

**Hannah Arendt**

**The Life  
of the Mind**

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reached its climax together with its end. I did not want to cross the "rainbow-bridge of concepts," perhaps because I am not homesick enough, in any event because I do not believe in a world, be it a past world or a future world, in which man's mind, equipped for withdrawing from the world of appearances, could or should ever be comfortably at home. Moreover, at least in the cases of Nietzsche and Heidegger, it was precisely a confrontation with the Will as a human faculty and not as an ontological category that prompted them first to repudiate the faculty and *then* turn about to put their confidence in this ghostly home of personified concepts which so obviously was "built" and decorated by the thinking, as opposed to the willing, ego.

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In my discussion of the Will I have repeatedly mentioned two altogether different ways of understanding the faculty: as a faculty of *choice* between objects or goals, the *liberum arbitrium*, which acts as arbiter between given ends and deliberates freely about means to reach them; and, on the other hand, as our "faculty for beginning spontaneously a series in time" (Kant)<sup>17</sup> or Augustine's "*initium ut esset homo creatus est*," man's capacity for beginning because he himself is a beginning. With the modern age's concept of Progress and its inherent shift from understanding the future as that which approaches us to that which we determine by the Will's projects, the instigating power of the Will was bound to come to the foreground. And so indeed it did, as far as we can tell from the common opinion of the time.

On the other hand, nothing is more characteristic of the beginnings of what we now call "existentialism" than the absence of any such optimistic overtones. According to Nietzsche, only "lack of historical sense," a lack that for him is "the original error of all philosophers,"<sup>18</sup> can explain that optimism: "Let us not be deceived! Time marches forward; we'd like to believe that everything that is in it also marches forward—that

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the development is one that moves forward." And as to Progress' correlate, the idea of mankind: "'Mankind' does not advance; it does not even exist."<sup>19</sup>

In other words, though the universal suspicion at the beginning of the modern age had been powerfully neutralized, held in check, first by the very notion of Progress and then by its seeming embodiment and apogee in the French Revolution, this had proved to be only a delaying action, whose force eventually exhausted itself. If one wants to look on this development historically, one can only say that Nietzsche's thought-experiments—"such an experimental philosophy as I live anticipates experimentally even the possibilities of the most fundamental nihilism"<sup>20</sup>—at last completed what had begun with Descartes and Pascal in the seventeenth century.

Men, forever tempted to lift the veil of the future—with the aid of computers or horoscopes or the intestines of sacrificial animals—have a worse record to show in these "sciences" than in almost any other scientific endeavor. Still, if it were a matter of honest competition between futurologists in respect to our own time, the prize might well go to John Donne, a poet without any scientific ambitions, who in 1611 wrote in immediate reaction to what he knew was going on in the sciences (which for a long time would still be operating under the name of "natural philosophy"). He did not have to wait for Descartes, or Pascal, to draw all the conclusions from what he perceived.

And new Philosophy calls all in doubt,  
The Element of fire is quite put out;  
The Sun is lost and th'earth, and no mans wit  
Can well direct him where to looke for it. . . .  
'Tis all in pieces, all cohaerence gone;  
All just supply, and all Relation:  
Prince, Subject, Father, Sonne, are things forgot. . . .

And he ends with lamentations that needed roughly three hundred years to be heard again: "when thou knowst this, Thou knowst how ugly a monster . . . how wan a Ghost . . . how drie a Cinder this world is."<sup>21</sup>

It is against this historical background that we shall have

to consider the last two thinkers still close enough to the West's philosophical heritage to recognize in the Will one of the mind's important faculties. We start with Nietzsche and remember that he never wrote any book with the title "Will to Power," that the collection of fragments, notes, and aphorisms bearing this title was published posthumously, selected from a chaos of unconnected and often contradictory sayings. Each one of them is what all Nietzsche's mature writings actually are, namely, a thought-experiment, a literary genre surprisingly rare in our recorded history. The most obvious analogy is Pascal's *Pensées*, which share with Nietzsche's *Will to Power* a haphazardness of arrangement that has led later editors to try to *rearrange* them, with the rather annoying result that the reader has a good deal of trouble identifying and dating them.

We shall consider first a number of simple descriptive statements without metaphysical or general philosophical connotations. Most of them will sound rather familiar, but it will be better not to jump to the conclusion that we may be confronted here with bookish influences. To draw such inferences is especially tempting in the case of Heidegger because of his profound knowledge of medieval philosophy, on the one hand, and his insistence on the primacy of the future tense in *Being and Time* (which I have already spoken of), on the other. It is all the more noteworthy that in his discussion of the Will, which chiefly takes the form of an interpretation of Nietzsche, he nowhere mentions Augustine's discoveries in the *Confessions*. Hence what will sound familiar in the following is best ascribed to the peculiar characteristics of the willing faculty; even Schopenhauer's influence on the young Nietzsche we may disregard without great scruples. Nietzsche knew that "Schopenhauer spoke of the 'will'; but nothing is more characteristic of his philosophy than the absence of all genuine willing,"<sup>22</sup> and he saw correctly that the reason for this lay in a "basic misunderstanding of the *will* (as if craving, instinct, drive were the *essence* of the will)" whereas "the will is precisely that which treats cravings as their master and appoints to them their way and measure."<sup>23</sup>

For "to will is not the same as to desire, to strive for, to want: from all these it is distinguished through the element of

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Command. . . . That something is commanded, this is inherent in willing."<sup>24</sup> Heidegger comments: "No characteristic phrase occurs more frequently in Nietzsche than . . . to will is to command; inherent in Will is the commanding thought."<sup>25</sup> It is no less characteristic that this commanding thought is directed only very rarely toward dominating others: command and obedience both occur in the mind—in a fashion strangely similar to Augustine's conception, of which Nietzsche certainly knew nothing.

He explains at some length in *Beyond Good and Evil*:

Somebody who wills gives orders to something *in* him that obeys. . . . The strangest aspect of this multiple phenomenon we call 'Will' is that we have but one word for it, and especially only one word for the fact that *we are in every given case at the same time those who issue the orders and those who obey them*; insofar as we obey, we experience the feelings of coercion, urging, pressing, resisting, which usually begin to manifest themselves immediately after the act of willing; insofar however . . . as we are in command . . . we experience a sensation of pleasure, and this all the more strongly as we are used to overcoming the dichotomy through the notion of the I, the Ego, and this in such a way that we take the obedience in ourselves for granted and therefore identify willing and performing, willing and acting [*italics added*].

This willing operation existing only in our minds overcomes the mental duality of the two-in-one that has become a battle between one who commands and one who is supposed to obey by identifying the "I" as a whole with the commanding part and anticipating that the other, the resisting part, will obey and do as it is told. "What is called 'freedom of the will' is essentially a passionate superiority toward a someone who must obey. 'I am free; "he" must obey'—the consciousness of this is the very willing."<sup>26</sup>

We would not expect Nietzsche to believe in divine grace as the healing power for the Will's duality. What is unexpected in the above description is that he detected in the "consciousness" of the struggle a kind of trick of the "I" that enables it to escape the conflict by identifying itself with the commanding part and to overlook, as it were, the unpleasant, paralyzing sentiments of being coerced and hence always on the point of

resisting. Nietzsche often denounces this feeling of superiority as an illusion, albeit a wholesome one. In other passages, he accounts for the "strangeness" of the whole phenomenon by calling it an "oscillation [of the will] between yes and no," but he sticks to the feeling of the "I" 's superiority by identifying the oscillation with a kind of swinging from pleasure to pain. The pleasure, different in this as in other respects from Scotus' *delectatio*, is clearly the anticipated joy of the I-can inherent in the willing act itself, independent of performance, of the triumphal feeling we all know when we perform well, regardless of praise or audience. In Nietzsche, the point is that he numbers the negative slave-feelings of being coerced and of resisting or resenting among the necessary obstacles without which the Will would not even know its own power. Only by surmounting an inner resistance does the Will become aware of its genesis: it did not spring up to obtain power; power is its very source. Again in *Beyond Good and Evil*: "'Freedom of the will' is the word for that manifold pleasurable condition of the willer *who is in command and at the same time* considers himself as one with the executor of the command—as such enjoying the triumph over the resistance, but possessed of the judgment that it is his will itself that is overcoming the resistance. In this fashion the willer adds the pleasurable feelings of executing . . . to his pleasurable feeling as Commander."<sup>27</sup>

This description, which takes the two-in-one of the Will, the resisting "I" and the triumphant "I," to be the source of the Will's power, owes its plausibility to the unexpected introduction of the pain-pleasure principle into the discussion: "to posit pleasure and displeasure as cardinal facts."<sup>28</sup> Just as the mere absence of pain can never cause pleasure, so the Will, if it did not have to overcome resistance, could never achieve power. Here, unwittingly following the ancient hedonist philosophies rather than the contemporary pleasure-pain calculus, Nietzsche relies in his description on the experience of *release* from pain—not on the mere absence of pain or the mere presence of pleasure. The intensity of the sensation of release is only matched by the intensity of the sensation of pain and is always greater than any pleasure unrelated to pain. The plea-



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sure of drinking the most exquisite wine cannot be compared in intensity with the pleasure felt by a desperately thirsty man who obtains his first drink of water. In this sense there is a clear distinction between joy, independent of and unrelated to needs and desires, and pleasure, the sensuous lust of a creature whose body is alive to the extent that it is in need of something it does not have.

Joy, it seems, can only be experienced if one is wholly free of pain and desire; that is, it stands outside the pain-pleasure calculus, which Nietzsche despised because of its inbred utilitarianism. Joy—what Nietzsche called the Dionysian principle—comes from *abundance*, and it is true that all joy is a kind of luxury; it overcomes us, and we can indulge in it only after the needs of life have been satisfied. But this is not to deny the sensuous element in joy as well; abundance is still *life's* abundance, and the Dionysian principle in its sensuous lust turns to destruction precisely because abundance can afford destruction. In this respect is not the Will in the closest possible affinity with the life-principle, which constantly produces and destroys? Hence Nietzsche defines the Dionysian as “temporary identification with the principle of life (including the voluptuousness of the martyr),” as “Joy in the destruction . . . and at the sight of its progressive ruin . . . Joy in what is coming and lies in the future, which triumphs over existing things, however good.”<sup>29</sup>

The Nietzschean shift from the I-will to the anticipated I-can, which negates the Paulinian I-will-and-I-cannot and thereby all Christian ethics, is based on an unqualified Yes to Life, that is, on an elevation of Life as experienced outside all mental activities to the rank of supreme value by which everything else is to be evaluated. This is possible and plausible because there is indeed an I-can inherent in every I-will, as we saw in our discussion of Duns Scotus: “*Voluntas est potentia quia ipsa aliquid potest*” (“The Will is a power because it can achieve something”).<sup>30</sup> The Nietzschean Will, however, is not limited by its own inherent I-can; for instance, it can will eternity, and Nietzsche looks forward to a future that will produce the “superman,” that is, a new human species strong

enough to live in the thought of an "eternal recurrence." "We produced the weightiest thought—now let us produce the being to whom it will be easy and blessed! . . . To celebrate the future, not the past. To sing [*dichten*] the myth of the future."<sup>31</sup>

Life as the highest value cannot, of course, be demonstrated; it is a mere hypothesis, the assumption made by common sense that the will is free because without that assumption—as has been said over and over—no precept of a moral, religious, or juridical nature could possibly make sense. It is contradicted by the "scientific hypothesis" according to which—as Kant, notably, pointed out—every act, the moment it enters the world, falls into a network of causes, and thus appears in a sequence of occurrences explicable only in the context of causality. For Nietzsche, it is decisive that the common-sense hypothesis constitutes a "dominant sentiment from which we cannot liberate ourselves even if the scientific hypothesis were demonstrated."<sup>32</sup> But the identification of willing with living, the notion that our urge to live and our will to will are ultimately the same, has other and perhaps more serious consequences for Nietzsche's concept of power.

This may become clear when we turn to two leading metaphors in *The Gay Science*, one having to do with life and the other introducing the theme of "Eternal Recurrence"—the "basic idea of Zarathustra," as he called it in *Ecce Homo*, and the basic idea also of the posthumous aphorisms collected under the misleading, non-Nietzschean title *The Will to Power*. The first appears under the title "Will and Wave" (*Wille und Welle*):

How greedily this wave approaches, as if it were after something! How it crawls with terrifying haste into the inmost nooks of this labyrinthine cliff! . . . it seems that something of value, high value, must be hidden there.—And now it comes back, a little more slowly but still quite white with excitement; is it disappointed? Has it found what it looked for? Does it pretend to be disappointed?—But already another wave is approaching, still more greedily and savagely than the first, and its soul, too, seems to be full of secrets and the lust to dig up treasures. *Thus live waves—thus live we who will.* . . . Carry on as you like, roaring with

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overweening pleasure and malice—or dive again . . . and throw your infinite white mane of foam and spray over them: Everything suits me, for everything suits you so well, and *I am so well disposed toward you for everything*. . . . For . . . I know you and your secret, I know your kind! You and I—are we not of one kind?—You and I—do we not have one secret? [Italics added.]<sup>33</sup>

Here at first it seems as though we were dealing with a perfect metaphor, a “perfect resemblance of two relations between totally dissimilar things.”<sup>34</sup> The relation of the waves to the sea from which they erupt without intent or aim, creating a tremendous purposeless excitement, resembles and therefore illuminates the turmoil the Will excites in the household of the soul—always seemingly in quest of something till it quiets down, yet never extinguished, always ready for a new assault. The Will enjoys willing as the sea enjoys waves, for “rather than not will, man even wills *nothingness*.”<sup>35</sup> Upon closer examination, however, it appears that something quite decisive has happened here to what was originally a typically Homeric metaphor. Those metaphors, we saw, were always irreversible: Looking upon the storms of the sea, you were reminded of your inward emotions; but those emotions did not tell you anything about the sea. In the Nietzschean metaphor, the two dissimilar things the metaphor is bringing together not only resemble each other, for Nietzsche they are identical; and the “secret” of which he is so proud is precisely his knowledge of this identity. Will and Wave are the same, and one is even tempted to assume that the experiences of the willing ego had made Nietzsche discover the turmoil of the sea.

In other words, the appearances of the world have become a mere *symbol* for inward experiences, with the consequence that the metaphor, originally designed to bridge the rift between the thinking or willing ego and the world of appearances, collapses. The collapse has come about not because of a superior weight given to the “objects” that confront human life but, rather, because of a partisanship for man’s soul apparatus, whose experiences are understood to have absolute primacy. There are many passages in Nietzsche that point to this fundamental anthropomorphism. To cite only one example: “All the presuppositions of mechanistic theory [in Nietzsche identical

with the "scientific hypothesis"]—matter, atom, gravity, pressure and stress—are not 'facts-in-themselves' but interpretations with the aid of psychical fictions."<sup>36</sup> Modern science has come to strangely similar suspicions in its speculative reflections on its own results: today's "astrophysicists . . . must reckon with . . . the possibility that their outer world is only our inner world turned inside out" (Lewis Mumford).

We now turn to our second story, which is actually not a metaphor or a symbol but a *parable*, the story of a thought-experiment that Nietzsche entitled "*Das grösste Schwergewicht*," the thought that would weigh most heavily on you.

What, if some day or night a demon were to steal after you into your loneliest loneliness and say to you: "This life as you now live it, you will have to live once more and innumerable times more; and there will be nothing new in it, but every pain and every joy and every thought and sigh and everything unutterably small or great in your life will have to return to you, all in the same succession and sequence—even this spider and this moonlight between the trees, and even this moment and I myself. The eternal hourglass of existence is turned upside down again and again, and you with it, speck of dust!"

Would you not throw yourself down and gnash your teeth and curse the demon who spoke thus? Or have you once experienced a tremendous moment when you would have answered him: "You are a god and never have I heard anything more divine." If this thought gained possession of you, it would change you as you are or perhaps crush you. The question in each and every thing, "Do you desire this once more and innumerable times more?" would lie upon your actions as the greatest weight. *Or how well disposed would you have to become to yourself and to life to crave nothing more fervently than this ultimate eternal confirmation and seal?* [Italics added.]<sup>37</sup>

No later version of the eternal-recurrence notion displays so unequivocally its main characteristic, namely, that it is not a theory, not a doctrine, not even a hypothesis, but a mere thought-experiment. As such, since it implies an experimental return to the ancient cyclical time concept, it seems to be in flagrant contradiction with any possible notion of the Will, whose projects always assume rectilinear time and a future that is unknown and therefore open to change. In the context

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of Nietzsche's own statements on the Will, and the shift he postulated from the I-will to an anticipated I-can, the only affinity between the two stories would seem to lie in the "tremendous moment" of overflowing "benevolence"—the being "well disposed to" Life—that obviously gave birth in each case to the thought.

If we see it in terms of his notion of the Will, this would be the moment when the I-can feeling is at its peak and spreads a general "feeling of strength" (*Kraftgefühl*). That emotion, as Nietzsche observes, often arises in us "even before the deed, occasioned by the idea of what is to be done (as at the sight of an enemy or an obstacle to which we feel ourselves equal)." To the operating will this emotion is of little consequence; it is "always an accompanying feeling," to which we wrongly ascribe the "force of action," the quality of a causative agent. "Our belief in causality is belief in force and effect; a transference from our experience [in which] we identify force and the feeling of force."<sup>38</sup> Hume's famous discovery that the relation between cause and effect rests on belief engendered by custom and association, and not on knowledge, was made afresh, and in many variations, by Nietzsche, who was unaware of having had a predecessor.

His own examination is more searching and more critical because, in the place of Hume's utility calculus and his "moral sentiment," he puts the experience of an I-will which is followed by an effect, that is, he uses the fact that man is conscious of himself as a causative agent even before he has done anything. But Nietzsche does not believe that this renders the Will less irrelevant; for Nietzsche as well as for Hume, free will is an illusion inherent in human nature, an illusion which philosophy, a critical examination of our faculties, will cure us of. Except that for Nietzsche the moral consequences of the cure are decidedly more serious.

If we can no longer ascribe "the value of an action . . . to the *intention*, the purpose for the sake of which one has acted or lived . . . [if] the absence of intention and purpose in events comes more and more to the foreground of consciousness," the conclusion seems inevitable that "Nothing has any meaning," for "this melancholy sentence means 'All meaning

lies in intention, and if intention is altogether lacking, then meaning is altogether lacking too.'” Hence: “Why could ‘a purpose’ not be an epiphenomenon in the series of changes of effective forces that bring forth purposive action—a pale image in our consciousness . . . a symptom of occurrences, *not* their cause?—But with this we have criticized the *will itself*: is it not an illusion to take for a cause that which rises to consciousness as an act of will?” (Italics added.)<sup>39</sup>

The fact that this passage is contemporaneous with the passages about “Eternal Recurrence” justifies us in asking whether and how these two thoughts can be, if not reconciled, at any rate conceived in such a way that they will not clash head on with each other. Let us first comment very briefly on the few important non-speculative but, rather, descriptive statements made by Nietzsche on the Will.

There is, first—what seems obvious but had never been pointed out before—that “the Will cannot will backward”; it cannot stop the wheel of time. This is Nietzsche’s version of the I-will-and-I-cannot, for it is precisely this willing-backward that the Will wills and intends. From that impotence Nietzsche derives all human evil—resentment, the thirst for vengeance (we punish because we cannot undo what has been done), the thirst for the power to dominate others. To this “genealogy of morals,” we could add that the Will’s impotence persuades men to prefer looking backward, remembering and thinking, because, to the backward glance, everything that is *appears* to be necessary. The repudiation of willing liberates man from a responsibility that would be unbearable if nothing that was done could be undone. In any case, it was probably the Will’s clash with the past that made Nietzsche experiment with Eternal Recurrence.

Second, the concept “will-to-power” is redundant: the Will generates power by willing, hence the will whose objective is humility is no less powerful than the will to rule over others. The willing act itself is already an act of potency, an indication of strength (the “feeling of strength,” *Kraftgefühl*) that goes beyond what is required to meet the needs and demands of everyday life. If there is a simple contradiction in Nietzsche’s thought-experiments, it is the contradiction between the Will’s



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factual impotence—it wills but cannot will backward—and this feeling of strength.

Third, the Will—whether it wills backward and senses its impotence or wills forward and senses its strength—transcends the sheer givenness of the world. This transcendence is gratuitous and corresponds to the overwhelming superabundance of Life. Hence the Will's authentic goal is abundance: "By the words 'freedom of the Will' we signify this feeling of a surplus of strength," and the feeling is more than a mere illusion of consciousness because it does correspond with the superabundance of life itself. Hence one could understand all of Life as a Will-to-power. "Only where there is life is there also will: not will to life but . . . will to power."<sup>40</sup> For one could very well explain "nourishment" as the "consequence of insatiable appropriation, of the will to power, [and] 'procreation' [as] the crumbling that supervenes when the ruling cells are incapable of organizing that which has been appropriated."<sup>41</sup>

This transcending, which is inherent in willing, Nietzsche calls "Overcoming." It is possible because of abundance: the activity itself is seen as creativity, and the "virtue" that corresponds to this whole complex of ideas is Generosity—the overcoming of the thirst for vengeance. It is the extravagance and "recklessness [*Übermut*] of an overflowing, spendthrift will" that opens up a future beyond all past and present. *Surplus*, according to Nietzsche as well as to Marx (the sheer fact of a surplus of labor force left over after the requirements for the preservation of individual life and of species survival have been met), constitutes the *conditio-per-quam* of all culture. The so-called superman is man insofar as he is able to transcend, "overcome," himself. But this overcoming, we should not forget, is a merely mental exercise: to "recreate all 'it was' into a 'thus I willed it'—that alone should I call redemption."<sup>42</sup> For "Man seeks . . . a world that is not self-contradictory, not deceptive, does not change, a *true* world. . . ." Man, as he is now when he is honest, is a nihilist, namely, "a man who judges of the world as it is that it ought *not* to be, and of the world as it ought to be that it does not exist. . . . [To overcome nihilism one needs] the strength to reverse values and to

deify . . . the apparent world as the only world, and to call them good."<sup>43</sup>

Clearly, what is needful is not to change the world or men but to change their way of "evaluating" it, their way, in other words, of thinking and reflecting about it. In Nietzsche's words, what must be overcome are the philosophers, those whose "life is an experiment of cognition";<sup>44</sup> they must be taught how to cope. Had Nietzsche developed these thoughts into a systematic philosophy, he would have fashioned a kind of greatly enriched Epictetian doctrine, teaching once more the "art of living one's own life," whose psychologically powerful trick consists in *willing* that to happen which happens anyhow.<sup>45</sup>

But the point is that Nietzsche, who knew and estimated Epictetus very highly, did not stop with the discovery of the Will's mental omnipotence. He embarked on a construction of the given world that would make sense, be a fitting abode for a creature whose "strength of will [is great enough] to do without meaning in things . . . [who] can endure to live in a meaningless world."<sup>46</sup> "Eternal Recurrence" is the term for this final redeeming thought inasmuch as it proclaims the "Innocence of all Becoming" (*die Unschuld des Werdens*) and with that its inherent aimlessness and purposelessness, its freedom from guilt and responsibility.

"Innocence of Becoming" and "Eternal Recurrence" are not drawn from a mental faculty; they are rooted in the indisputable *fact* that we indeed are "thrown" into the world (Heidegger), that no one has asked us if we wished to be here or wished to be as we are. For all we know or can ever know, "no one is responsible for man's being there at all, for his being such-and-such, or for his being in these circumstances or in this environment." Hence, the basic insight into the essence of Being is "that *there are no moral facts* at all," an insight Nietzsche, as he said, "was the first to formulate." Its consequences are very great, not only because Christianity and its concept of a "'moral world-order' infects the innocence of becoming by means of 'punishment' and 'guilt' [and therefore can be seen as] a metaphysics of the hangman," but because, with the elimination of intent and purpose, of somebody who can "be



held responsible," causality itself is eliminated; nothing can be "traced back" to a cause once the "*causa prima*" is eliminated.<sup>47</sup>

With the elimination of cause and effect, there is no longer any sense in the rectilinear structure of Time whose past is always understood as the cause of the present, whose present is the tense of intention and preparation of our projects for the future, and whose future is the outcome of both. Besides, that time construct crumbles under the weight of the no less factual insight that "Everything passes," that the future brings only what *will have been*, and therefore that everything that is "deserves to pass away."<sup>48</sup> Just as every I-will, in its identification with the commanding part of the two-in-one, triumphantly anticipates an I-can, so expectation, the mood with which the Will affects the soul, contains within itself the melancholy of an *and-this-too-will-have-been*, the foreseeing of the future's past, which reasserts the Past as the dominant tense of Time. The only redemption from this all-devouring Past is the thought that everything that passes returns, that is, a cyclical time construct that makes Being swing within itself.

And is not Life itself construed so, does not one day follow upon the next, season succeed season by repeating itself in eternal sameness? Is not this world view much "truer" to reality as we know it than the world view of the philosophers? "If the motion of the world aimed at a final state, that state would have been reached. The sole fundamental fact, however, is that it does not aim at a final state; and every philosophy and scientific hypothesis . . . which necessitates such a final state is *refuted* by this fundamental fact. I seek a conception of the world that takes this fact into account. Becoming must be explained without recourse to final intentions; Becoming must appear justified at every moment (or incapable of being evaluated; which amounts to the same thing); the present must absolutely not be justified by reference to a future, nor the past by reference to the present. . . ." Nietzsche then summarizes: "1. Becoming does not aim at a *final state*, does not flow into 'being.' 2. Becoming is not a merely *apparent state*; perhaps the world of beings is mere appearance. 3. Becoming is of [equal value at] every moment . . . in other words, it has no value at all, for anything against which to measure

it . . . is lacking. *The total value of the world cannot be evaluated.*"<sup>49</sup>

In the turmoil of aphorisms, remarks, and thought-experiments that constitute the posthumous collection entitled *The Will to Power* the importance of this last passage, which I have quoted at some length, is difficult to spot. Judging by internal evidence, I am inclined to think of it as Nietzsche's last word on the subject; and this last word clearly spells a repudiation of the Will and the willing ego, whose internal experiences have misled thinking men into assuming that there are such things as cause and effect, intention and goal, in reality. The superman is one who has overcome these fallacies, whose insights are strong enough either to resist the promptings of the Will or to turn his own will around, redeem it from all oscillations, quiet it to that stillness where "looking away" is "the only negation,"<sup>50</sup> because nothing is left but the "wish to be a Yes-sayer," to bless everything there is for being, "to bless and say Amen."<sup>51</sup>

### 15 *Heidegger's Will-not-to-will*

Neither the word "willing" nor the word "thinking" occurs in Heidegger's early work before the so-called reversal (*Kehre*) or "turn-about" that took place in the mid-thirties; and Nietzsche's name is nowhere mentioned in *Being and Time*.<sup>52</sup> Hence Heidegger's position on the faculty of the Will, culminating in his passionate insistence on willing "not to will"—which of course has nothing to do with the Will's oscillation between *velle* and *nolle*, willing and nilling—arises directly from his extremely careful investigation of Nietzsche's work, to which, after 1940, he returns time and again. Still, the two volumes of his *Nietzsche*, which were published in 1961, are in certain respects the most telling; they contain lecture courses from the years 1936 to 1940, that is, the very years when the "reversal" actually occurred and therefore had not yet been subjected to Heidegger's own interpretations. If in reading these two volumes one ignores Heidegger's later re-interpretation (which came out before the *Nietzsche*), one is tempted to

11. *Ibid.*, Third Thesis. Author's translation.
12. Schelling, *Of Human Freedom*, p. 351.
13. *Ibid.*, p. 350.
14. Trans. F. D. Wieck and J. G. Gray, New York, Evanston, London, 1968, p. 91.
15. *Vorträge und Aufsätze*, p. 89.
16. *The Will to Power*, no. 419, pp. 225–226.
17. *Critique of Pure Reason*, B478.
18. *Human All Too Human*, no. 2, in *The Portable Nietzsche*, p. 51.
19. *The Will to Power*, no. 90, p. 55.
20. *Ibid.*, no. 1041, p. 536.
21. "An Anatomy of the World; The First Anniversary."
22. *The Will to Power*, no. 95, p. 59.
23. *Ibid.*, no. 84, p. 52.
24. *Ibid.*, no. 668, p. 353. Author's translation.
25. *Nietzsche*, vol. I, p. 70.
26. No. 19.
27. *Ibid.* Italics added.
28. *The Will to Power*, no. 693, p. 369.
29. *Ibid.*, no. 417, p. 224.
30. See chap. III, p. 142.
31. In *Aufzeichnung zum IV, Teil von "Also Sprach Zarathustra,"* quoted from Heidegger, *Was Heisst Denken?*, p. 46.
32. *The Will to Power*, no. 667, p. 352. Author's translation.
33. *The Gay Science*, trans. Walter Kaufmann, Vintage Books, New York, 1974, bk. IV, no. 310, pp. 247–248.
34. See *Thinking*, chap. II, pp. 98–110.
35. *Toward a Genealogy of Morals*, no. 28.
36. *The Will to Power*, no. 689, p. 368.
37. *The Gay Science*, bk. IV, no. 341, pp. 273–274.
38. *The Will to Power*, no. 664, p. 350.
39. *Ibid.*, no. 666, pp. 351–352. Author's translation.
40. *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, pt. II, "On Self-Overcoming," in *The Portable Nietzsche*, p. 227.
41. *The Will to Power*, no. 660, p. 349.
42. *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, pt. II, "On Redemption," in *The Portable Nietzsche*, p. 251.
43. *The Will to Power*, no. 585 A, pp. 316–319.
44. *The Gay Science*, bk. IV, no. 324. Author's translation.
45. See chap. II, pp. 73–84.
46. *The Will to Power*, no. 585 A, p. 318.

## Notes to pages 171–177

47. See *Twilight of the Idols*, especially "The Four Great Errors," in *The Portable Nietzsche*, pp. 500–501.
48. *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, pt. II, in *The Portable Nietzsche*, p. 252.
49. *The Will to Power*, no. 708, pp. 377–378.
50. *The Gay Science*, bk. IV, no. 276, p. 223.
51. *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, pt. III, "Before Sunrise," also "The Seven Seals (or: The Yes and Amen Song)," in *The Portable Nietzsche*, pp. 276–279 and 340–343.
52. See the excellent *Index* to Heidegger's whole work up to and including *Wegmarken* (1968) by Hildegard Feick, 2nd ed., Tübingen, 1968. Under "Wille Wollen," the *Index* refers the reader to "Sorge, Subjekt" and quotes one sentence from *Sein und Zeit*: "Wollen und Wünschen sind im Dasein als Sorge verwurzelt." I have mentioned that the modern emphasis on the future as the predominant tense showed itself in Heidegger's singling out Care as the dominating existential in his early analyses of human existence. If one rereads the corresponding sections in *Sein und Zeit* (especially no. 41), it is evident that he later used certain characteristics of Care for his analysis of the Will.
53. New York, 1971, p. 112.
54. First edition, Frankfurt, 1949, p. 17.
55. *Die Selbstbehauptung der deutschen Universität* (The Self-Assertion of the German University).
56. Mehta, *op. cit.*, p. 43.
57. "Brief über den 'Humanismus,'" *Platons Lehre von der Wahrheit*, Bern, 1947, p. 57; translation quoted from Mehta, *op. cit.*, p. 114.
58. "Brief über den 'Humanismus,'" p. 47.
59. Vol. II, p. 468.
60. "Brief über den 'Humanismus,'" p. 53; translation quoted from Mehta, *op. cit.*, p. 114.
61. "Brief über den 'Humanismus,'" pp. 46–47.
62. *Nietzsche*, vol. I, p. 624.
63. *The Will to Power*, no. 708. Author's translation.
64. *Nietzsche*, vol. II, p. 272. In Mehta, *op. cit.*, p. 179.
65. *Nietzsche*, vol. I, pp. 63–64.
66. *Ibid.*, p. 161.
67. *Ibid.*, vol. II, p. 462.
68. *Ibid.*, p. 265.
69. *Ibid.*, p. 267.

FRIEDRICH NIETZSCHE

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*Beyond Good and Evil*  
*Prelude to a Philosophy of the Future*

EDITED BY

ROLF-PETER HORSTMANN

*Humboldt-Universität, Berlin*

JUDITH NORMAN

*Trinity University, Texas*

TRANSLATED BY

JUDITH NORMAN



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

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

19

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

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

<sup>18</sup> The effect is I.



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

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

FRIEDRICH NIETZSCHE

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*The Gay Science*

*With a Prelude in German Rhymes  
and an Appendix of Songs*

EDITED BY

BERNARD WILLIAMS

*All Souls College, Oxford*

TRANSLATED BY

JOSEFINE NAUCKHOFF

*Wake Forest University*

POEMS TRANSLATED BY

ADRIAN DEL CARO

*University of Colorado at Boulder*



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*Will and wave.* – How greedily this wave is approaching, as if it were trying to reach something! How it crawls with terrifying haste into the inmost crevices of the craggy gorge! It seems to be trying to arrive before someone else; something of value, of great value, seems to be hidden there. – And now it is returning, a bit more slowly but still quite white with excitement – is it disappointed? Has it found what it was seeking? Is it simulating disappointment? – But already another wave is nearing, still more greedily and wildly than the first; and its soul, too, seems full of secrets and the hunger for treasure-digging. That is how the waves live – that is how we live, we who will – I will say no more. So? You distrust me? You are angry with me, you beautiful monsters? Are you afraid I will divulge your entire secret? Well, be angry with me; raise your dangerous green bodies as high as you can; make a wall between me and the sun – as you are now! Truly, at this moment nothing remains of the world but green dusk and green thunderbolts. Carry on as you want, you high-spirited ones: roar with delight and malice – or dive again, pour your emeralds into the deepest depths, cast your endless white mane of foam and froth over them: everything is fine with me because everything suits you so well, and I love you so for everything – how could I betray *you*! For – mark my words! – I know you and your secret; I know your kind! After all, you and I are of one kind! After all, you and I have one secret!

*Refracted light.* – One is not always brave; and when one gets tired, one of us, too, is likely one day to lament: ‘It is so hard to hurt people – why is it necessary! What good does it do us to live in seclusion when we don’t want to keep to ourselves what gives offence? Wouldn’t it be more advisable to live in the bustle and to do good to individuals as compensation for the sins that should and must be committed against everyone? To be foolish with fools, vain with the vain, fanatic with the fanatic? Wouldn’t it be fair, given the extravagant degree of deviation on the whole? When I hear of other people’s malice towards me, is not satisfaction the first thing I feel? Quite right! (I seem to be

the last moments of his life – perhaps he would then belong to a still higher order of minds. Whether it was death or the poison or piety or malice – something loosened his tongue and he said: ‘O Crito, I owe Asclepius a rooster.’ This ridiculous and terrible ‘last word’ means for those who have ears: ‘O Crito, *life is a disease*.’<sup>31</sup> Is it possible that a man like him, who had lived cheerfully and like a soldier in plain view of everyone, was a pessimist? He had merely kept a cheerful demeanour while all his life hiding his ultimate judgement, his inmost feeling! Socrates, Socrates *suffered from life*! And then he still avenged himself – with this veiled, gruesome, pious, and blasphemous saying. Did a Socrates really need *revenge*? Was there one ounce too little magnanimity in his overabundant virtue? – O friends! We must overcome even the Greeks!

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*The heaviest weight.* – What if some day or night a demon were to steal into your loneliest loneliness and say to you: ‘This life as you now live it and have lived it you will have to live once again and innumerable times again; and there will be nothing new in it, but every pain and every joy and every thought and sigh and everything unspeakably small or great in your life must return to you, all in the same succession and sequence – even this spider and this moonlight between the trees, and even this moment and I myself. The eternal hourglass of existence is turned over again and again, and you with it, speck of dust!’ Would you not throw yourself down and gnash your teeth and curse the demon who spoke thus? Or have you once experienced a tremendous moment when you would have answered him: ‘You are a god, and never have I heard anything more divine.’ If this thought gained power over you, as you are it would transform and possibly crush you; the question in each and every thing, ‘Do you want this again and innumerable times again?’ would lie on your actions as the heaviest weight! Or how well disposed would you have

<sup>31</sup> See Plato, *Phaedo* 116–18, esp. 118a.5–8. Asclepius was the god of healing and a rooster would have been a usual thank-offering to him from someone whom he had cured of an illness. Nietzsche’s interpretation of what Socrates said was not standard in the ancient world, and became common only in the Renaissance. It is rejected by some modern scholars.

to become to yourself and to life *to long for nothing more fervently* than for this ultimate eternal confirmation and seal?

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*Incipit tragoedia.*<sup>32</sup> – When Zarathustra<sup>33</sup> was thirty years old, he left his homeland and Lake Urmi and went into the mountains. There he enjoyed his spirit and solitude, and did not tire of that for ten years. But at last his heart changed – and one morning he arose with rosy dawn, stepped before the sun, and spoke to it thus: ‘You great heavenly body! What would your happiness be if you did not have those for whom you shine! For ten years you have climbed up to my cave; without me, my eagle, and my snake, you would have become tired of your light and of this road; but we awaited you every morning, relieved you of your overabundance, and blessed you for it. Behold, I am sick of my wisdom, like a bee that has collected too much honey; I need outstretched hands; I would like to give away and distribute until the wise among humans once again enjoy their folly and the poor once again their riches. For that I must step into the depths, as you do in the evening when you go behind the sea and bring light even to the underworld, you over-rich heavenly body! Like you I must *go under*, as it is called by the human beings to whom I want to descend. So bless me then, you calm eye that can look without envy upon all-too-great happiness! Bless the cup that wants to overflow in order that the water may flow golden from it and everywhere carry the reflection of your bliss! Behold, this cup wants to become empty again, and Zarathustra wants to become human again.’ Thus began Zarathustra’s going under.

<sup>32</sup> ‘The tragedy begins’. At this point, on completing Book iv, Nietzsche went on to write *Also Sprach Zarathustra* (*Thus Spoke Zarathustra*), the most prophetic in style among his philosophical works, in 1883–5. He added Book v to *The Gay Science* in 1887.

<sup>33</sup> Nietzsche takes the name from that of the Persian religious thinker of the seventh/sixth century BC who propagated a strongly dualistic doctrine, sharply distinguishing between good and evil.

# Friedrich Nietzsche

## *Œuvres*

### *Préface*

par Patrick Wotling

### *Le Gai Savoir*

Traduction par Patrick Wotling

### *Ainsi parlait Zarathoustra*

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### *Le Crépuscule des idoles*

Traduction par Henri Albert

### *L'Antéchrist*

Traduction par Éric Blondel

### *Ecce Homo*

Traduction par Éric Blondel

### *Nietzsche contre Wagner*

Traduction par Éric Blondel

Pour ce qui est de la superstition des logiciens : je ne me lasserai pas de souligner sans relâche un tout petit fait que ces superstitieux rechignent à admettre, — à savoir qu'une pensée vient quand « elle » veut, et non pas quand « je » veux; de sorte que c'est une *falsification* de l'état de fait que de dire : le sujet « je » est la condition du prédicat « pense ». Ça pense : mais que ce « ça » soit précisément le fameux vieux « je », c'est, pour parler avec modération, simplement une supposition, une affirmation, surtout pas une « certitude immédiate ». En fin de compte, il y a déjà trop dans ce « ça pense » : ce « ça » enferme déjà une *interprétation* du processus et ne fait pas partie du processus lui-même. On raisonne ici en fonction de l'habitude grammaticale : « penser est une action, toute action implique quelqu'un qui agit, par conséquent — ». C'est à peu près en fonction du même schéma que l'atomisme antique chercha, pour l'adjoindre à la « force » qui exerce des effets, ce caillot de matière qui en est le siège, à partir duquel elle exerce des effets, l'atome; des têtes plus rigoureuses enseignèrent finalement à se passer de ce « résidu de terre », et peut-être un jour s'habituerait-on encore, chez les logiciens aussi, à se passer de ce petit « ça » (forme sous laquelle s'est sublimé l'honnête et antique je).

Ce n'est certes pas le moindre attrait d'une théorie que d'être réfutable : c'est justement par là qu'elle attire les têtes les plus fines. Il semble que la théorie cent fois réfutée de la « volonté libre » ne doive de durer encore qu'à cet attrait — : il se présente toujours quelqu'un qui se sent assez fort pour la réfuter.

Les philosophes ont l'habitude de parler de la volonté comme si elle était la chose la mieux connue au monde; Schopenhauer a même donné à entendre que la volonté est à proprement parler la seule chose que nous connaissions, que nous connaissions intégralement et complètement, sans perte ni ajout. Mais je ne cesse d'avoir le sentiment que Schopenhauer n'a fait dans ce cas aussi que ce que les philosophes ont l'habitude de faire : qu'il a repris et exagéré un *préjugé du peuple*. Le vouloir me semble avant tout quelque chose de *compliqué*, quelque chose qui n'a d'unité que verbale, — et c'est justement l'unité du mot qui abrite le préjugé du peuple qui a vaincu la prudence, perpétuellement bien mince, des philosophes. Soyons donc plus prudents, soyons « non philosophes » —, disons : dans tout vouloir, il y a d'abord une pluralité de sentiments, à savoir le sentiment de l'état dont on *part*, le sentiment de l'état vers lequel on *va*, le sentiment de ce « dont on part » et de ce « vers lequel on va » eux-mêmes, et encore un sentiment musculaire concomitant qui commence à entrer en jeu, par une sorte d'habitude, dès que nous « voulons », quand bien même nous n'agissons pas « bras et jambes ». De même qu'il faut reconnaître du sentir et plus précisément plusieurs genres de sentir comme ingrédient de la volonté, de même en second lieu il faut encore du penser : dans tout acte de volonté, il y a une pensée qui commande; — et on ne doit certes pas croire que l'on puisse séparer cette pensée du « vouloir », comme si alors la volonté demeurerait encore ! En troisième lieu, la volonté n'est pas seulement un complexe de sentir et de penser, mais encore et surtout un *affect* : et plus précisément cet affect qu'est celui du commandement. Ce que l'on appelle « liberté de la volonté » est essentiellement l'affect de supériorité à l'égard de celui qui doit obéir : « je suis libre, "il" doit obéir » — cette conscience habite toute volonté, et de la même manière cette attention tendue, ce regard droit qui fixe un point unique à l'exclusion de toute autre chose, cette évaluation inconditionnée « c'est désormais telle chose et rien d'autre qui est nécessaire », cette certitude intime qu'on sera obéi, et tout ce qui fait encore partie de l'état de celui qui ordonne. Un homme qui *veut* —, donne un ordre à un quelque chose en lui qui obéit, ou dont il croit qu'il obéit. Mais que l'on prête attention à présent à ce qu'il y a de plus singulier dans la volonté — dans cette chose si multiple pour laquelle le peuple n'a qu'un mot



unique : dans la mesure où, dans le cas qui nous occupe, nous sommes simultanément ceux qui ordonnent et ceux qui obéissent, et qu'en tant que nous obéissons, nous connaissons les sentiments de contrainte, de pression, d'oppression, de résistance, de mouvement qui d'ordinaire se déclenchent immédiatement à la suite de l'acte de volonté ; dans la mesure où nous avons l'habitude d'autre part de passer outre cette dualité et de nous abuser nous-mêmes à son sujet grâce au concept synthétique « je », toute une chaîne de conclusions erronées, et par conséquent de fausses évaluations au sujet de la volonté elle-même, s'est encore agrégée au vouloir, — de sorte que celui qui veut croit de bonne foi que vouloir suffit à l'action. Comme dans la plupart des cas, on n'a voulu que là où l'on était en droit d'attendre l'effet de l'ordre, donc l'obéissance, donc l'action, l'apparence d'une nécessité de l'effet s'est traduite dans le sentiment ; bref, celui qui veut croit avec un haut degré de certitude que volonté et action sont en quelque façon une seule et même chose —, il attribue encore le succès, l'exécution du vouloir à la volonté elle-même et jouit à cette occasion d'une augmentation du sentiment de puissance qui accompagne tout succès. « Liberté de la volonté » — voilà le mot dont on désigne cet état de plaisir multiple de celui qui veut, qui ordonne et simultanément se pose comme identique à celui qui exécute, — qui, en tant que tel, jouit de triompher des résistances, mais juge par-devers soi que c'est sa volonté elle-même qui a véritablement surmonté ces obstacles. Celui qui veut ajoute de la sorte les sentiments de plaisir des instruments d'exécution efficaces, de la domesticité des « sous-volontés » ou des sous-âmes — notre corps n'est en effet qu'une structure sociale composée de nombreuses âmes — à son sentiment de plaisir en tant qu'émetteur d'ordres. *L'effet, c'est moi\** : il se produit ici ce qui se produit dans toute communauté bien construite et heureuse, la classe dirigeante s'identifie aux succès de la communauté. Dans tout vouloir, on a affaire purement et simplement à du commandement et de l'obéissance, sur le fond, comme on l'a dit, d'une structure sociale composée de nombreuses « âmes » : raison pour laquelle un philosophe devrait prendre le droit de ranger le vouloir en tant que tel dans la sphère de la morale : à savoir la morale comprise comme doctrine des rapports de domination dont découle le phénomène « vie ». —

Que les concepts philosophiques particuliers n'aient rien d'erratique, qu'ils ne se développent pas de manière séparée, mais qu'ils croissent en relation et de manière apparentée, qu'en dépit de toute la brusquerie et l'arbitraire avec lequel ils semblent intervenir dans l'histoire de la pensée, ils fassent tout autant partie d'un système que l'ensemble des membres de la faune d'un continent : c'est ce que finit encore par trahir la sûreté avec laquelle les philosophes les plus différents ne cessent de remplir un certain schéma fondamental de philosophies possibles. Sous l'emprise d'un charme invisible, ils reparcourent constamment la même orbite : si indépendants qu'ils continuent à se sentir les uns des autres avec leur volonté critique ou systématique : quelque chose en eux les guide, quelque chose les pousse dans un ordre déterminé, l'un après l'autre, cette systématique et cette parenté innées de concepts, précisément. Leur pensée est en fait bien moins une découverte qu'une reconnaissance, un re-souvenir, un retour au foyer, dans une économie d'ensemble de l'âme lointaine et vieille comme le monde, à partir de laquelle ces concepts ont pris leur essor autrefois : — philosopher est dans cette mesure un atavisme de tout premier ordre. L'étrange air de famille de toutes les manières de philosopher, indiennes, grecques, allemandes s'explique assez facilement. Là où se trouve une parenté linguistique, il est absolument inévitable que du fait de la philosophie commune de la grammaire — je veux dire du fait de la domination et de l'aiguillage inconscients exercés par de mêmes fonctions grammaticales — tout soit préparé d'emblée pour une évolution et une succession semblables des systèmes philosophiques : de même que la voie semble barrée à certaines autres possibilités de commentaire du monde. Il est très probable que des philosophes du domaine linguistique ouralo-altaïque (celui dans lequel le concept de sujet est le moins développé) porteront « sur le monde » un regard autre et se rencontreront sur des voies autres que des Indo-germans ou des musulmans : le charme exercé par des fonctions grammaticales déterminées est en dernière analyse le charme exercé par des jugements de valeurs *physiologiques* et des conditions de race. — Voilà pour récuser la superficialité de Locke au sujet de la provenance des idées.

*Volonté et vague.* — Avec quelle avidité s'avance cette vague, comme s'il lui fallait atteindre quelque chose ! Avec quelle précipitation terrifiante elle s'insinue jusque dans les recoins les plus profonds des rochers crevassés ! Il semble qu'elle veuille y arriver avant quelqu'un ; il semble qu'y soit caché quelque chose de valeur, de grande valeur. — Et la voici qui revient, un peu plus lentement, toute blanche encore d'excitation, — est-elle déçue ? A-t-elle trouvé ce qu'elle cherchait ? Fait-elle semblant d'être déçue ? — Mais déjà s'approche une autre vague, plus avide et plus sauvage encore que la première, et son âme aussi semble emplie de secrets et du désir de déterrer des trésors. C'est ainsi que vivent les vagues, — et c'est ainsi que nous vivons, nous qui voulons ! — je n'en dis pas davantage. — Comment ? Vous vous méfiez de moi ? Vous vous irritez contre moi, beaux monstres ? Craignez-vous que je trahisse tout votre secret ? Eh bien ! Irritez-vous contre moi désormais, dressez vos dangereux corps verts aussi haut que vous le pouvez, élevez un mur entre moi et le soleil — comme à présent ! En vérité, il ne reste déjà plus du monde que le vert crépuscule et de verts éclairs. Déchaînez-vous à votre guise, arrogantes, rugissez de plaisir et de méchanceté — ou plongez de nouveau, déversez vos émeraudes au fond du plus abyssal abîme, et recouvrez-les en lançant de votre blanche dentelle infinie d'écume et d'embruns — je souscris à tout, car tout vous va si bien, et je vous suis si reconnaissant pour tout : comment pourrais-je vous trahir ! Car — prêtez bien l'oreille ! — je vous connais, vous et votre secret, je connais votre espèce ! Vous et moi, nous sommes d'une seule et même espèce ! — Vous et moi, nous avons un seul et même secret !

*Lumière réfractée.* — On n'est pas toujours audacieux, et lorsque l'on est fatigué, il arrive à l'un d'entre nous de se lamenter ainsi. « Il est si dur de faire mal aux hommes — oh, pourquoi faut-il que ce soit nécessaire ! À quoi nous sert de vivre cachés si nous ne voulons pas garder pour nous ce qui suscite le scandale ? Ne serait-il pas plus recomman-

dable de vivre dans la mêlée et de réparer dans les individus ce dont il nous faut, par devoir et par nécessité, nous rendre coupables envers tous ? Être fou avec le fou, vaniteux avec le vaniteux, exalté avec l'exalté ? Ne serait-ce pas juste, tant est insolent, dans l'ensemble, le degré d'écart ? Si j'apprends les méchancetés qu'autrui a dites sur mon compte, — mon premier sentiment n'est-il pas la satisfaction ? C'est justice ! — ai-je l'impression de leur déclarer — je suis si peu en accord avec vous et j'ai tant de vérité de mon côté : amusez-vous donc à mes dépens aussi souvent que vous le pouvez ! Voici mes défauts et mes erreurs, voici mon illusion, mon mauvais goût, mon désarroi, mes larmes, ma vanité, ma tanière secrète de hibou, mes contradictions ! Voilà de quoi vous faire rire ! Riez donc et réjouissez-vous ! Je n'ai pas d'aigreur envers la loi et la nature des choses qui veulent que les défauts et les erreurs amusent ! — Il y eut jadis, certes, des époques "plus belles" où l'on pouvait, avec toute pensée un peu nouvelle, se sentir assez *indispensable* pour arpenter la rue en sa compagnie et lancer à tout homme : "Vois ! Le royaume des cieux est proche !" — Je ne me manquerais pas si j'étais absent. Nous sommes tous superflus ! » — Mais comme je l'ai dit, nous ne pensons pas de cette manière lorsque nous sommes audacieux ; nous ne pensons pas à *cela*.

*Mon chien.* — J'ai donné un nom à ma douleur et l'appelle « chien », — elle est tout aussi fidèle, aussi indiscreète et effrontée, aussi distrayante, aussi sage que n'importe quel autre chien — et je peux l'apostropher et passer sur elle mes accès de mauvaise humeur : comme d'autres le font avec leur chien, leur domestique et leur femme.

*Pas de tableau de martyre.* — Je veux faire comme Raphaël et ne plus peindre de tableau de martyre. Il y a assez de choses sublimes pour que

révolutions doit être pour toi un murmure ! Tu voudras aussi aider : mais seulement ceux dont tu *comprends* parfaitement la misère parce qu'ils partagent avec toi une seule et unique souffrance et un seul et unique espoir — tes *amis* : et seulement à la manière dont tu t'aides toi-même : — je veux les rendre plus courageux, plus résistants, plus simples, plus gais ! Je veux leur enseigner ce que si peu comprennent à présent et, moins que tous, ces prédicateurs de pitié : — *la co-réjouissance* !

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*Vita femina.* — Voir les suprêmes beautés d'une œuvre — pour cela, tout le savoir et toute la bonne volonté ne suffisent pas ; il faut les hasards heureux les plus rares pour que se dissipe pour nous le voile de nuages qui enveloppe ces sommets et que le soleil brille sur elles de tous ses feux. Il ne suffit pas que nous nous trouvions juste au bon endroit pour voir ce spectacle : il faut que notre âme même ait dissipé le voile qui enveloppait ses sommets et qu'elle ait besoin d'une expression et d'une image extérieures, comme pour trouver un appui et rester maîtresse d'elle-même. Mais il est si rare que tout cela soit réuni à la fois que je serais tenté de croire que les suprêmes sommets de tout ce qui est bon, que ce soit œuvre, action, homme, nature, ont été jusqu'à présent pour la plupart, et même pour les meilleurs, quelque chose de caché et de voilé : — mais ce qui se dévoile à nous, *se dévoile à nous une seule fois* ! — Les Grecs pouvaient bien prier : « Deux et trois fois tout ce qui est beau ! » Ah, ils avaient là une bonne raison d'invoquer les dieux, car la réalité non divine ne nous donne pas du tout le beau, ou bien une seule fois ! Je veux dire que le monde regorge de belles choses, mais qu'il est malgré tout pauvre, très pauvre, en beaux instants et en dévoilements de ces choses. Mais peut-être est-ce là la magie la plus forte de la vie : elle se drapait dans un voile brodé d'or de belles possibilités, riche en promesses, rétif, pudique, moqueur, compatissant, séducteur. Oui, la vie est femme !

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*Socrate mourant.* — J'admire la vaillance et la sagesse de Socrate en tout ce qu'il fit, dit — et ne dit pas. Cet esprit malin et cet ensorceleur d'Athènes, moqueur et amoureux, qui faisait trembler et sangloter les jeunes gens les plus arrogants, ne fut pas seulement le bavard le plus sage qui ait existé : il fut grand également dans le silence. Je voudrais qu'il ait également gardé le silence au dernier instant de sa vie, — peut-être appartiendrait-il alors à un ordre d'esprits encore supérieur. Fut-ce la mort, ou le poison, ou la piété, ou la méchanceté — quelque chose lui délia la langue à cet instant, et il dit : « Oh, Criton, je dois un coq à Asclépios. » Cette « dernière parole » risible et terrifiante signifie pour celui qui a des oreilles : « Oh, Criton, *la vie est une maladie* ! » Est-ce possible ! Un homme tel que lui, qui a vécu gaiement et, aux yeux de tous, comme un soldat, — était pessimiste ! Il s'était contenté de faire bonne figure à la vie et avait, toute sa vie, caché son jugement ultime, son sentiment le plus intime ! Socrate, Socrate a *souffert de la vie* ! Et il en a encore tiré vengeance — par cette parole voilée, horrible, pieuse et blasphématoire ! Fallait-il que même un Socrate se venge ? Manquait-il un grain de générosité à sa vertu surabondante ? — Ah, mes amis ! Il nous faut dépasser jusqu'aux Grecs !

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*Le poids le plus lourd.* — Et si un jour ou une nuit, un démon se glissait furtivement dans ta plus solitaire solitude et te disait : « Cette vie, telle que tu la vis et l'a vécue, il te faudra la vivre encore une fois et encore d'innombrables fois ; et elle ne comportera rien de nouveau, au contraire, chaque douleur et chaque plaisir et chaque pensée et soupir et tout ce qu'il y a dans ta vie d'indiciblement petit et grand doit pour toi revenir, et tout suivant la même succession et le même enchaînement — et également cette araignée et ce clair de lune entre les arbres, et également cet instant et moi-même. L'éternel sablier de l'existence est sans cesse renversé, et toi avec lui, poussière des poussières ! » — Ne te jetterais-tu pas par terre en grinçant des dents et en maudissant le démon

qui parla ainsi ? Ou bien as-tu vécu une fois un instant formidable où tu lui répondrais : « Tu es un dieu et jamais je n'entendis rien de plus divin ! » Si cette pensée s'emparait de toi, elle te métamorphoserait, toi, tel que tu es, et, peut-être, t'écraserait ; la question, posée à propos de tout et de chaque chose, « veux-tu ceci encore une fois et encore d'innombrables fois ? » ferait peser sur ton agir le poids le plus lourd ! Ou combien te faudrait-il aimer et toi-même et la vie pour ne plus *aspirer* à rien d'autre qu'à donner cette approbation et apposer ce sceau ultime et éternel ? —

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*Incipit tragœdia.* — Lorsque Zarathoustra eut trente ans, il quitta son pays natal et le lac d'Urmi et gagna la montagne. Là, il jouit de son esprit et de sa solitude et ne s'en lassa pas dix années durant. Mais son cœur finit par se métamorphoser, — et un matin il se leva avec l'aube, avança face au soleil et lui parla ainsi : « Grand astre ! Que serait ton bonheur si tu n'avais ceux pour qui tu resplendis ! Dix années durant, tu es monté jusqu'à ma caverne : tu te serais lassé de ta lumière et de ce chemin sans moi, mon aigle et mon serpent ; mais nous t'attendions chaque matin, te déchargions de ta profusion et te bénissions pour cela. Vois ! Je suis repu de ma sagesse comme l'abeille qui a butiné trop de miel, j'ai besoin de mains qui se tendent, je voudrais prodiguer et partager jusqu'à ce que les sages parmi les hommes se réjouissent de nouveau de leur folie et les pauvres de leur richesse. Je dois pour cela descendre dans l'abîme : comme tu le fais au soir, lorsque tu disparais derrière la mer et portes encore la lumière au monde d'en bas, astre débordant de richesse ! — je dois, pareil à toi, *décliner*, comme disent les hommes vers qui je veux descendre. Bénis-moi donc, œil paisible, qui peut voir sans envie même un bonheur trop grand ! Bénis le calice qui veut déborder pour répandre l'or de son eau et porter partout le reflet de ton ravissement ! Vois ! Ce calice veut se vider à nouveau, et Zarathoustra veut redevenir homme. » — Ainsi commença le déclin de Zarathoustra.

## CINQUIÈME LIVRE

NOUS, SANS PEUR

*Carcasse, tu trembles ? Tu tremblerais  
bien davantage, si tu savais où je te mène.*

TURENNE.

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*Ce que signifie notre gaieté d'esprit.* — Le plus grand événement récent, — le fait que « Dieu est mort », que la croyance au dieu chrétien a perdu toute crédibilité — commence déjà à répandre sa première ombre sur l'Europe. Pour les rares du moins dont les yeux, le soupçon que dardent leur yeux, sont assez forts et subtils pour ce spectacle, il semble qu'un soleil ait décliné, qu'une ancienne et profonde confiance se soit renversée en doute : notre vieux monde doit leur sembler chaque jour plus crépusculaire, plus méfiant, plus étranger, plus « ancien ». Mais pour l'essentiel, on est en droit de dire : l'événement lui-même est bien trop grand, trop éloigné, trop en marge du pouvoir de compréhender.