

# Nietzsche

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## Nietzsche's Literary Output

- Nietzsche was trained in classical philology, or what we would now call “classics.”
- His first published work, *The Birth of Tragedy* (1872), attempted to explain Greek art, and more generally, Greek culture in a way that gives insight into the state of German culture.
- His 1878 book *Human, All-Too-Human* initiated a steady stream of books that were at once philosophical, psychological, historical, and cultural in their content.
- These works were written in several literary forms, including essays, aphorisms, and poetry.
- In 1901, his sister published as *The Will to Power*, a collection of his notes from 1883 to 1888.
- She published in 1908 his autobiography *Ecce Homo*.

## Nietzsche and Christianity

- Like Marx and Schopenhauer, Nietzsche rejected Christianity.
- Although his views on Christianity appear here and there throughout his philosophical works, they are systematically developed in *The Anti-Christ*, which was published in 1895, after he had become insane.
- Nietzsche's criticisms of Christianity were not directed at Jesus, but rather at the religion created by his followers.
  - “In truth there was only *one* Christian, and he died on the cross” (*The Anti-Christ*, Section 39).
- Nietzsche viewed Christianity as a socio-cultural phenomenon.
- His chief criticism was that it has a debilitating effect on the people who are under its sway.

### ***The Joyful Wisdom***

- Nietzsche published *The Joyful Wisdom, With a Prelude in Rhymes and an Appendix in Songs* in 1882.
- More recently, the title has been translated as *The Gay Science*.
- Nietzsche described the goal of the book as “to erect a new image and ideal of the free spirit.”
- The book was the last in a “series” of books with this goal, the others being:
  - *Human, All Too Human* (1887),
  - *The Wanderer and his Shadow* (1880),
  - *Dawn: Thoughts about the Prejudices of Morality* (1881).
- The book consists of 63 rhymes, 383 very short essays, and 14 songs.

### **The Death of God**

- Nietzsche’s famous proclamation that “God is dead” appears first in Section 108 of *The Joyful Wisdom*.
- In this section, entitled “New Struggles,” Nietzsche states that the “shadow” of the dead God will remain and will terrorize humans for millenia to come.
- It is “we,” the free spirits, who will have to overcome the shadow of the dead God.
- In Section 343, “What Our Cheerfulness Signifies,” Nietzsche describes the death of God as that “the belief in the Christian God has become unworthy of belief.”
- He welcomes the new unbelief as opening up new horizons.
- One specific consequence of the death of God is that “our entire European morality,” which is based on faith in God, is undermined.

### **Foresight and Precaution**

- The death of God also has consequences for our view of the natural world, which is full of “shadows of God.”
- We must remain on guard against allowing these “shadows” to falsify our understanding of nature.
- It is only when nature becomes entirely “undeified” that we will be able to “*naturalize* ourselves by means of the pure, newly discovered, newly redeemed nature.”
- The bulk of Section 109 consists of a list of ways in which nature is “deified,” along with reasons for being on our guard against them.

### **The Nature of the World**

- There are several ways of viewing the natural world against which we should be on our guard.
  - As a living thing,
  - As a machine,
  - As an imitation of humanity,
  - As subject to “laws,”
  - As containing enduring substances.
- Each of these in some way is a consequence of trying to relate the natural world to some divinity.

### **The World as an Organism**

- The organisms we perceive only on “the crust of the earth” are interpreted as being:
  - The essential,
  - The universal,
  - The eternal.
- But they themselves are only:
  - Derivative,
  - Rare,
  - Accidental.

### **The World as a Machine**

- A machine is constructed with a view toward a single end.
- But there is no discernible end for the existence of the world.
- The model of the world as a machine is the observed universe.
- But “the astral arrangement in which we live is an exception” and its order should not be regarded as typical.
- The universe as a whole is chaotic, lacking in “order, structure, form, beauty, wisdom, and whatever else our aesthetic humanities are called.”
- The order we find is not even “lucky,” as this implies the assignment of blame or praise to the universe, which cannot be praised or blamed.

### **The World as Governed by Law**

- There is no moral order of the world.
- In fact, there are only necessities in nature.
- But the necessities are not based on such things as “commands,” and what acts from necessity does not “obey.”
- There is no chance in the world.
- Chance is only what occurs outside the framework of design, but there is no design in the world.

### **Novelty in the World**

- It is not the case that the world “eternally creates something new.”
- This claim anticipates Nietzsche’s hypothesis of “eternal recurrence” in Section 341, according to which the apparently “new” is simply a re-cycled version of what has existed before.
- In fact, there is nothing at all in the world that is eternal.
- Even belief in matter, which is supposed to be the eternal subject of all change, is “just another error.”
- This error is just as erroneous as the belief by Parmenides and his followers that there is an eternal being, which is identified with God.

### **Enduring Errors**

- Throughout human history, there have been a number of “erroneous articles of faith” that have been transmitted through the generations because of their utility.
  - There are enduring things,
  - There are equal things,
  - There are things, substances, and bodies,
  - A thing is as it appears,
  - Our will is free,
  - What is good for me is also absolute good.
- The strength of these convictions is based not on their truth, but on “their antiquity, their embodiment, their character as conditions of life.”

### **“Truth” and “Knowledge”**

- The errors just listed became codified as “knowledge.”
- Through logic, they became the standard of the “true” and the “false.”
  - For example, logic provides forms for judging enduring things as having properties, as being identical to one another, etc.
- Those who looked to life itself rather than “knowledge” for their beliefs were dismissed as mad.
- It was only very late that “deniers and doubters” of the errors came forth.
- Truth itself (as opposed to the “true” and the “false”) then emerged as “the most impotent form of knowledge.”

### **The Eleatics**

- The ancient Eleatic philosophers sought to counter the errors by denying the existence of changing things that are as they appear to be.
- But they did not do so from the standpoint of life.
- Rather, they falsified life by regarding themselves as having the same qualities as being itself.
  - Impersonality,
  - Unchanging permanence,
- They denied the role of impulse in cognition.
- They viewed reason “generally as an entirely free and self-originating activity.”
- However, their methods were invalid and their ends suspect.

### **The Intellectual Struggle**

- The “subtler sincerity and skepticism” made the Eleatics “impossible.”
- The skepticism pitted against one another opposing positions that were at least compatible with the ancient errors.
- There was room for argument concerning which is more useful for life.
- But there was also room for argument concerning what is irrelevant to life.
- Thus there arose a kind of intellectual game—a struggle to attain “the truth.”
- This game became itself a kind of impulse and need.
- As a result, “examination, denial, distrust and contradiction became *forces*.”
- This leads to the all-important clash in the thinker between these forces and the ancient errors.

### **Origin of the Logical**

- The fundamental tenet of logic is that different things can be brought under the same concept and are in this sense “the same.”
- It is opposed to the real truth—that there is no sameness of things in the world.
- The identification of merely similar things as “the same” merely has survival value, as when choosing what to eat.
- To be more circumspect in one’s judgments is dangerous to life.
- The impulses underlying logic, which struggle with one another in our judgments, are “in themselves very illogical or unjust.”
- Thus, logic has its origin in the illogical, though this fact is concealed.

### **Cause and Effect**

- One of the ancient errors is the doctrine of cause and effect.
- It is said that one thing happens because of something else, and that the latter explains the former.
- However, all that we can really give is a description of one thing happening after something else.
- In order to make the description, we isolate a few features of what happens and ignore the rest.
- These features are conceptualizations that we make, and so we describe ourselves rather than explaining the world.
- The true way of describing change would require recognizing the “infinite number of processes” that escape our attention in the apparently abrupt transition from one state to another—which is contrary to the notion of cause and effect.

### **The Origin of Self-Consciousness**

- Leibniz had suggested in the seventeenth century that most human mental activity is not self-conscious.
- We are capable of thinking, feeling, willing, remembering, and in general “acting” without referring these activities to ourselves.
- Since self-consciousness is in this way superfluous, the question arises as to its purpose.
- The answer is that self-consciousness is a necessary condition for communication.

- Although self-consciousness allows the individual to communicate his personal needs, communication is primarily a phenomenon of whole societies.
- Elaborate systems of communication were developed and self-consciousness developed with them (only to be squandered by artists, preachers, etc.).

### **The Herd Mentality**

- The social nature of communication and its product self-consciousness has a crucial consequence for self-understanding.
- Despite our attempts to understand or know ourselves, we can only be self-conscious on terms that are products of society at large.
- So in attempting to become *self*-conscious, we become conscious instead of our “averageness.”
- In this way, our perspective on ourselves is the perspective of the herd.
- While our actions are in fact individual and unique, when we “translate them into consciousness,” they do not appear to be so.
- “Everything which becomes conscious *becomes* just thereby shallow, meager, relatively stupid.”
- In fact, highly developed self-consciousness has become a disease in modern Europe.

### **Consciousness and Knowledge**

- The result of this account of self-consciousness is that what we know (or believe) is merely what is of utility to the human race.
- In fact, we do not even know that it is useful.
- It may be that we have stupidly regarded as useful what will one day lead to the demise of humanity.
- The account does not oppose subject and object, which is the realm of epistemology— itself just a matter of grammar or “popular metaphysics.”
- Nor does it oppose appearance and thing in itself, which is a distinction we are not entitled to make.

### What “Knowledge” Really Is

- Ordinary people seeking “knowledge,” are in reality seeking comfort in the familiar.
- “What is strange is to be traced back to something *known*.”
- Philosophers have understood nothing more of knowledge than that with which we are “at home.”
- We rejoice in knowledge because it releases us from the grip of fear.
- The (Hegelian) location of knowledge in “the idea” is a manifestation of this tendency.
- Philosophers seek to move “outward” from the most familiar—“the facts of consciousness.”
- But this is a fundamental error, because what we are used to is what is most difficult to know.

### *Twilight of the Idols*

- *Twilight of the Idols, or How to Philosophize with a Hammer* was one of Nietzsche’s last works, completed in 1888 and published in 1889.
- Its original title was, *A Psychologist’s Leisure, or the Idle Hours of a Psychologist*.
- The final title was a parody of Richard Wagner’s opera title *Twilight of the Gods*.
- The book contains a number of short pieces—some very short—and a more lengthy essay “Expeditions of an Untimely Man.”
- We will examine one short essay and two excerpts from longer essays.

### “Reason’ in Philosophy”

- The section of *Twilight of the Idols* entitled “Reason’ in Philosophy” contains an attack on the rationalism that characterizes most of Western philosophy.
- This rationalism traffics in lifeless concepts and forever seeks the “being” that excludes becoming.
- Unable to find “being,” it blames the senses for presenting a world of mere “appearances.”
- It also attempts to begin its investigations with the most abstract concepts, which are considered “higher” and are more highly valued.

- This tendency shows up in the philosophy of the Greeks, the Indians, and the Christians.
- Nietzsche criticizes these rationalist methods and advocates the primacy of appearances over “being.”

### **Concept-Mummies**

- Philosophers are idiosyncratic in that they are opposed to anything temporal that involves becoming.
- They believe that they are showing respect for a subject when they treat it as something eternal.
- But in reality, they are only draining the life out of whatever they de-historicize, turning living concepts into “concept-mummies.”
- They search for “being,” which they oppose absolutely to becoming, but it eludes their grasp.
- Desperate for something to blame, they charge the senses with being deceptive and hiding the “true” world.
- They particularly despise the the body, that whose end the senses serve, and which behaves as if it were real.

### **The “Apparent” and “True” Worlds**

- A philosopher who embraced the senses and becoming in the face of the tendency of rationalism is Heraclitus.
- He did think that the senses are deceptive, but only because they present objects as being relatively permanent, while all things in reality are in flux.
- Nietzsche claims against Heraclitus and the Eleatic defenders of “being” that the senses are not deceptive at all.
- Any claim to permanence, substance, thinghood, etc. in the world is based on an interpretation of what the senses present.
- The senses present the “apparent” world as it is, with its becoming, passing away, and in general change.
- Nietzsche contends that real product of the deception of reason is the “true” world of which the “apparent” world is supposed to be a distortion.

### **Real Science and Pseudo-Science**

- The senses are magnificent instruments of observation.
  - The nose is more sensitive than a spectroscope, yet it has not been taken seriously by philosophers.
- Science is fruitful only to the extent that it accepts the testimony of the senses, extend their reach, and think through them.
- Would-be sciences that disregard the senses falsify the world.
  - Metaphysics.
  - Theology.
  - Psychology.
  - Epistemology.
- The “formal sciences” of logic and mathematics do not deal with reality at all.
  - Logic is merely a system of conventions for using signs.
  - Mathematics is merely applied logic.

### **How the Philosophers Invented “God”**

- A second idiosyncrasy of philosophers confuses the last with the first.
- The rationalist philosophers begin with the “highest” concepts, when they would be at the end if they could be reached at all.
  - The good.
  - The true.
  - The perfect.
- Since being is static for these philosophers, the “highest” concepts could not have emerged from the “lower” ones.
- Because they cannot come to be, they must be treated as causes in themselves.
- Since these “highest” concepts must conform perfectly with one another, they are all located in a single being, the “most real being,” “God.”
- The human race has paid dearly for this web-spinning by the philosophers.

### **The Influence of Language on Our Thinking**

- Nietzsche diagnoses the cause of the rationalist bias in favor of “thinghood” to the origins of language.
- Language originated when psychology was in its most rudimentary form.
  - There is everywhere a *doer* and a *doing*.
  - The doer is the *Ego*, and the cause is *will*.
- This initial notion of an ego is generalized to that of *substance*, which is the origin of the concept “thing.”
- Philosophers later found that the categories of “thinghood” can be handled with security, and so they made them *a priori*, since experience contradicts them.
- The final result of the error was the claim that because we have reasons, humans must belong in the divine realm of “being.”
- “I am afraid we are not rid of God because we still have faith in grammar.”

### **Summary of the Case Against Rationalism**

- The reasons that “this” world has been called “apparent” are in fact the reasons why that world is real, while the existence of any other world cannot be demonstrated.
- The so-called “true” world is merely a “moral-optical illusion,” and the criteria for its existence are in fact criteria for not-being.
- The only reason for favoring an other-worldly “better” life is as revenge against real life.
- The distinction between an “apparent” world and a “true” world is only a symbol of the decline of life.
- It may be thought that the artist’s esteem for appearance over reality makes him decadent.
- But the “appearance” of the artist is just a selective and corrected duplication of the real world.
- The tragic artist in particular is Dionysian and says “Yes” to even the terrible in life.

### **The Error of Free Will**

- The essay “The Four Great Errors” in *Twilight of the Idols* catalogues four errors concerning causality.
- The error of “free will” is a foul artifice of the theologians.
  - Its aim is to impart “responsibility” for one’s actions which can only be atoned through the priest.
- The search for responsibility generally is the result of wishing to judge and punish specific actions.
- Thus the “will” was created by ancient priests go allow for themselves or God the right to punish.
- So that every act could be judged for its guilt, every act had to have its origin located in consciousness.
- The modern “immoralists” are trying to cleanse the world of the concept of guilt.
- Naturally, it is the priests and their concept of a “moral world-order” that pose the greatest obstacle to this attempt to cure humanity of its sickness.

### **Humanity Has No Purpose**

- The philosophies of the past have tried to impart meaning to humanity by describing it as having been made to achieve some end.
- But there is nothing that gives humans the qualities they have.
  - Not God.
  - Not society.
  - Not ourselves (as with Kant and perhaps Plato).
- There is no end for which humanity exists.
  - Not an “ideal of humanity.”
  - Not an “ideal of happiness.”
  - Not an “ideal of morality.”
- The very concept of an “end” is an invention.
- We are all necessarily connected parts of a whole, whose “value” it is impossible to judge.
- To admit this fact is a great liberation, and we redeem the world by denying God.

### **Moral Anti-Realism**

- In the first section of “The ‘Improvers’ of Mankind” in *Twilight of the Idols*, Nietzsche claims to have been the first to formulate what we now call a moral anti-realist position:
  - “*There are altogether no moral facts.*”
- It is the task of the philosopher to go “*beyond* good and evil.”
- Morality and moral judgments are based on the misinterpretation of certain phenomena.
- They go back to a time when people mistook mere imaginings for truth.
- However, they are a sign or symptom of the “most valuable realities of cultures and inwardnesses.”
- The only way to profit from morality is to interpret the “sign language” that morality is.

### ***On the Genealogy of Morals***

- One of Nietzsche’s most widely-read books is the 1887 *The Genealogy of Morals: An Attack*.
- The book consists of three parts, each of which is self-contained, though fairly closely related with the others.
- The first part, “‘Good and Evil,’ ‘‘Good and Bad’,” attempts to document an “inversion” from noble values into Christian values.
- The second part, “‘Guilt,’ ‘Bad Conscience,’ and Related Matters,” tries to show how religion originated through the invention of “guilt” as a form of self-torment.
- The third part, “What Do Aescetic Ideals Mean?” purports to explain how humanity, which suffers naturally and apparently for no reason, adopts suffering itself as the reason for its existence.

### **The English Psychologists**

- Nietzsche begins the first essay by considering the case of the “English psychologists,” who attempt to explain human behavior through such mechanisms as principles of association.
- It would be an offense to human pride if all that is responsible for our mental life is so mechanical.
- Thus, it is interesting to speculate as to what drives these psychologists to treat the human being in this way.

- A mean instinct to belittle humanity?
- The pessimistic gloominess of disillusioned idealists?
- A turn away from Plato and Christianity?
- A taste for the strange and paradoxical?
- Perhaps it is one of these reasons or a bit of all of them.
- Whatever the reason, Nietzsche holds out the hope that they are “courageous, magnanimous and proud animals,” who hold out the hope of learning the truth, however distasteful it turns out to be.

### **The Unhistorical Deduction of the Concept of “Good”**

- For all their good spirits, the English psychologists failed in their attempt to understand the concept of “good.”
- They gave an historical explanation of the origin of the concept.
- Originally, the non-egoistic acts of people are praised and called “good” by their recipients because they found them to be useful to themselves.
- Then the origin of the praise was forgotten, and it became simply routine to praise non-egoistic acts.
  - That which is merely useful to the recipient is erroneously called “good in itself.”
- The results of the English psychologists are a devaluation of the proudest values of humanity.
- But they do not think historically, because they reflect the idiosyncratic categories of the psychologists: utility, forgetting, routine, and error.

### **The Origin of “Good” and “Bad”**

- The error of the English psychologists lies in locating the source of the concept “good” in the sentiments of the recipients of actions.
- Instead, its origin lies in the valuation given by “the noble, mighty, highly placed, and the high-minded” to *their own* actions.
- A “good action” belongs “to the highest rank, in contradistinction to all that was base, low and plebeian.”
- A “bad action” is one undertaken out of baseness.
- This contrast between the actions of the nobles and that of the base depends on the “pathos of distance,” the feeling of superiority of the “higher” over the “lower.”

- There is no element of utility here, as the noble values spring from their passions, rather from any cool calculation.
- Nor is there any reason to call “good” with actions that are not undertaken egoistically, as the herd would have it.

### **Goodness and Utility**

- The first mistake of the English psychologists was to misunderstand the origin of the concept of “good” in utility.
- Their second mistake was internal to their theory: that goodness was taken to be an intrinsic value because the usefulness of “good” actions was forgotten.
- Surely, if the actions were so useful, their utility should never be forgotten.
- A more plausible view was taken by Herbert Spencer.
- He also equates goodness with utility, but he claims in addition that this association is never forgotten.
- It is because the association is made universally that goodness is thought to be an intrinsic value.
- Although Spencer’s view is wrong, it is at least in itself “self-consistent and psychologically tenable” as an explanation.

### **The Etymology of ‘Good’ and ‘Bad’**

- From the point of view of etymology (the study of the origins of words), one can obtain an insight into the genealogy of morality itself.
- In a number of different languages, the word ‘good’ developed to refer to features of nobility or aristocracy.
  - Spiritually high-minded.
  - Spiritually privileged.
- This development runs parallel to that of the word ‘bad,’ which refers to features of the base.
  - Common.
  - Low.
- In German, the word ‘bad’ (*schlecht*) is the same as ‘simple’ (*schlicht*), and is merely descriptive of someone as common, in contrast to the nobility.
- This development has not been noticed due to the destructive prejudice of democracy in modern times.

### **Priestly Aristocracies**

- When the clerical caste is the highest caste, they appropriate the word 'pure' and detach 'good' from social standing.
- Originally, purity was a matter of simple hygiene, but in the hands of the priestly aristocracy, it is transformed into an unhealthy brooding and emotional explosiveness.
- The metaphysics of the clergy finds purity by repudiating the senses.
- Its discontent is to be "cured" by "God," which is the epitome of purity: pure nothingness.
- This made the passions dangerous, which in turn made the human being into an interesting animal.
  - The human soul became deep.
  - The human soul became evil for the first time.

### **The Slave-Revolt in Morality**

- When the priestly caste splits off from the aristocratic, there exists potential for conflict.
- The priests are physically powerless, but they are the most dangerous opponent because they become great haters.
- The priestly haters develop intellect as their weapon, which keeps human history from being "a dull and stupid thing."
- The Jewish priesthood were able to get their revenge against the powerful by inverting their values.
- Wealth, nobility, and power are turned into evil, and only the poor, lowly, and powerless are good.
- This inversion constituted the slave-revolt in the history of morality.
- The revolt remains successful and has been forgotten only because of its success.

### **The Man of Nobility and the Man of Rancor**

- The values of the noble man and the man of rancor work in opposite ways.
- The values of the noble are positive, an affirmation of what he is.
- The values of the man of rancor are negative, a condemnation of what someone else (the noble) is.

- The noble looks at those below him as merely unhappy and at his enemies as worthy of respect, which is “a bridge to love.”
- The man of rancor feels the might of those above him and reacts by declaring them “evil.”
- Any cleverness on the part of the noble is subordinate to his power and thrust of his instincts.
- A race of men of rancor regards sharp-wittedness “as an absolutely vital condition for its existence.”

### **The Origin of “Freedom” and “Responsibility”**

- The attributes of strength and weakness are natural, as are all the acts which are performed through strength and weakness.
- Common language deceives us into believing that behind every act is a “doer” which can be separated from the act.
  - There is an object, a bolt of lightning, which causes the flash of light to occur.
- This separation is applied to persons by the weak in the claim that it is the “subject” who is responsible for the act.
- Thus it is claimed that the strong are free not to act in the way that strong people naturally do.
- The weak then can claim that they have freely chosen weakness, which is to say that they have chosen to be “good.”

### **Guilt and Punishment**

- The account of the origins of “freedom” and “responsibility” marks the end of the first essay.
- The aim of the Second Essay is to account for the origins of a different phenomenon, “guilt” or “bad conscience.”
- Before revealing their true origins, Nietzsche attempts to refute a different explanation.
  - Guilt arises from punishment.
- To make his case, Nietzsche gives an account of the origin of punishment.
- He describes it as a form of compensation to the victim of the crime, from the “debtor to the” creditor.”
- Punishment does not instill guilt, but on the contrary it hardens the person punished.

### **Primordial Humanity**

- Nietzsche's "tentative expression" of his "hypothesis" concerning the origins of guilt is given beginning in Section 16 and continuing until the end of the essay.
- The starting-point is a hypothesis about human beings in their primitive state, in which their instincts, their unconscious drives, are "allowed free play" and are "discharged" without opposition.
- These instincts "had hitherto been the foundation of his power, his joy, and his awesomeness."
- These "wild, extravagant instincts" included:
  - Hostility,
  - Cruelty,
  - Delight in persecution,
  - Excitement,
  - Destruction.

### **Interiorization**

- At some point, there occurred a "the most profound transformation [the human] ever underwent."
- This transformation made humans into social beings.
- As social beings, humans turned away from instinct and to a calculating "consciousness," which later was called the human "soul."
- Nietzsche called this process the "interiorization" or turning inward of the human being.
- The effect of interiorization was the suppression of the original drives and instincts.
- Thus the human animal turns upon itself.
- It replaces the original wild environment with an interior wilderness in which the only victim of one's instincts is himself.

### **The Origin of Guilt**

- Guilt is the result of wild instinct re-directed inwardly toward one's self.
- "Man began rending, persecuting, terrifying himself, like a wild beast hurling itself against the bars of its cage."
- This self-torture was accompanied by a sickness of one's self.

- Interiorization changed “the whole complexion of the universe.”
- This is due to its great novelty, profundity, mysteriousness, contradictoriness, and pregnancy with possibility.
- The spectacle created by interiorization was so momentous that humans invented gods to witness it.

### **The Earliest Commonwealth**

- Nietzsche hypothesizes that the transformation from wildness to society came about abruptly.
- It began with violent tyranny of the strong over the weak.
- The original founders of society were little more than an organized pack of beasts who were able to suppress violently the instincts of the others.
- The commonwealth could not have been the result of a “social contract,” as its founders were commanders to whom the idea of an agreement had no meaning.
- These artists who worked their will on the others could feel no guilt.
- But they did originate guilt in those whom they subdued, whose instincts were driven inward upon themselves.

### **Beauty and Altruism**

- Modern morality praises altruism, selflessness, self-denial, self-sacrifice as a beautiful thing.
- But altruism, and even beauty itself, has its origins in the ugliness of bad conscience.
- Before there can be beauty, there must be ugliness.
- And what is ugly to the interiorized human is himself.
- Thus beauty lies in the denial of one’s self.
- There is a joy in beauty, but it “was from its very start a *cruel joy*.”

### **The Creation of the Gods?**

- In Section 21, there is an interlude which recasts the earlier discussion of the relation of debtor to creditor.
- Societies owe a debt to their ancestors for bringing about the conditions under which they now flourish.

- The greater the success of the society, the greater the debt is incurred to the ancestors.
- This in turn inflates the image of the ancestors, who become increasingly “fearful to the imagination.”
- Nietzsche speculates that the image of fearful ancestors is converted into a notion of gods.
- It then becomes the gods who must be repaid—at a higher and higher price.

### **Abolish God, Abolish Guilt?**

- As more sophisticated societies developed from primitive tribes, the sense of indebtedness to their gods continues to grow.
- In parallel, the conception of the gods themselves changes.
- As tribes are unified under despotic rule, their gods become unified until they are consolidated into a single god.
- The God of Christianity is the “highest potency” god yet developed—and correspondingly the feeling of indebtedness and guilt is the greatest in Christianity.
- Modern society is beginning to become skeptical of Christianity, and with this should come a diminution of guilt.
- “A complete and definite victory of atheism” may bring about a “second innocence” devoid of guilt for humanity as a whole.

### **The Guilt of the Creditor**

- Unfortunately, the fall of the notion of a divine creditor is not doing away with guilt.
- Instead, guilt has become “moralized,” in the sense that one is guilty because of one’s own failings.
- The debt now seems to be unredeemable.
- One reaction is to turn the guilt back on the creditor by thinking of it as guilty.
  - The “first cause” of humanity, such as “bondage of the will,”
  - Nature, seen as an instrument of the devil,
  - Existence itself, resulting in a longing for nothingness as in Buddhism.
- Christianity brilliantly offers “temporary relief to tortured humanity” through the paradox of the God-creditor redeeming the debt by sacrificing himself.

## **A Lunatic Asylum**

- In Section 22, Nietzsche summarizes his hypothesis.
  - Social humanity invented guilt to torture itself.
  - Religion was seized upon to make this self-torture even worse.
  - An entire inventory of instruments of torture was created.
  - Naturalness was rejected in favor of the eternal torture of hell.
- Here we find “an insanity of the *will* that is without parallel.”
- Everything humans will is directed against themselves, culminating in a God that assures them of their unworthiness.
- This is the worst sickness humanity has ever endured.
- We must turn away in horror from the cry of “love” in the midst of all of this torture.

## ***Beyond Good and Evil***

- *Beyond Good and Evil, Prelude to a Philosophy of the Future* was published in 1886.
- It consists of nine “Parts,” each divided into a number of sections, and a set of poems.
- In the Preface, Nietzsche places the book in the context of “the fight against Plato or, . . . the fight against the Christian-ecclesiastical pressure of millenia.”
- The “dogmatist’s error” committed by Plato was his “invention of the pure spirit and the good as such.”
- The conflict between modern Europe and Platonism/Christianity has created a dynamic tension which gives hope of attaining a new goal.

## **The Value of the Will to Truth**

- Part One of *Beyond Good and Evil* is entitled “Prejudices of Philosophers” (or “On the Prejudices of Philosophers”).
- It begins with the fact that philosophers have had a will to discover the truth.
- There is a question of the origin of the will to truth.
- But in investigating the question, one is driven to the more fundamental question as to the value of the will to truth.
- “Granted that we want the truth: *why not rather* untruth? And uncertainty? Even ignorance.

- Nietzsche suggests that he is the first to raise the question of the value of the will to truth.
- He adds that this may be the most risky question that could possibly be raised.

### **Thinking and Instinct**

- Reading between the lines of what the philosophers say, Nietzsche concludes that all thinking, including philosophical thinking, “must be counted among the instinctive functions.”
- “Being conscious” is no more opposed to instinct than being born is opposed to heredity.
- The thinking of the philosopher, then, is secretly influenced by the philosopher’s instincts.
- Behind all logic are valuations, which in turn are based on “physiological demands, for the maintenance of definite mode of life.”
- The value of “truth” over illusion and of certainty over uncertainty may only be necessary for human maintenance, but may be only superficial.

### **Untruth as a Condition of Life**

- It is strange to assert, as Nietzsche does, that the falsehood of an opinion is no objection to it.
- The important questions about an opinion are whether it is:
  - Life-furthering,
  - Life-preserving,
  - Species preserving,
- The falsest opinions serve these functions best.
  - Belief in the eternal and immutable,
  - Reduction of the world to mathematical quantities.
- To recognize untruth as a condition of life is to go “beyond good and evil,” because it takes conditions of life to be ultimate values.

### **Prejudices of Philosophers**

- The philosophers claim to have uncovered their “truths” as the result of the cold application of logical dialectic.
- In fact, they are merely propounding and defending their real opinions: “their heart’s desire abstracted and refined.”
- They do not admit that it is their prejudices that they parade as “truths.”
- Kant proposes his “categorical imperative” as if it were the result of dialectical thinking, but instead it expresses the prejudice of an old moralist and ethical preacher.
- Spinoza clads his own “wisdom” in a mathematical form that is nothing but hocus-pocus.

### **Stoicism**

- The Stoics desired to live “according to nature.”
- But nature is indifferent and devoid of all values.
- Nature is thus contrary to life, which ultimately is all about valuation.
- If nature is equated to life, then the desire would be the empty imperative to live life according to life.
- The reality is that the Stoics were attempting to dictate their values to nature.
- The Stoic “love of truth” turns into a false view of nature.
- This projection of the values of the philosopher onto everything else is the most spiritual “will to power”: to create the world.

### **Kant**

- Kant proclaimed the great discovery of synthetic *a priori* judgments and asked how they are possible
- Kant went on to “discover” a moral faculty to account for the moral judgments.
- His explanation was that they are the product of a “faculty.”
- But this explanation is empty: such judgments are possible because we have a means for making them.
- This is like explaining the sleep-inducing property of opium to their power to produce sleep.
- The German philosophers followed Kant’s procedure enthusiastically, as with Schelling’s “intellectual intuition.”
- The real explanation for these claims was a felt need to counter the sensualism of the seventeenth century.

### **Life as Will to Power**

- Living things seek to discharge their strength.
- “Life itself is will to power.”
- Self-preservation is only a relatively insignificant byproduct of the discharge of strength.
- Thus, self-preservation is not the goal of life.
- Indeed, teleological principles such as that of self-preservation are superfluous and should be avoided.
- Spinoza showed that method demands the exclusion of teleological principles.

### **“Immediate Certainties”**

- Philosophers are fond of discovering “immediate certainties” such as:
  - “I think” (Descartes),
  - “I will” (Schopenhauer).
- But immediate certainty, absolute knowledge, thing in itself, are contradictions in terms.
- In the case of “I think,” there is a host of connections to other matters that make its immediacy impossible.
  - What is the origin of the concept of thinking?
  - What is the I?
  - How can the I be the cause of thinking?
- If the answer is supposed to be given by intuition, we must ask why what is given by intuition is true.

### **The Thinker**

- The logicians claim that “the subject ‘I’ is a condition of the predicate ‘think.’”
- In fact, the opposite is the case: “a thought comes when ‘it’ wishes, and not when ‘I’ wish.”
- Even if the formula is reduced to “one thinks,” there is no immediate certainty about the “one” that thinks.
- The argument is that thinking is an activity, and every activity requires an active agent.

- But this is an interpretation of the process of thinking, so the “I” is not immediately certain.
- The postulation of the “I” or of “one” is reminiscent of the “atom” of the ancients.
  - Where there is power, there must be a material subject which has the power.

### **Willing**

- There is no immediate certainty regarding the will, of the kind which Schopenhauer proposed.
- Willing is complicated, involving at least these sensations:
  - Of the condition away from which we go,
  - Of the condition toward which we go,
  - Of the “from” and “toward” themselves,
  - Of muscular activity, etc.
- Willing also requires a ruling thought.
- Willing is the emotion of a command.
- “A man who *wills* commands something within himself which renders obedience, or which he believes renders obedience.”

### **False Judgments About the Will**

- In willing, there are sensations both of the command and of the outcome of the command.
- The sensations are taken to refer to something within an identical “I” which wills.
- In most cases, the outcome of the command is what is expected.
- From this we infer that the outcome is the effect of the command.
- The feeling of delight at the success of the command is what is called “freedom of the will”
- However, what commands and what obeys are distinct “souls” which form part of a community which makes up the “I.”
- Thus willing takes on a moral significance due to its relation of supremacy, which is a phenomenon of life.

### **The Unity of Philosophy**

- Many philosophical notions have recurred throughout the ages among cultures with the same linguistic roots;
  - Indian,
  - Greek,
  - German
- Language forms a scheme of possible philosophies, in which scheme each individual philosopher finds his niche.
- Language itself is the result of “*physiological* valuations and racial conditions.”
- Most likely people with radically different language forms would view the world very differently.
- This view refutes Locke’s empiricist claim that all ideas are impressed by experience on an initially empty mind.

### **Free and Unfree Will**

- There are two kinds of desire that appear to be in conflict with each other:
  - To exercise “free will,” thereby taking full responsibility for one’s action and claim merit for them.
  - To claim that one’s will is “unfree,” thereby absolving one’s self of any responsibility for one’s action and devaluing them.
- Both conceptions depend on a faulty notion of “cause and effect,” according to which one thing acts upon another, mechanically or with purpose.
- But the notions of “cause” and “causal law” are mere inventions of ourselves.
- In reality, there are only strong wills and weak wills, not free and unfree wills.

### **Natural Law**

- The notion that nature conforms to law is based on an underlying democratic instinct of the modern soul.
  - As all humans are equal before the law, so must nature be equal before its law.
- The motive here is a vulgar antagonism toward everything privileged.
- But this is only an interpretation of the “text” of nature, which in fact is lawless.
- Another interpretation is that nature is, so to speak, tyrannically inconsiderate in its discharge of power.

- On this interpretation as with the first, the course of nature is “calculable,” but only because of the absence of laws of nature.
  - “Every power effects its ultimate consequences every moment.”

### **The Triumph of Psychology**

- Psychology has been held back by “moral prejudices and timidities.”
- It is difficult to view the human mind when these blinders are removed.
- Someone with a “still strong and manly conscience” will be taken aback by what is discovered:
  - “Good” and “bad” impulses are reciprocally conditioned on each other,
  - Worse, “good” impulses depend on “bad ones.”
- If the investigator goes so far as to recognize the “bad” impulses (hatred, envy, etc.) as conditions of life, he will feel as if sea-sick.
- There are good reasons to avoid these seas, but if one drifts into them, one should move forward with resolve.
- Upon the defeat of morality, psychology becomes “once more the path to the fundamental problems.”