hand they are available in a single volume, along with *The Antichrist* and selections from Nietzsche's other books, from his notes, and from his letters: *The Portable Nietzsche*, selected and translated, with an introduction, prefaces, and notes, by Walter Kaufmann, The Viking Press, New York, 1954. Page numbers refer to this volume. The same translation of *Zarathustra*, with preface and notes, is also available separately as a Compass Book paperback, The Viking Press, New York, 1966.

Walter Kaufmann, *Nietzsche: Philosopher, Psychologist, Antichrist* (originally published by the Princeton University Press, 1950; revised paperback edition with different pagination, published by Meridian Books, New York, 1956), is cited by chapters and sections to facilitate ready reference.

Jenseits
von Gut und Böse.

Vorspiel
einer
Philosophie der Zukunft.

Von
Friedrich Nietzsche.



Leipzig
Druck und Verlag von C. G. Naumann,
1886.

Preface

Supposing truth is a woman—what then? Are there not grounds for the suspicion that all philosophers, insofar as they were dogmatists, have been very inexpert about women? That the gruesome seriousness, the clumsy obtrusiveness with which they have usually approached truth so far¹ have been awkward and very improper methods for winning a woman's heart? What is certain is that she has not allowed herself to be won—and today every kind of dogmatism is left standing dispirited and discouraged. *If it is left standing at all!* For there are scoffers who claim that it has fallen, that all dogmatism lies on the ground—even more, that all dogmatism is dying.

Speaking seriously, there are good reasons why all philosophical dogmatizing, however solemn and definitive its airs used to be, may nevertheless have been no more than a noble childishness and tyronism. And perhaps the time is at hand when it will be comprehended again and again *how little* used to be sufficient to furnish the cornerstone for such sublime and unconditional philosophers' edifices as the dogmatists have built so far: any old popular superstition from time immemorial (like the soul superstition which, in the form of the subject and ego superstition, has not even yet ceased to do mischief); some play on words perhaps, a seduction by grammar, or an audacious generalization of very narrow, very personal, very human, all too human facts.

The dogmatists' philosophy was, let us hope, only a promise across millennia—as astrology was in still earlier times when perhaps more work, money, acuteness, and patience were lavished in its service than for any real science so far: to astrology and its “supra-terrestrial” claims we owe the grand style of architecture in Asia and Egypt. It seems that all great things first have to bestride

¹ *Bisher* (so far) is a word that recurs constantly throughout *Beyond Good and Evil*. It helps to color the word “beyond” in the title.

the earth in monstrous and frightening masks in order to inscribe themselves in the hearts of humanity with eternal demands: dogmatic philosophy was such a mask; for example, the Vedanta doctrine in Asia and Platonism in Europe.

Let us not be ungrateful to it, although it must certainly be conceded that the worst, most durable, and most dangerous of all errors so far was a dogmatist's error—namely, Plato's invention of the pure spirit and the good as such. But now that it is overcome, now that Europe is breathing freely again after this nightmare and at least can enjoy a healthier—sleep, we, *whose task is wakefulness itself*, are the heirs of all that strength which has been fostered² by the fight against this error. To be sure, it meant standing truth on her head and denying *perspective*, the basic condition of all life, when one spoke of spirit and the good as Plato did. Indeed, as a physician one might ask: "How could the most beautiful growth of antiquity, Plato, contract such a disease? Did the wicked Socrates corrupt him after all? Could Socrates have been the corrupter of youth after all? And did he deserve his hemlock?"

But the fight against Plato or, to speak more clearly and for "the people," the fight against the Christian-ecclesiastical pressure of millennia—for Christianity is Platonism for "the people"—has created in Europe a magnificent tension of the spirit the like of which had never yet existed on earth: with so tense a bow we can now shoot for the most distant goals. To be sure, European man experiences this tension as need and distress; twice already attempts have been made in the grand style to unbend the bow—once by means of Jesuitism, the second time by means of the democratic enlightenment which, with the aid of freedom of the press and newspaper-reading, might indeed bring it about that the spirit would no longer experience itself so easily as a "need." (The Germans have invented gunpowder—all due respect for that!—but then they made up for that: they invented the press.)³ But we who

² *Grossgezüchtet*: *züchten* means to breed, grow, or cultivate animals, plants, or qualities. Nietzsche uses the word frequently, and in these pages it is most often rendered by "cultivate." In his usage the connotation is generally spiritual.

³ Cf. the Preface to *The Antichrist*: "One must be skilled in living on moun-

are neither Jesuits nor democrats, nor even German enough, we good Europeans⁴ and free, very free spirits—we still feel it, the whole need of the spirit and the whole tension of its bow. And perhaps also the arrow, the task, and—who knows?—the goal—

Sils Maria, Upper Engadine,
June 1885.⁵

tains—seeing the wretched ephemeral babble of politics and national self-seeking beneath oneself" (*Portable Nietzsche*, p. 568). In the daily newspaper the concern with ephemeral matters is institutionalized and cultivated at the expense of genuine "spirituality."

⁴ Nietzsche's coinage, initially introduced by him in *Human, All-Too-Human* (1878), section 475 (*Portable Nietzsche*, pp. 61-63).

⁵ The book was written "summer 1885 in the Upper Engadine and the following winter in Nizza" (letter to Georg Brandes, April 10, 1888). This is borne out by other letters, except that additions and revisions were made until June 1886. The book was printed in June and July and published the beginning of August 1886.

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¹ The Table of Contents appears here in the original edition, but not in the later standard editions or in Schlechta.

PART ONE



ON THE PREJUDICES
OF PHILOSOPHERS

Part¹ One

1

The will to truth which will still tempt us to many a venture, that famous truthfulness of which all philosophers so far have spoken with respect—what questions has this will to truth not laid before us! What strange, wicked, questionable questions! That is a long story even now—and yet it seems as if it had scarcely begun. Is it any wonder that we should finally become suspicious, lose patience, and turn away impatiently? that we should finally learn from this Sphinx to ask questions, too? *Who* is it really that puts questions to us here? *What* in us really wants “truth”?

Indeed we came to a long halt at the question about the cause of this will—until we finally came to a complete stop before a still more basic question. We asked about the *value* of this will. Suppose we want truth: *why not rather* untruth? and uncertainty? even ignorance?

The problem of the value of truth came before us—or was it we who came before the problem? Who of us is Oedipus here? Who the Sphinx? It is a rendezvous, it seems, of questions and question marks.

And though it scarcely seems credible, it finally almost seems to us as if the problem had never even been put so far—as if we were the first to see it, fix it with our eyes, and *risk* it. For it does involve a risk, and perhaps there is none that is greater.

2

“How *could* anything originate out of its opposite? for example, truth out of error? or the will to truth out of the will to

¹ Marianne Cowan has suggested in the preface to her translation that Nietzsche divided this book “into ‘articles’ like articles of faith,” and she sees “irony in this.” But there is no warrant for rendering *Hauptstück* as “article”: it means “major part.” Kant’s *Critique of Pure Reason* and *Critique of Practical Reason* are both divided into *Hauptstücke*. So is Nietzsche’s own *Human, All-Too-Human*. The term is obviously particularly appropriate for books subdivided into many short sections.

deception? or selfless deeds out of selfishness? or the pure and sunlike gaze of the sage out of lust? Such origins are impossible; whoever dreams of them is a fool, indeed worse; the things of the highest value must have another, *peculiar* origin—they cannot be derived from this transitory, seductive, deceptive, paltry world, from this turmoil of delusion and lust. Rather from the lap of Being, the intransitory, the hidden god, the 'thing-in-itself'—there must be their basis, and nowhere else."

This way of judging constitutes the typical prejudgment and prejudice which give away the metaphysicians of all ages; this kind of valuation looms in the background of all their logical procedures; it is on account of this "faith" that they trouble themselves about "knowledge," about something that is finally baptized solemnly as "the truth." The fundamental faith of the metaphysicians is *the faith in opposite values*.² It has not even occurred to the most cautious among them that one might have a doubt right here at the threshold where it was surely most necessary—even if they vowed to themselves, "*de omnibus dubitandum*."³

For one may doubt, first, whether there are any opposites at all, and secondly whether these popular valuations and opposite values on which the metaphysicians put their seal, are not perhaps merely foreground estimates, only provisional perspectives, perhaps even from some nook, perhaps from below, frog perspectives, as it were, to borrow an expression painters use. For all the value that the true, the truthful, the selfless may deserve, it would still be possible that a higher and more fundamental value for life might have to be ascribed to deception, selfishness, and lust. It might even be possible that what constitutes the value of these good and revered things is precisely that they are insidiously related, tied to, and involved with these wicked, seemingly opposite things—maybe even one with them in essence. Maybe!

But who has the will to concern himself with such dangerous maybes? For that, one really has to wait for the advent of a new

² Nietzsche's attack on this faith is prefigured in the title of the book. This aphorism invites comparison with the first aphorism of *Human, All-Too-Human*.

³ "All is to be doubted." Descartes.

species of philosophers, such as have somehow another and converse taste and propensity from those we have known so far—philosophers of the dangerous “maybe” in every sense.

And in all seriousness: I see such new philosophers coming up.

3

After having looked long enough between the philosopher's lines and fingers, I say to myself: by far the greater part of conscious thinking must still be included among instinctive activities, and that goes even for philosophical thinking. We have to relearn here, as one has had to relearn about heredity and what is “innate.” As the act of birth deserves no consideration in the whole process and procedure of heredity, so “being conscious” is not in any decisive sense the *opposite* of what is instinctive: most of the conscious thinking of a philosopher is secretly guided and forced into certain channels by his instincts.

Behind all logic and its seeming sovereignty of movement, too, there stand valuations or, more clearly, physiological demands for the preservation of a certain type of life. For example, that the definite should be worth more than the indefinite, and mere appearance worth less than “truth”—such estimates might be, in spite of their regulative importance for *us*, nevertheless mere foreground estimates, a certain kind of *niaiserie*⁴ which may be necessary for the preservation of just such beings as we are. Supposing, that is, that not just man is the “measure of things”⁵—

4

The falseness of a judgment is for us not necessarily an objection to a judgment; in this respect our new language may sound strangest. The question is to what extent it is life-promoting, life-preserving, species-preserving, perhaps even species-cultivating.

⁴ Folly, stupidity, silliness: one of Nietzsche's favorite French words.

⁵ “Man is the measure of all things.” Protagoras, born about 480 B.C.

And we are fundamentally inclined to claim that the falsest judgments (which include the synthetic judgments *a priori*)⁶ are the most indispensable for us; that without accepting the fictions of logic, without measuring reality against the purely invented world of the unconditional and self-identical, without a constant falsification of the world by means of numbers, man could not live—that renouncing false judgments would mean renouncing life and a denial of life. To recognize untruth as a condition of life—that certainly means resisting accustomed value feelings in a dangerous way; and a philosophy that risks this would by that token alone place itself beyond good and evil.

5

What provokes one to look at all philosophers half suspiciously, half mockingly, is not that one discovers again and again how innocent they are—how often and how easily they make mistakes and go astray; in short, their childishness and childlikeness—but that they are not honest enough in their work, although they all make a lot of virtuous noise when the problem of truthfulness is touched even remotely. They all pose as if they had discovered and reached their real opinions through the self-development of a cold, pure, divinely unconcerned dialectic (as opposed to the mystics of every rank, who are more honest and doltish—and talk of “inspiration”); while at bottom it is an assumption, a hunch, indeed a kind of “inspiration”—most often a desire of the heart that has been filtered and made abstract—that they defend with reasons they have sought after the fact. They are all advocates who represent that name, and for the most part even wily spokesmen for

⁶ One of Kant's central questions was, “How are synthetic judgments *a priori* possible?” He meant judgments that are known for certain to be true, independently of experience, but not by definition. His examples include the judgment that every event has a cause. Hans Vaihinger, a leading Kant scholar who published a book on *Nietzsche als Philosoph* (1902; 4th ed. 1916), later published his own theory of necessary fictions under the title, *Die Philosophie des Als-Ob* (1911; English tr. by C. K. Ogden, 1924: *The Philosophy of “As If”*), devoting the final chapter to a detailed discussion of Nietzsche's similar ideas. Cf. section 11 below.

their prejudices which they baptize "truths"—and very far from having the courage of the conscience that admits this, precisely this, to itself; very far from having the good taste of the courage which also lets this be known, whether to warn an enemy or friend, or, from exuberance, to mock itself.

The equally stiff and decorous Tartuffery of the old Kant as he lures us on the dialectical bypaths that lead to his "categorical imperative"—really lead astray and seduce—this spectacle makes us smile, as we are fastidious and find it quite amusing to watch closely the subtle tricks of old moralists and preachers of morals. Or consider the hocus-pocus of mathematical form with which Spinoza clad his philosophy—really "the love of *his* wisdom," to render that word fairly and squarely—in mail and mask, to strike terror at the very outset into the heart of any assailant who should dare to glance at that invincible maiden and Pallas Athena: how much personal timidity and vulnerability this masquerade of a sick hermit betrays!

6

Gradually it has become clear to me what every great philosophy so far has been: namely, the personal confession of its author and a kind of involuntary and unconscious memoir; also that the moral (or immoral) intentions in every philosophy constituted the real germ of life from which the whole plant had grown.

Indeed, if one would explain how the abstrusest metaphysical claims of a philosopher really came about, it is always well (and wise) to ask first: at what morality does all this (does *he*) aim? Accordingly, I do not believe that a "drive to knowledge" is the father of philosophy; but rather that another drive has, here as elsewhere, employed understanding (and misunderstanding) as a mere instrument. But anyone who considers the basic drives of man to see to what extent they may have been at play just here as *inspiring* spirits (or demons and kobolds) will find that all of them have done philosophy at some time—and that every single one of them would like only too well to represent just *itself* as the ultimate purpose of existence and the legitimate *master* of all the other

drives. For every drive wants to be master—and it attempts to philosophize in *that spirit*.

To be sure: among scholars who are really scientific men, things may be different—"better," if you like—there you may really find something like a drive for knowledge, some small, independent clockwork that, once well wound, works on vigorously *without* any essential participation from all the other drives of the scholar. The real "interests" of the scholar therefore lie usually somewhere else—say, in his family, or in making money, or in politics. Indeed, it is almost a matter of total indifference whether his little machine is placed at this or that spot in science, and whether the "promising" young worker turns himself into a good philologist or an expert on fungi or a chemist: it does not *characterize* him that he becomes this or that. In the philosopher, conversely, there is nothing whatever that is impersonal;⁷ and above all, his morality bears decided and decisive witness to *who he is*—that is, in what order of rank the innermost drives of his nature stand in relation to each other.

7

How malicious philosophers can be! I know of nothing more venomous than the joke Epicurus permitted himself against Plato and the Platonists; he called them *Dionysiokolakes*. That means literally—and this is the foreground meaning—"flatterers of Dionysius," in other words, tyrant's baggage and lickspittles; but in addition to this he also wants to say, "they are all *actors*, there is nothing genuine about them" (for *Dionysokolax* was a popular name for an actor).⁸ And the latter is really the malice that Epicurus aimed at Plato: he was peeved by the grandiose manner, the *mise en scène*⁹ at which Plato and his disciples were so expert—at

⁷ Nietzsche is thinking of the "great" philosophers. Now that there are literally thousands of "philosophers," these tend to be more akin to their colleagues in other departments than to the men discussed here.

⁸ The reference is to Epicurus' fragment 238, and the ambiguity is due to the fact that Dionysius was the name of the Sicilian tyrant whom Plato had tried for several years to convert to his own philosophy.

⁹ Staging.

which Epicurus was not an expert—he, that old schoolmaster from Samos, who sat, hidden away, in his little garden at Athens and wrote three hundred books—who knows? perhaps from rage and ambition against Plato?

It took a hundred years until Greece found out who this garden god, Epicurus, had been.— Did they find out?—

8

There is a point in every philosophy when the philosopher's "conviction" appears on the stage—or to use the language of an ancient Mystery:

*Adventavit asinus,
Pulcher et fortissimus.*¹⁰

9

"According to nature" you want to *live*? O you noble Stoics, what deceptive words these are! Imagine a being like nature, wasteful beyond measure, indifferent beyond measure, without purposes and consideration, without mercy and justice, fertile and desolate and uncertain at the same time; imagine indifference itself as a power—how *could* you live according to this indifference? Living—is that not precisely wanting to be other than this nature? Is not living—estimating, preferring, being unjust, being limited, wanting to be different? And supposing your imperative "live according to nature" meant at bottom as much as "live according to life"—how could you *not* do that? Why make a principle of what you yourselves are and must be?

In truth, the matter is altogether different: while you pretend rapturously to read the canon of your law in nature, you want something opposite, you strange actors and self-deceivers! Your pride wants to impose your morality, your ideal, on nature—even on nature—and incorporate them in her; you demand that she should be nature "according to the Stoa," and you would like all

¹⁰ "The ass arrived, beautiful and most brave."

existence to exist only after your own image—as an immense eternal glorification and generalization of Stoicism. For all your love of truth, you have forced yourselves so long, so persistently, so rigidly-hypnotically to see nature the wrong way, namely Stoically, that you are no longer able to see her differently. And some abysmal arrogance finally still inspires you with the insane hope that *because* you know how to tyrannize yourselves—Stoicism is self-tyranny—nature, too, lets herself be tyrannized: is not the Stoic—a *piece* of nature?

But this is an ancient, eternal story: what formerly happened with the Stoics still happens today, too, as soon as any philosophy begins to believe in itself. It always creates the world in its own image; it cannot do otherwise. Philosophy is this tyrannical drive itself, the most spiritual will to power, to the “creation of the world,” to the *causa prima*.¹¹

10

The eagerness and subtlety—I might even say, shrewdness—with which the problem of “the real and the apparent world” is today attacked all over Europe makes one think and wonder; and anyone who hears nothing in the background except a “will to truth,” certainly does not have the best of ears. In rare and isolated instances it may really be the case that such a will to truth, some extravagant and adventurous courage, a metaphysician’s ambition to hold a hopeless position, may participate and ultimately prefer even a handful of “certainty” to a whole carload of beautiful possibilities; there may actually be puritanical fanatics of conscience who prefer even a certain nothing to an uncertain something to lie down on—and die. But this is nihilism and the sign of a despairing, mortally weary soul—however courageous the gestures of such a virtue may look.

It seems, however, to be otherwise with stronger and livelier thinkers who are still eager for life. When they side *against* appearance, and speak of “perspective,” with a new arrogance; when they

¹¹ First cause.

Philosophy

Beyond Good and Evil is one of the most remarkable and influential books of the nineteenth century. Like *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, which had immediately preceded it, *Beyond Good and Evil* represents Nietzsche's attempt to sum up his philosophy—but in less flamboyant and more systematic form. The nine parts of the book are designed to give the reader a comprehensive idea of Nietzsche's thought and style: they span "The Prejudices of Philosophers," "The Free Spirit," religion, morals, scholarship, "Our Virtues," "Peoples and Fatherlands," and "What is Noble," as well as a chapter of epigrams and a concluding poem.

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