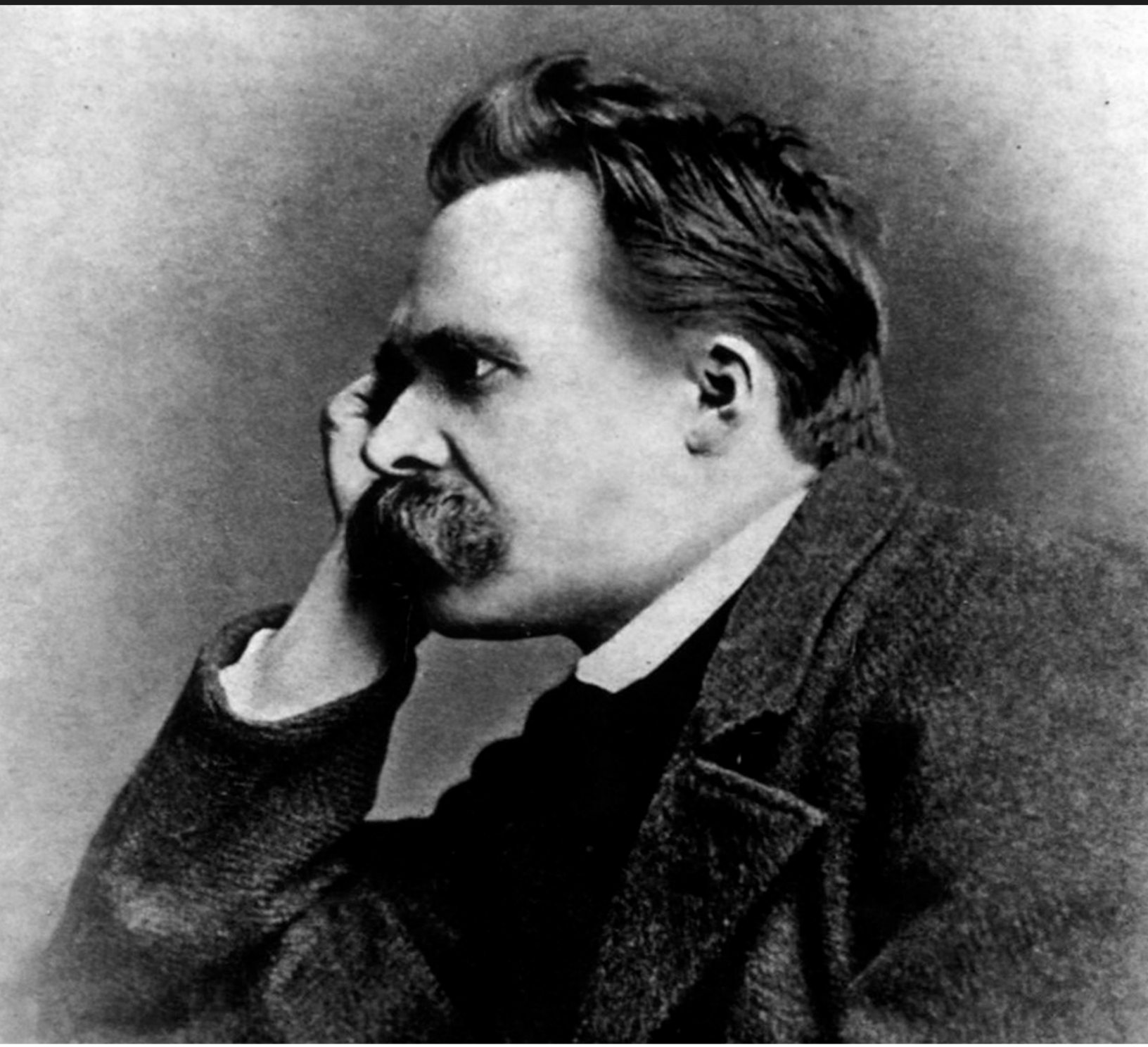
The Will to Power

vol. 2



Friedrich Nietzsche

The Will to Power

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THE WILL TO POWER

AN ATTEMPTED
TRANSVALUATION OF ALL VALUES
By
FRIEDRICH NIETZSCHE
VOL. II
BOOKS III AND IV

THIRD BOOK

THE PRINCIPLES OF A NEW VALUATION.

I.

THE WILL TO POWER IN SCIENCE.

(A) The Method of Investigation.

466.

The distinguishing feature of our nineteenth century is not the triumph of science, but the triumph of the scientific method over science.

467.

The history of scientific methods was regarded by Auguste Comte almost as philosophy itself.

468.

The great Methodologists: Aristotle, Bacon, Descartes, Auguste Comte.

469.

The most valuable knowledge is always discovered last: but the most valuable knowledge consists of methods.

All methods, all the hypotheses on which the science of our day depends, were treated with the profoundest contempt for centuries: on their account a man used to be banished from the society of respectable people—he was held to be an "enemy of God," a reviler of the highest ideal, a madman.

We had the whole pathos of mankind against us,—our notion of what "truth" ought to be, of what the service of truth ought to be, our objectivity, our method, our calm, cautious and distrustful manner were altogether despicable.... At bottom, that which has kept men back most, is an æsthetic taste: they believed in the picturesque effect of truth; what they demanded of the scientist was, that he should make a strong appeal to their imagination.

From the above, it would almost seem as if the very reverse had been achieved, as if a sudden jump had been made: as a matter of fact, the schooling which the moral hyperboles afforded, gradually prepared the way for that milder form of pathos which at last became incarnate in the scientific man....

Conscientiousness in small things, the self-control of the religious man, was a preparatory school for the scientific character, as was also, in a very pre-eminent sense, the attitude of mind which makes a man take problems seriously, irrespective of what personal advantage he may derive from them....

(B) The Starting-point of Epistemology.>

470.

Profound disinclination to halt once and for all at any collective view of the world. The charm of the opposite point of view: the refusal to relinquish the stimulus residing in the enigmatical.

471.

The hypothesis that, at bottom, things proceed in such a moral fashion that human reason must be right, is a mere piece of good-natured and simple-minded trustfulness, the result of the belief in Divine truthfulness—God regarded as the Creator of all things.—These concepts are our inheritance from a former existence in a Beyond.

472.

The contradiction of the so-called "facts of consciousness." Observation a thousand times more difficult, error is perhaps the absolute condition of observation.

473.

The intellect cannot criticise itself, simply because it can be compared with no other kind of intellect, and also because its ability to know would only reveal itself in the presence of "actual reality"; that is to say, because, in order to criticise the intellect, we should have to be higher creatures with "absolute knowledge." This would presuppose the existence of something, a "thing-in-itself," apart from all the perspective kinds of observation and senso-spiritual

perception. But the psychological origin of the belief in things, forbids our speaking of "things in themselves."

474.

The idea that a sort of adequate relation exists between subject and object, that the object is something which when seen from inside would be a subject, is a well-meant invention which, I believe, has seen its best days. The measure of that which we are conscious of, is perforce entirely dependent upon the coarse utility of the function of consciousness: how could this little garret-prospect of consciousness warrant our asserting anything in regard to "subject" and "object," which would bear any relation to reality!

475.

Criticism of modern philosophy: erroneous starting-point, as if there were such things as "facts of consciousness"—and no phenomenalism in introspection.

476.

"Consciousness"—to what extent is the idea which is thought of, the idea of will, or the idea of a feeling (which is known by us alone), quite superficial? Our inner world is also "appearance."

477.

I am convinced of the phenomenalism of the inner world also: everything that reaches our consciousness is utterly and completely adjusted, simplified, schematised, interpreted, the actual process of inner "perception," the relation of causes between thoughts, feelings, desires, between subject and object, is absolutely concealed from us, and may be purely imaginary. This "inner world of appearance" is treated with precisely the same forms and procedures as the "outer" world. We never come across a single "fact": pleasure and pain are more recently evolved intellectual phenomena. . . .

Causality evades us; to assume the existence of an immediate causal relation between thoughts, as Logic does, is the result of the coarsest and most clumsy observation. There are all sorts of passions that may intervene between two thoughts: but the interaction is too rapid—that is why we fail to recognise them, that is why we actually deny their existence. . . .

"Thinking," as the epistemologists understand \r it, never takes place at all: it is an absolutely gratuitous fabrication, arrived at by selecting one element from the process and by eliminating all the rest —an artificial adjustment for the purpose of the understanding. . . .

The "mind," something that thinks: at times, even, "the mind absolute and pure"—this concept is an evolved and second result of false introspection, which believes in "thinking": in the first place an act is imagined here which does not really occur at all, i.e. "thinking"; and, secondly, a subject-substratum is imagined in which every process of this thinking has its origin, and nothing else—that is to say, both the action and the agent are fanciful.

478.

Phenomenalism must not be sought in the wrong quarter: nothing is more phenomenal, or, to be more precise, nothing is so much deception, as this inner world, which we observe with the "inner sense."

Our belief that the will is a cause was so great, that, according to our personal experiences in general, we projected a cause into all phenomena (i.e. a certain motive is posited as the cause of all phenomena).

We believe that the thoughts which follow one upon the other in our minds are linked by some sort of causal relation: the logician, more especially, who actually speaks of a host of facts which have never once been seen in reality, has grown accustomed to the prejudice that thoughts are the cause of thoughts.

We believe—and even our philosophers believe it still—that pleasure and pain are the causes of reactions, that the very purpose of pleasure and pain is to occasion reactions. For hundreds of years, pleasure and pain have been represented as the motives for every action. Upon reflection, however, we are bound to concede that everything would have proceeded in exactly the same way, according to precisely the same sequence of cause and effect, if the states "pleasure" and "pain" had been entirely absent; and that we are simply deceived when we believe that they actually cause anything:—they are the attendant phenomena, and they have quite a different purpose from that of provoking reactions; they are in themselves effects involved in the process of reaction which takes place.

In short: Everything that becomes conscious is a final phenomenon, a conclusion—and is the cause of nothing; all succession of phenomena in consciousness is absolutely atomistic.—And we tried to understand the universe from the opposite point of view—as if nothing were effective or real, save thinking, feeling, willing! . . .

479.

The phenomenalism of the "inner world!" A chronological inversion takes place, so that the cause reaches consciousness as the effect.—We know that pain is projected into a certain part of the body although it is not really situated there; we have learnt that all sensations which were ingenuously supposed to be conditioned by the outer world are, as a matter of fact, conditioned by the inner world: that the real action of the outer world never takes place in a way of which we can become conscious.... That fragment of the outer world of which we become conscious, is born after the effect produced by the outer world has been recorded, and is subsequently interpreted as the "cause" of that effect....

In the phenomenalism of the "inner world," the chronological order of cause and effect is inverted. The fundamental fact of "inner experience" is, that the cause is imagined after the effect has been recorded.... The same holds good of the sequence of thoughts: we seek for the reason of a thought, before it has reached our consciousness; and then the reason reaches consciousness first, whereupon follows its effect. All our dreams are the interpretation of our collective feelings with the view of discovering the possible causes of the latter; and the process is such that a condition only becomes conscious, when the supposed causal link has reached consciousness.[1]

The whole of "inner experience" is founded on this: that a cause is sought and imagined which accounts for a certain irritation in our nerve-centres, and that it is only the cause which is found in this way which reaches consciousness; this cause may have absolutely nothing to do with the real cause—it is a sort of groping assisted by former "inner experiences," that is to say, by memory. The memory, however, retains the habit of old interpretations,—that is to say, of erroneous causality,—so that "inner experience" comprises in itself all the results

of former erroneous fabrications of causes. Our "outside world," as we conceive it every instant, is indissolubly bound up with the old error of cause: we interpret by means of the schematism of "the thing," etc.

"Inner experience" only enters consciousness when it has found a language which the individual can understand—that is to say, a translation of a certain condition into conditions with which he is familiar; "understand" means simply this: to be able to express something new in the terms of something old or familiar. For instance, "I feel unwell"—a judgment of this sort presupposes a very great and recent neutrality on the part of the observer: the simple man always says, "This and that make me feel unwell,"—he begins to be clear concerning his indisposition only after he has discovered a reason for it.... This is what I call a lack of philological knowledge; to be able to read a text, as such, without reading an interpretation into it, is the latest form of "inner experience,"—it is perhaps a barely possible form....

[1] When in our dream we hear a bell ringing, or a tapping at our door, we scarcely ever wake before having already accounted for the sound, in the terms of the dream-world we were in.—TR.

480.

There are no such things as "mind," reason, thought, consciousness, soul, will, or truth: they all belong to fiction, and can serve no purpose. It is not a question of "subject and object," but of a particular species of animal which can prosper only by means of a certain exactness, or, better still, regularity in recording its perceptions (in order that experience may be capitalised)....

Knowledge works as an instrument of power. It is therefore obvious that it increases with each advance of power....

The purpose of knowledge: in this case, as in the case of "good" or "beautiful," the concept must be regarded strictly and narrowly from an anthropocentric and biological standpoint. In order that a particular species may maintain and increase its power, its conception of reality must contain enough which is calculable and constant to allow of its formulating a scheme of conduct. The utility of preservation—and not some abstract or theoretical need to eschew deception—stands as the motive force behind the development of the organs of knowledge; ... they evolve in such a way that their observations may suffice for our preservation. In other words, the measure of the desire for knowledge depends upon the extent to which the Will to Power grows in a certain species: a species gets a grasp of a given amount of reality, in order to master it, in order to enlist that amount in its service.

(c) The Belief in the "Ego." Subject.

481.

In opposition to Positivism, which halts at phenomena and says, "These are only facts and nothing more," I would say: No, facts are precisely what is lacking, all that exists consists of interpretations. We cannot establish any fact "in itself": it may even be nonsense to desire to do such a thing. "Everything is subjective," ye say: but that in itself is interpretation. The subject is nothing given, but something superimposed by fancy, something introduced behind.—Is it necessary to set an interpreter behind the interpretation already to hand? Even that would be fantasy, hypothesis.

To the extent to which knowledge has any sense at all, the world is knowable: but it may be interpreted differently, it has not one sense behind it, but hundreds of senses.—"Perspectivity."

It is our needs that interpret the world; our instincts and their impulses for and against. Every instinct is a sort of thirst for power; each has its point of view, which it would fain impose upon all the other instincts as their norm.

482.

Where our ignorance really begins, at that point from which we can see no further, we set a word; for instance, the word "I," the word "do," the word "suffer"—these concepts may be the horizon lines of our knowledge, but they are not "truths."

483.

Owing to the phenomenon "thought," the ego is taken for granted; but up to the present everybody believed, like the people, that there was something unconditionally certain in the notion "I think," and that by analogy with our understanding of all other causal reactions this "I" was the given cause of the thinking. However customary and indispensable this fiction may have become now, this fact proves nothing against the imaginary nature of its origin; it might be a life-preserving belief and still be false.

484.

"Something is thought, therefore there is something that thinks": this is what Descartes' argument amounts to. But this is tantamount to considering our belief in the notion "substance" as an "a priori" truth: —that there must be something "that thinks" when we think, is merely a formulation of a grammatical custom which sets an agent to every action. In short, a metaphysico-logical postulate is already put forward here—and it is not merely an ascertainment of fact.... On Descartes' lines nothing absolutely certain is attained, but only the fact of a very powerful faith.

If the proposition be reduced to "Something is thought, therefore there are thoughts," the result is mere tautology; and precisely the one factor which is in question, the "reality of thought," is not touched upon,—so that, in this form, the apparitional character of thought cannot be denied. What Descartes wanted to prove was, that thought not only had apparent reality, but absolute reality.

485.

The concept substance is an outcome of the concept subject, and not conversely! If we surrender the concept soul, the subject, the very conditions for the concept "substance" are lacking. Degrees of Being are obtained, but Being is lost.

Criticism of "reality": what does a "plus or minus of reality" lead to, the gradation of Being in which we believe?

The degree of our feeling of life and power (the logic and relationship of past life) presents us with the measure of "Being," "reality," "non-appearance."

Subject i this is the term we apply to our belief in an entity underlying all the different moments of the most intense sensations of reality; we regard this belief as the effect of a cause,—and we

believe in our belief to such an extent that, on its account alone, we imagine "truth," "reality," "substantiality."—a "Subject" is the fiction which would fain make us believe that several similar states were the effect of one substratum: but we it was who first created the "similarity" of these states; the similising and adjusting of them is the fact—not their similarity (on the contrary, this ought rather to be denied).

486.

One would have to know what Being is, in order to be able to decide whether this or that is real (for instance, "the facts of consciousness"); it would also be necessary to know what certainty and knowledge are, and so forth.—But, as we do not know these things, a criticism of the faculty of knowledge is nonsensical: how is it possible for an instrument to criticise itself, when it is itself that exercises the critical faculty. It cannot even define itself!

487.

Should not all philosophy ultimately disclose the first principles on which the reasoning processes depend?—that is to say, our belief in the "ego" as a substance, as the only reality according to which, alone, we are able to ascribe reality to things? The oldest realism at length comes to light, simultaneously with man's recognition of the fact that his whole religious history is no more than a history of soul-superstitions. Here there is a barrier; our very thinking, itself, involves that belief (with its distinctions—substance, accident, action, agent, etc.); to abandon it would mean to cease from being able to think.

But that a belief, however useful it may be for the preservation of a species, has nothing to do with the truth, may be seen from the fact that we must believe in time, space, and motion, without feeling ourselves compelled to regard them as absolute realities.

488.

The psychological origin of our belief in reason.— The ideas "reality," "Being," are derived from our subject-feeling.

"Subject," interpreted through ourselves so that the ego may stand as substance, as the cause of action, as the agent.

The metaphysico-logical postulates, the belief in substance, accident, attribute, etc. etc., draws its convincing character from our habit of regarding all our actions as the result of our will: so that the ego, as substance, does not vanish in the multiplicity of changes.—But there is no such thing as will. We have no categories which allow us to separate a "world as thing-in-itself," from "a world of appearance." All our categories of reason have a sensual origin: they are deductions from the empirical world. "The soul," "the ego"—the history of these concepts shows that here, also, the oldest distinction ("spiritus," "life") obtains. . . .

If there is nothing material, then there can be nothing immaterial. The concept no longer means anything.

No subject-"atoms." The sphere of a subject increasing or diminishing unremittingly, the centre of the system continually displacing itself, in the event of the system no longer being able to organise the appropriated mass, it divides into two. On the other hand, it is able, without destroying it, to transform a weaker subject into one of its own functionaries, and, to a certain extent, to compose a new entity with it. Not a "substance," but rather something which in

itself strives after greater strength; and which wishes to "preserve" itself only indirectly (it wishes to surpass itself).

489.

Everything that reaches consciousness as an entity is already enormously complicated: we never have anything more than the semblance of an entity.

The phenomenon of the body is the richer, more distinct, and more tangible phenomenon: it should be methodically drawn to the front, and no mention should be made of its ultimate significance.

490.

The assumption of a single subject is perhaps not necessary, it may be equally permissible to assume a plurality of subjects, whose interaction and struggle lie at the bottom of our thought and our consciousness in general. A sort of aristocracy of "cells" in which the ruling power is vested? Of course an aristocracy of equals, who are accustomed to ruling co-operatively, and understand how to command?

My hypotheses. The subject as a plurality. Pain intellectual and dependent upon the judgment harmful, projected. The effect always "unconscious": the inferred and imagined cause is projected, it follows the event. Pleasure is a form of pain. The only kind of power that exists is of the same nature as the power of will: a commanding of other subjects which thereupon alter themselves. The unremitting transientness and volatility of the subject. "Mortal soul." Number as perspective form.

491.

The belief in the body is more fundamental than the belief in the soul: the latter arose from the unscientific observation of the agonies of the body. (Something which leaves it. The belief in the truth of dreams)

492.

The body and physiology the starting-point: why?—We obtain a correct image of the nature of our subject-entity, that is to say, as a number of regents at the head of a community (not as "souls" or as "life-forces") as also of the dependence of these regents upon their subjects, and upon the conditions of a hierarchy, and of the division of labour, as the means ensuring the existence of the part and the whole. We also obtain a correct image of the way in which the living entities continually come into being and expire, and we see how eternity cannot belong to the "subject"; we realise that the struggle finds expression in obeying as well as in commanding, and that a fluctuating definition of the limits of power is a factor of life. The comparative ignorance in which the ruler is kept, of the individual performances and even disturbances taking place in the community, also belong to the conditions under which government may be carried on. In short, we obtain a valuation even of want-of-knowledge, of seeing-things-generally-as-a-whole, of simplification, of falsification, and of perspective. What is most important, however, is, that we regard the ruler and his subjects as of the same kind, all feeling, willing, thinking—and that wherever we see or suspect movement in a body, we conclude that there is co-operative-subjective and invisible

life. Movement as a symbol for the eye; it denotes that something has been felt, willed, thought.

The danger of directly questioning the subject concerning the subject, and all spiritual self-reflection, consists in this, that it might be a necessary condition of its activity to interpret itself erroneously. That is why we appeal to the body and lay the evidence of sharpened senses aside: or we try and see whether the subjects themselves cannot enter into communication with us.

(d) Biology of the Instinct of Knowledge. Perspectivity.

493.

Truth is that kind of error without which a certain species of living being cannot exist. The value for Life is ultimately decisive.

494.

It is unlikely that our "knowledge" extends farther than is exactly necessary for our self-preservation. Morphology shows us how the senses and the nerves as well as the brain evolve in proportion as the difficulties of acquiring sustenance increase.

495.

If the morality of "Thou shalt not lie" be refuted, the sense for truth will then have to justify itself before another tribunal—as a means to the preservation of man, as Will to Power.

Likewise our love of the beautiful: it is also the creative will. Both senses stand side by side; the sense of truth is the means wherewith

the power is appropriated to adjust things according to one's taste. The love of adjusting and reforming—a primeval love! We can only take cognisance of a world which we ourselves have made.

496.

Concerning the multifariousness of knowledge. The tracing of its relation to many other things (or the relation of kind)—how should "knowledge" be of another? The way to know and to investigate is in itself among the conditions of life; that is why the conclusion that there could be no other kind of intellect (for ourselves) than the kind which serves the purpose of our preservation is an excessively hasty one: this actual condition may be only an accidental, not in the least an essential; one.

Our apparatus for acquiring knowledge is not adjusted for knowledge.

497.

The most strongly credited a priori "truths" are, to my mind, mere assumptions pending further investigation; for instance, the law of causation is a belief so thoroughly acquired by practice and so completely assimilated, that to disbelieve in it would mean the ruin of our kind. But is it therefore true? What an extraordinary conclusion! As if truth were proved by the mere fact that man survives!

498.

To what extent is our intellect also a result of the conditions of life? —We should not have it did we not need to have it, and we should not have it as we have it, if we did not need it as we need it—that is to say, if we could live otherwise.

499.

Thinking in a primitive (inorganic) state is to persevere in forms, as in the case of the crystal.—In our thought, the essential factor is the harmonising of the new material with the old schemes (= Procrustes' bed), the assimilation of the unfamiliar.

500.

The perception of the senses projected outwards: "inwards" and "outwards"—does the body command here?

The same equalising and ordering power which rules in the idioplasma, also rules in the incorporation of the outer world: our sensual perceptions are already the result of this process of adaptation and harmonisation in regard to all the past in us; they do not follow directly upon the "impression."

501.

All thought, judgment, perception, regarded as an act of comparing[2] has as a first condition the act of equalising, and earlier still the act of "making equal." The process of making equal is the same as the assimilation by the amœba of the nutritive matter it appropriates.

"Memory" late, in so far as the equalising instinct appears to have been subdued: the difference is preserved. Memory—a process of classification and collocation; active—who?

[2] The German word vergleichen, meaning "to compare," contains the root "equal" (gleich) which cannot be rendered in English. TR.

502.

In regard to the memory, we must unlearn a great deal: here we meet with the greatest temptation to assume the existence of a "soul," which, irrespective of time, reproduces and recognises again and again, etc. What I have experienced, however, continues to live "in the memory"; I have nothing to do with it when memory "comes," my will is inactive in regard to it, as in the case of the coming and going of a thought. Something happens, of which I become conscious: now something similar comes—who has called it forth? Who has awakened it?

503.

The whole apparatus of knowledge is an abstracting and simplifying apparatus—not directed at knowledge, but at the appropriation of things: "end" and "means" are as remote from the essence of this apparatus as "concepts" are. By the "end" and the "means" a process is appropriated (—a process is invented which may be grasped), but by "concepts" one appropriates the "things" which constitute the process.

504.

Consciousness begins outwardly as co-ordination and knowledge of impressions,—at first it is at the point which is remotest from the biological centre of the individual; but it is a process which deepens and which tends to become more and more an inner function, continually approaching nearer to the centre.

505.

Our perceptions, as we understand them—that is to say, the sum of all those perceptions the consciousness whereof was useful and essential to us and to the whole organic processes which preceded us: therefore they do not include all perceptions (for instance, not the electrical ones);—that is to say, we have senses only for a definite selection of perceptions—such perceptions as concern us with a view to our self-preservation. Consciousness extends so far only as it is useful. There can be no doubt that all our sense-perceptions are entirely permeated by valuations (useful or harmful—consequently, pleasant or painful). Every particular colour; besides being a colour, expresses a value to us (although we seldom admit it, or do so only after it has affected us exclusively for a long time, as in the case of convicts in gaol or lunatics). Insects likewise react in different ways to different colours: some like this shade, the others that. Ants are a case in point.

506.

In the beginning images how images originate in the mind must be explained. Then words, applied to images. Finally concepts, possible only when there are words—the assembling of several pictures into a whole which is not for the eye but for the ear (word). The small

amount of emotion which the "word" generates,—that is, then, which the view of the similar pictures generates, for which one word is used, —this simple emotion is the common factor, the basis of a concept. That weak feelings should all be regarded as alike, as the same, is the fundamental fact. There is therefore a confusion of two very intimately associated feelings in the ascertainment of these feelings;— but who is it that ascertains? Faith is the very first step in every sensual impression: a sort of yea-saying is the first intellectual activity! A "holding-a-thing-to-be-true" is the beginning. It were our business, therefore, to explain how the "holding-of-a-thing-to-be-true" arose! What sensation lies beneath the comment "true"?

507.

The valuation, "I believe that this and that is so," is the essence of "truth." In all valuations, the conditions of preservation and of growth find expression. All our organs and senses of knowledge have been developed only in view of the conditions of preservation and growth. The trust in reason and its categories, the trust in dialectics, and also the valuation of logic, prove only that experience has taught the usefulness of these things to life: not their "truth." The prerequisites of all living things and of their lives is: that there should be a large amount of faith, that it should be possible to pass definite judgments on things, and that there should be no doubt at all concerning all essential values. Thus it is necessary that something should be assumed to be true, not that it is true.

"The real world and the world of appearance"— I trace this contrast to the relation of values. We have posited our conditions of existence as the attributes of being in general. Owing to the fact that, in order to prosper, we must be stable in our belief, we developed the idea that

the real world was neither a changing nor an evolving one, but a world of being.

(e) The Origin of Reason and Logic.

508.

Originally there was chaos among our ideas. Those ideas which were able to stand side by side remained over, the greater number perished—and are still perishing.

509.

The kingdom of desires out of which logic grew: the gregarious instinct in the background. The assumption of similar facts is the first condition for "similar souls." For the purpose of mutual understanding and government.

510.

Concerning the origin of logic. The fundamental proneness to equalise things and to see them equal, gets to be modified, and kept within bounds, by the consideration of what is useful or harmful—in fact, by considerations of success: it then becomes adapted in suchwise as to be gratified in a milder way, without at the same time denying life or endangering it. This whole process corresponds entirely with that external and mechanical process (which is its symbol) by which the protoplasm continually assimilates, makes equal to itself, what it

appropriates, and arranges it according to its own forms and requirements.

511.

Likeness and Similarity.

1. The coarser the organ the more apparent likenesses it sees;

2. The mind will have likeness—that is to say, the identification of one sensual impression with others already experienced: just as the body assimilates inorganic matter.

For the understanding of Logic:—

The will which tends to see likeness everywhere is the will to power —the belief that something is so and so (the essence of a judgment), is the result of a will which would fain have it as similar as possible.

512.

Logic is bound up with the proviso: granted that identical cases exist. As a matter of fact, before one can think and conclude in a logical fashion, this condition must first be assumed. That is to say, the will to logical truth cannot be consummated before a fundamental falsification of all phenomena has been assumed. From which it follows that an instinct rules here, which is capable of employing both means: first, falsification; and secondly, the carrying out of its own point of view: logic does not spring from a will to truth.

513.

The inventive force which devised the categories, worked in the service of our need of security, of quick intelligibility, in the form of signs, sounds, and abbreviations.—"Substance," "subject," "object," "Being," "Becoming," are not matters of metaphysical truth. It was the powerful who made the names of things into law, and, among the powerful, it was the greatest artists in abstraction who created the categories.

514.

A moral—that is to say, a method of living which long experience and experiment have tested and proved efficient, at last enters consciousness as a law, as dominant.... And then the whole group of related values and conditions become part of it: it becomes venerable, unassailable, holy, true; a necessary part of its evolution is that its origin should be forgotten.... That is a sign that it has become master. Exactly the same thing might have happened with the categories of reason: the latter, after much groping and many trials, might have proved true through relative usefulness.... A stage was reached when they were grasped as a whole, and when they appealed to consciousness as a whole,—when belief in them was commanded,—that is to say, when they acted as if they commanded.... From that time forward they passed as a priori, as beyond experience, as irrefutable. And, possibly, they may have been the expression of no more than a certain practicality answering the ends of a race and a species,—their usefulness alone is their "truth."

515.

The object is, not "to know," but to schematise,—to impose as much regularity and form upon chaos, as our practical needs require. In the formation of reason, logic, and the categories, it was a need in us that was the determining power: not the need "to know," but to classify, to schematise, for the purpose of intelligibility and calculation. (The adjustment and interpretation of all similar and equal things,—the same process, which every sensual impression undergoes, is the development of reason!) No pre-existing "idea" had anything to do with it: but utility, which teaches us that things can be reckoned with and managed, only when we view them roughly as equal.... Finality in reason is an effect, not a cause: Life degenerates with every other form of reason, although constant attempts are being made to attain to those other forms of reason;—for Life would then become too obscure, too unequal.

The categories are "truths" only in the sense that they are the conditions of our existence, just as Euclid's Space is a conditional "truth." (Between ourselves, as no one will maintain that men are absolutely necessary, reason, as well as Euclid's Space, are seen to be but an idiosyncrasy of one particular species of animals, one idiosyncrasy alone among many others....)

The subjective constraint which prevents one from contradicting here, is a biological constraint: the instinct which makes us see the utility of concluding as we do conclude, is in our blood, we are almost this instinct.... But what simplicity it is to attempt to derive from this fact that we possess an absolute truth! ... The inability to contradict anything is a proof of impotence but not of "truth."

We are not able to affirm and to deny one and the same thing: that is a principle of subjective experience—which is not in the least "necessary," but only a sign of inability.

If, according to Aristotle, the principium contradictionis is the most certain of all principles; if it is the most ultimate of all, and the basis of every demonstration; if the principle of every other axiom lie within it: then one should analyse it all the more severely, in order to discover how many assumptions already lie at its root. It either assumes something concerning reality and Being, as if these had become known in some other sphere—that is to say, as if it were impossible to ascribe the opposite attributes to it; or the proposition means: that the opposites should not be ascribed to it. In that case, logic would be an imperative, not directed at the knowledge of truth, but at the adjusting and fixing of a world which must seem true to us.

In short, the question is a debatable one: are the axioms of logic adequate to reality, or are they measures and means by which alone we can, create realities, or the concept "reality"?... In order to affirm the first alternative, however, one would, as we have seen, require a previous knowledge of Being; which is certainly not the case. The proposition therefore contains no criterion of truth, but an imperative concerning that which should pass as true.

Supposing there were no such thing as A identical with itself, as every logical (and mathematical) proposition presupposes, and that A is in itself an appearance, then logic would have a mere world of appearance as its first condition. As a matter of fact, we believe in that proposition, under the influence of an endless empiricism which seems to confirm it every minute. The "thing"—that is the real substratum of A; our belief in things is the first condition of our faith in logic. The A in logic is, like the atom, a reconstruction of the thing.... By not understanding this, and by making logic into a