Transcendent Speculation on the
Apparent Deliberateness in the
Fate of the Individual

Although the ideas to be given here do not lead to any firm result, indeed they might perhaps be termed a mere metaphysical fantasy, I could not bring myself to consign them to oblivion, since to many a man they will be welcome, at any rate as a comparison with his own that he may have entertained on the same subject. Yet such a man should also be reminded that in them everything is dubious and uncertain, not merely the solution but even the problem. Accordingly, here we have to expect anything but definite information; rather the mere ventilation of a very obscure set of facts which have suggested themselves possibly to everyone in the course of his life, or when he has looked back on it. Even our observations on the subject may perhaps not be much more than a fumbling and groping in the dark where we note that something does exist, yet we do not really know where or what it is. If, however, in the course of my remarks I should occasionally adopt a positive or even dogmatic tone, let it be said here and now that this is done merely in order not to become dull and diffuse through the constant repetition of the forms of doubt and conjecture, and that in consequence this is not to be taken seriously.

Belief in a special providence, or else in a supernatural guidance of the events in an individual’s life, has at all times been universally popular, and even with thinkers who are averse to all superstition it is occasionally found firm and unshaken and entirely unconnected with any definite dogmas. Opposed to it in the first place is the fact that, like all belief in a God, it has sprung not really from knowledge, but from the will; thus it is primarily the offspring of our miserable state. The data for this, which might have been furnished merely by knowledge, could perhaps be traced to the fact that chance which plays
us a hundred cruel and maliciously contrived tricks, does sometimes turn out particularly favourable to us, or indirectly ministers to our great benefit. In all such cases, we recognize therein the hand of providence and this most clearly when it has led us to a fortunate destiny against our own insight and even in ways that we abominate. We then say *tunc bene navigavi, cum naufragium feci,* and the contrast between choice and guidance becomes unmistakably clear, but at the same time in favour of the latter. For this reason, when we meet with misfortunes, we console ourselves with that short maxim that is often proved true 'who knows it may be some good?' This has really sprung from the view that, although chance rules the world, error is nevertheless its co-regent, since we are as much subject to the one as to the other. Perhaps the very thing that now seems to us a misfortune is a blessing. Thus we shun the blows of one world-tyrant and rush to the other in that we turn from chance and appeal to error.

Apart from this, however, to attribute to pure evident chance a purpose or intention is an idea of unparalleled audacity. Yet I believe that everyone has had at least once in his life a vivid conception of it. It is found among all races and in all faiths, although it is most marked among the Mohammedans. It is an idea that can be the absurdest or profoundest according as it is understood. Nevertheless, striking as the instances may at times be whereby it could be supported, there is always the standing objection to them that it would be the greatest marvel if chance never watched over our affairs as well as, or even better than, our understanding and insight could have done.

Without exception everything that happens takes place with strict necessity and this is a truth to be understood a priori and consequently to be regarded as irrefutable; here I will call it demonstrable fatalism. In my prize-essay 'On the Freedom of the Will' (chap. 3, at the end) it follows as the result of all previous investigations. It is confirmed empirically and *a posteriori* by the fact, no longer in doubt, that magnetic somnambulists, persons gifted with second sight, and sometimes even the dreams of ordinary sleep directly and accurately predict future events.*

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1 ['I then had a good voyage, although I was shipwrecked.]

* In *The Times* of 2 December 1852 the following judicial statement is found: At Newent in Gloucestershire, Mr. Lovegrove the coroner held an inquest on a
This empirical confirmation of my theory of the strict necessity of all that happens is seen most strikingly in second sight. For in virtue thereof we afterwards see happen something that was often predicted long previously; it occurs with complete accuracy and with all the attendant circumstances just as they were stated, even when we had purposely made every effort to prevent it or make the event differ, at any rate in some minor circumstance, from the communicated vision. This has always been futile, since the very thing that was to frustrate the predicted event always helped to bring it about. It is precisely the same both in the tragedies and the history of the ancients, the calamity predicted by oracles or dreams is brought about by the very measures that are employed to prevent it. As instances of this, I merely mention from many Oedipus Rex and the fine story of Croesus with Adrastus in the first book of Herodotus, cc. 35–43. In keeping with these, we find cases of second sight given by the thoroughly reliable Bende Bendgen in the third part of the eighth volume of the Archiv für thierischen Magnetismus by Kieser (especially examples 4, 12, 14, 16), and also a case in Jung-Stilling’s Theorie der Geisterkunde, § 155. Now if the gift of second sight were as frequent as it is rare, innumerable events predicted would happen exactly, and the undeniable factual proof of the strict necessity of all that happens would be generally evident and accessible to everyone. There would then no longer be any doubt that, however much the course of things was represented as being purely accidental, at bottom it was not so; on the contrary, all these accidents, τα εἰκόνες φέρομεν, are themselves enveloped in a deeply hidden necessity, εἰμαρμένη, whose mere instrument is chance itself. To gain an insight into this has from time immemorial been the endeavour of all soothsayers. Now from the divination just mentioned and founded on fact, it follows not merely that all

man named Mark Lane whose body was found in the water. The brother of the deceased stated that, on first hearing that his brother Mark was missing, he at once replied that he had been drowned, for the previous night he had dreamed that he stood in deep water and tried to pull him out. On the following night he again dreamed that his brother had been drowned near the sluice at Oxenhall and that a trout was swimming close to him. The next morning he went with his other brother to Oxenhall and there saw a trout in the water. At once he was convinced that his brother must be lying there and actually found the body at the spot. Thus something as fleeting as the swimming of a trout was some hours previously foreseen exactly to the second.
events occur with complete necessity, but also that they are in some way determined beforehand and objectively fixed, in that they present themselves to the eye of a seer as something existing. At all events, this could still be traced to the mere necessity of their occurrence in consequence of the course of the causal chain. In any case the insight, or rather the view, that this necessity of all that happens is not blind and thus the belief in a connection of events in the course of our lives, as systematic as it is necessary, is a fatalism of a higher order which cannot, like simple fatalism, be demonstrated, but happens possibly to everyone sooner or later and firmly holds him either temporarily or permanently according to his way of thinking. We can call this transcendent fatalism, as distinct from that which is ordinary and demonstrable. It does not come, like the latter, from a really theoretical knowledge or from the investigation necessary for this, for which few would be qualified; but it gradually reveals itself from the experiences in the course of a man’s own life. Of these certain events become conspicuous to everyone and, by virtue of their being specially and peculiarly appropriate to him, they bear, on the one hand, the stamp of a moral or inner necessity, yet, on the other, they carry the clear impression of an external and wholly accidental nature. The frequent occurrence of this gradually leads to the view, often becoming a conviction, that the course of an individual’s life, however confused it appears to be, is a complete whole, in harmony with itself and having a definite tendency and didactic meaning, as profoundly conceived as is the finest epic.* But now the information imparted to him in this way would relate solely to his individual will which in the last resort is his individual error. For plan and totality are to be found not in world history, as professorial philosophy would have us believe, but in the life of the individual. In fact, nations exist merely in abstracto; individuals are what is real. Therefore world history is without direct metaphysical significance; it is really only an accidental configuration. Here I remind the reader of what I have said on this point in the World as Will and Representation, vol. i, § 35. And so as regards their own individual fate, there

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* If we very carefully turn over in our minds many of the scenes of the past, everything therein appears to be as well mapped out as in a really systematically planned novel.
arises in many that transcendent fatalism which at some time occurs perhaps to everyone through an attentive consideration of his own life after its thread has been spun out to a considerable length. In fact, when he reflects on the details of his life, this may sometimes be presented to him as if everything therein had been mapped out and the human beings appearing on the scene seem to him to be mere performers in a play. This transcendent fatalism has not only much that is consoling, but perhaps much also that is true; and so at all times it has been affirmed even as a dogma.* As being quite unprejudiced, the testimony of an experienced courtier and man of the world, given moreover at a Nestorian age, deserves here to be mentioned, namely that of the ninety-year-old Knebel, who in a letter says: 'On closer observation, we shall find that in the lives of most people there is to be found a certain plan which, through the peculiar nature or circumstances that direct it, is so to speak sketched out for them. The states of their lives may be ever so variable and changeable, yet in the end there appears a totality that enables us to observe thereunder a certain harmony and consistency.——However concealed its action may be, the hand of a definite fate is also strictly in evidence; it may be moved by external influence or inner impulse; indeed contradictory grounds may operate in its direction. However disorganized the course of life, motive and tendency, ground and direction, always make their appearance.' (Knebel's Litterarischer Nachlass, 2nd edn., 1840, vol. iii, p. 452.)

The systematic arrangement, here mentioned, in the life of everyone can be explained partly from the immutability and rigid consistency of the inborn character which invariably brings a man back on to the same track. Everyone recognizes immediately and with such certainty what is most appropriate to his character that, as a rule, he by no means receives it in clear reflecting consciousness, but acts according to it at once.

* Neither our action nor our course of life is our work, but rather our essence and existence, which no one regards as our work. For on the basis of this and of the circumstances that happen in strict causal connection, and also of external events, our action and the course of our life take place with absolute necessity. Accordingly, at his birth the whole course of a man's life is already determined irrevocably down to its details, so that, at the height of her powers, a somnambulist could foretell it exactly. We should bear this great and certain truth in mind when we consider and judge the course of our life, our deeds, and our sufferings.
and, as it were, by instinct. In so far as this kind of knowledge passes into action without having entered clear consciousness, it is to be compared to the reflex motions of Marshall Hall. By virtue thereof everyone pursues and takes up what is appropriate to him as an individual, even without his being able to give a clear account of it to himself, and the power so to do does not come to him either from without or from his own false conceptions and prejudices. In the same way, the turtle in the sand, that is hatched out by the sun, at once goes straight to the water, even without being able to see it. And so this is the inner compass, the mysterious characteristic, that brings everyone correctly on to that path which for him is the only suitable one; but only after he has covered it does he become aware of its uniform direction. This, however, seems to be inadequate in view of the powerful influence and great force of external circumstances. Here it is very unlikely that the most important thing in the world, namely the course of a man’s life purchased at the price of so much activity, trouble, and suffering, should obtain only the other half of its guidance, namely the part coming from without, simply and solely from the hand of a really blind chance that is absolutely nothing in itself and dispenses with all direction and order. On the contrary, we are tempted to believe that, just as there are certain images or figures called anamorphoses (Pouillet, p. 171) which reveal to the naked eye only distorted, mutilated, and shapeless objects, but, on the other hand, show us regular human figures when seen in a conical mirror, so the purely empirical apprehension of the course of the world is like that intuitive perception of the picture with the naked eye; the pursuit of fate’s purpose, on the other hand, is like the intuitive perception in the conical mirror which combines and arranges what has there been scattered apart. Against this view, however, may still always be opposed the other that the systematic connection we think we perceive in the events of our lives, is only an unconscious working of our regulating and schematizing imagination similar to that by which we clearly and distinctly discern on a spotted wall human figures and groups, in that we bring into systematic connection spots that have been scattered by the blindest chance. Yet it may be supposed that what in the highest and truest sense of the word is for us right and beneficial,
cannot really be what was merely projected but never carried into effect and hence has never obtained any other existence than the one in our thoughts—the *vanì disegni, che non han’ mai loco*² of Ariosto—whose frustration by chance we should then have to deplore for the rest of our lives. Rather is it that which is really stamped in the great image of reality and of which we say with conviction after recognizing its appropriateness, *sic erat in fatis*,³ namely that it was bound to happen. Therefore there had to be some kind of provision for the realization of what is appropriate in this sense through a unity of the accidental and the necessary which lies at the very root of things. In virtue of that unity, the inner necessity showing itself as a kind of instinctive impulse, then rational deliberation, and finally the external operation of circumstances had to assist one another in the course of a man’s life in such a way that, at the end thereof when it had been run through, they made it appear like a well-finished and perfected work of art, although previously, when it was still in the making, it had, as in the case of every planned work of art, the appearance of being often without any plan or purpose. But whoever came along after its completion and closely considered it, would inevitably gaze in astonishment at such a course of life as the work of the most deliberate foresight, wisdom, and persistence. Yet on the whole, it would be of significance according as its subject was ordinary or extraordinary. From this point of view, we might conceive the very transcendent idea that, underlying this *mundus phaenomenon* wherein chance reigns, there is generally to be found everywhere a *mundus intelligibilis* that rules over chance itself. Nature, of course, does everything simply for the species and nothing for the mere individual, since for her the former is everything, the latter nothing. But what we here assume as operative is not nature, but the metaphysical that lies beyond nature and exists whole and undivided in every individual to whom, therefore, all this is of importance.

To get to the bottom of these things, we should indeed first have to answer the following questions: is a complete disparity possible between a man’s character and fate? or, looking at the main point, does the fate of everyone conform to his

² ['Vain plans that never have reality."

³ ['Thus it was decreed in fate.'
character? or finally, does a secret inconceivable necessity, comparable to the author of a drama, actually fit the two together always suitably? But on this very point we are in the dark.

Yet we think that at every moment we are masters of our actions; but if we look back on the course of our lives and in particular bear in mind our unfortunate steps together with their consequences, we often do not understand how we could do this or omit to do that, so that it looks as if a strange power has guided our steps. And so Shakespeare says:

Fate, show thy force: ourselves we do not owe;  
What is decreed must be, and be this so!  
Twelfth Night, Act 1, Sc. 5.

In verse and prose the ancients never weary of stressing the omnipotence of fate, showing thereby man’s powerlessness by way of contrast. We see everywhere that this is a conviction with which they are imbued, since they suspect a mysterious connection of things which is deeper than the clearly empirical. (See Lucian’s Dialogues of the Dead, xix and xxx; Herodotus, lib. i, c. 91 and ix, c. 16.) Hence the many terms in Greek for this concept: πότμος, αἰων, εἰμαρμένη, πεπρωμένη, μοῖρα, Ἀδράστεια, and possibly others. The word πρόνοια, on the other hand, shifts the concept of the thing in that it starts from νοῦς as something secondary, whereby it naturally becomes plain and intelligible, but also superficial and false.* Even Goethe says in Götz von Berlichingen (Act v): ‘We human beings do not direct ourselves; power over us is given to evil spirits which practise their mischievous tricks to our undoing.’ Also in Egmont (Act v, last scene): ‘Man thinks he guides his life and directs himself; and his innermost being is irresistibly drawn in accordance with his fate.’ Indeed the prophet Jeremiah has said: ‘I know that the way of man is not in himself: it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps.’ (10: 23). All this is due to our deeds being the necessary product of two factors one of which, our character,

* It is extraordinary how much the ancients were inspired and imbued with the notion of an omnipotent fate (εἰμαρκένεν, fatum). Not only poets especially in tragedies, but also philosophers and historians are evidence of this. In Christian times the idea receded into the background and was less insisted on, since it was superseded by the notion of Providence, πρόνοια, which presupposes an intellectual origin and, starting from a personal being, is not so rigid and unalterable and also not so profoundly conceived and mysterious. Hence it cannot replace the former idea; on the contrary, it has reproached this with infidelity.
is immutably fixed and yet known to us only *a posteriori* and thus gradually; the motives are the other. These reside without, are necessarily brought about by the course of the world, and determine the given character, on the assumption of its fixed nature, with a necessity that is wellnigh mechanical. Now the ego that judges of the ensuing course of things is the subject of knowing; as such it is a stranger to both and is merely the critical spectator of their action. Then, of course, it may at times be astonished.

But if we have once grasped the point of view of that transcendent fatalism and from this aspect now consider the life of an individual, we at times behold the strangest of all spectacles in the contrast between the obvious physical contingency of an event and its moral metaphorical necessity. Yet this can never be demonstrated; on the contrary, it can only be imagined. To get a clear picture of this through a well-known example that, on account of its striking nature, is at the same time suitable as a typical case, let us consider Schiller's *Gang nach dem Eisenhammer*. There we see Fridolin's delay through attendance at mass brought about, on the one hand, just as accidentally as, on the other, it is so extremely important and necessary to him. If we carefully consider the matter, we shall perhaps be able to find analogous cases in our own lives, though not so important or so clear and definite. Many, however, will thus be driven to the assumption that a *secret and inexplicable power* guides all the turns and changes of our lives, indeed often contrary to the intention we had at the time. Yet it does this in such a way as to be appropriate to the objective totality and subjective suitability of our lives and consequently to promote our true and essential welfare. Thus afterwards we often recognize the folly of desires that were entertained in the opposite direction. *Ducunt volentem fata, nolentem trahunt* (Seneca, *Epistulae*, 107). Now such a power that runs through all things with an invisible thread would also have to combine those, which without any mutual connection are allowed by the causal chain, in such a way that they would come together at the required moment. Accordingly, it would be just as complete a master of the events of real life as is the poet of those of his drama. But chance and error which disturb and encroach

*[*Fate leads the willing but drags along the unwilling.*]
primarily and directly on the regular causal run of things, would be the mere instruments of its invisible hand.

What urges us more than anything to the bold assumption of such an unfathomable power that springs from the unity of the deep-lying root of necessity and contingency, is the consideration that the definite and thoroughly characteristic individuality of every man in a physical, moral, and intellectual respect which is all in all to him and must, therefore, have sprung from the highest metaphysical necessity, follows, on the one hand (as I have shown in my chief work, vol. ii, chap. 43), as the necessary result of the father's moral character, of the mother's intellectual capacity, and of the combined corporization of the two. Now, as a rule, the union of these parents has been brought about through obviously accidental circumstances. And so the demand, or metaphysical moral postulate, of an ultimate unity of necessity and contingency here irresistibly forces itself on us. However, I regard it as impossible to arrive at a clear conception of this central root of both; only this much can be said, that it is at the same time what the ancients called fate, ἐμφαμένη, πεπρωμένη, fatum, what they understood by the guiding genius of every individual, but equally also what the Christians worship as Providence, πρόνοια. These three, of course, are distinguished by the fact that fatum is thought of as blind, whereas the other two are not; but this anthropomorphic distinction falls to the ground and loses all significance with that deeper metaphysical essence of things. In this alone do we have to look for the root of that inexplicable union of the contingent with the necessary which manifests itself as the mysterious disposer of all things human.

The notion of a genius or guardian angel that is assigned to every individual and presides over the course of his life, is said to be of Etruscan origin, yet it is widely current among the ancients. Its essential idea is contained in a verse of Menander which has been preserved for us by Plutarch (De tranquillitate animi, c. 15, also in Stobaeus, Eclogues, lib. i, c. 6, § 4, and Clement of Alexandria, Stromata, lib. v, c. 14):

Ἀπαντὶ δαίμονι ἄνδρι συμπαραστατεῖ
Εὐθὺς γενομένη, μυσταγωγὸς τοῦ βίου
Ἄγαθος.
(Hominem unus quemque, simul in lucem est editus, sectatur Genius, vitae qui auspicium facit, bonus nimirum.) At the end of the Republic, Plato describes how before its next rebirth every soul chooses for itself a fate with a personality suited thereto and then says: 'Επειδὴ δ’οὖν πάσας τὰς ψυχὰς τῶν βίων ἡρέθαι, ἀσπερ ἔλαχον, ἐν τάξει προσεῖνα πρὸς τὴν Λάχεσιν, ἐκείνην δ’ἐκάστῳ ἐν εἴλετο δαιμόνια, τούτων φύλακα ξυμπέμπετο τὸν βίον καὶ ἀποπληρωμὴν τῶν αἱρέσεων. On this passage Porphyry has furnished a commentary that is well worth reading and is preserved for us by Stobaeus in Eclogae ethice, lib. ii, c. 8, § 37 (vol. iii, pp. 368 ff. especially 376.) But Plato had previously said in this connexion: οὐχ ὑμᾶς δαίμων λήγεται, ἀλλ’ ὑμεῖς δαίμονα αἱρήσετε. πρῶτος δὲ ὁ λαχοῦ (fate that determines merely the order of choice) πρῶτος αἱρεῖσθαι βίον, ὦ συνέσται ἐξ ἀνόργυς. The matter is very beautifully expressed by Horace:

Scit Genius, natale comes qui temperat astrum,
Naturae deus humanae, mortalis in unum-
Quodque caput, vultu mutabilis, albus et ater.8
(Epistles, ii. 2. 187.)

A passage on this genius or guardian angel, well worth reading, is found in Apuleius, De deo Socratis, p. 236, 38 ed. Bip. Jamblichus, On the Egyptian Mysteries, sect. ix, c. 6, De proprio daemone, has a short but important chapter on this. But even more remarkable is the passage of Proclus in his commentary to Plato’s Alcibiades, p. 77, ed. Creuzer: ὃ γὰρ πᾶσον ἡμῶν τὴν ζωὴν ἡμῶν καὶ τὰς τε αἱρέσεις ἡμῶν ἀποπληρῶν, τὸς πρὸ τῆς γενέσεως, καὶ τὰς τῆς εἰμαρμένης δόσεις καὶ τῶν μορφωμένων θεών, ἐτι δὲ τὰς ἐκ τῆς προνοίας ἐλλάμψεις χρησίμων καὶ παραμετρῶν, οὕτως ὁ δαίμων ἔστι. κ.τ.λ.9 Theophrastus Paracelsus has most

5 ['With a man at his birth is associated a good genius which guides him in the mysteries of life.]
6 ['But after all the souls had chosen their courses of life, they stepped in succession by lot before Laches. But she associated with each the genius he had chosen to be his guardian through life and to fulfil all his choice.]
7 ['No genius will obtain you by lot, but you will select the genius. But the man who has first drawn the lot (that determines the order of succession) shall first choose the course of life, and thereto will he adhere with necessity.]
8 ['This is known only by the genius who tempers the fateful oracle of the stars, a mortal god of human nature who to everyone is different and changeable, now of bright and now of sombre form.]
9 ['For he who guides our whole life, realizes our elective decisions that took effect before birth, allots the gifts of fate and of the gods born of fate, and also...']
profoundly expressed the same idea, for he says: 'To understand *fatum* properly, it is that every man has a spirit that dwells outside him and has its seat in the stars above. He uses the *bosses* of his master; it is he who presages and shows him forebodings, for they continue to exist after him. These spirits are called *fatum.*' (Works, folio, Strasburg, 1603, vol. ii, p. 36.) It is worth noting that this same idea is to be found in Plutarch, for he says that outside that part of the soul which is submerged in the earthly body there remains suspended over man's head another purer part presenting itself as a star which is rightly called his demon or genius and guides him, and which the more prudent man willingly follows. The passage is too long to be quoted; it is found in *De genio Socratis*, c. 22. The principal sentence runs: το μὲν οὖν ὑποβρύχιον ἐν τῷ σῶματι φερόμενον Ἀδελφή λέγεται: τὸ δὲ φθόρας λειψάνει, οἱ πολλοὶ Νοῦν καλοῦντες, ἐντὸς εἰσὶν νομίζοντες αὐτῶν: οἱ δὲ ὀρθῶς ὑπονοοῦντες, ὡς ἐκτὸς ἰστι, Δαίμονα προσαγορεύοντο. Incidentally, I might mention that Christianity which, as we know, readily changed all the gods and demons of the pagans into the devil, appears to have made from this *genius* of the ancients the *spiritus familiaris* of scholars and magicians. The Christian description of Providence is too well known for me to have to dwell on it here. All these things, however, are only figurative, allegorical conceptions of the matter we are considering; for in general it is not granted to us to comprehend the deepest and most hidden truths other than in figures and similes.

In truth, however, that occult power that guides even external influences can ultimately have its root only in our own mysterious inner being; for indeed in the last resort the alpha and omega of all existence lie within us. But even in the most fortunate case we shall be able to obtain only a very remote glimpse of the mere possibility of this and here again only by means of analogies and similes.

* Bossen, types, protuberances, bumps, from the Italian *bozza*, *abbozzare*, *abbozzo*; from this we have *bossieren*, and the French *bosse.*

assigns and apportions the sunshine of Providence—he is the genius or guardian angel.'

12 ['That which runs in the body in an undercurrent is called soul (*ψυχή*), but the imperishable is called spirit (*νοῦς*) by the majority who imagine that it resides within them. Those, however, who have the correct opinion assume that it is outside man and call it genius (*Δαίμονα*).']
The closest analogy to the sway of that power is seen in the teleology of nature, in that it shows us the appropriate and suitable as occurring without knowledge of the end in view, especially where external appropriateness appears, in other words, that which takes place between different and even heterogeneous beings and indeed in inorganic nature. A striking instance of this kind is afforded by driftwood which is carried by the sea in large quantities straight to the treeless polar regions. Another example is that the main mass of land of the planet lies entirely heaped towards the North Pole whose winter for astronomical reasons is eight days shorter and thus again much milder than that of the South. However, the inner suitability that is undeniably evident in the complete and exclusive organism, the surprising harmony, producing such suitability, between the technique and the mere mechanism of nature, or between the nexus finalis and the nexus effectuus (in this connection I refer to my chief work, vol. ii, chap. 26) enable us to see by analogy how that which proceeds from different and indeed widely remote points and is apparently a stranger to itself, nevertheless conspires to the ultimate end and correctly arrives at that point, guided not by knowledge but by virtue of a necessity of a higher order that precedes all possibility of knowledge. Further, if we conjure up in our minds the theory formulated by Kant and later by Laplace concerning the origin of our planetary system, whose probability amounts almost to a certainty, and arrive at considerations such as I have given in my chief work vol. ii, chap. 25, and thus reflect on how, from the play of blind natural forces that follow their immutable laws, this admirably arranged planetary world was ultimately bound to come about, then here we have an analogy that can serve generally and remotely to show us the possibility that even the course of life of an individual is, so to speak, systematically guided by events that are often the capricious sport of blind chance and in a way that is best suited to the true and ultimate good of the person.* On this assumption, the dogma of Providence, as being

* Ἀυτόματα γὰρ τὰ πράγματα ἐπὶ τὸ συμφέρον
'Ρεῖ κἂν καθεύδῃς ἤ πάλιν τάνατια.
['For things continue to develop from themselves, even while you sleep, for your welfare as well as for the opposite thereof.']
thoroughly anthropomorphic, could certainly not pass as true directly and *sensu proprio*; but it might well be the indirect, allegorical, and mythical expression of a truth and so, like all religious myths, would be perfectly adequate for practical purposes and for subjective consolation in the sense, for instance, of Kant's moral theology which is to be understood only as a scheme for finding our bearings, and consequently allegorically; in a word, therefore, such a dogma might not be in fact true, but yet as good as true. In those deep, blind, primary forces of nature, from whose interplay the planetary system results, the will-to-live that subsequently appears in the most perfect phenomena of the world is already the inner operating and guiding principle. In those forces it already works towards its ends by means of strict natural laws and prepares the foundations for the structure and arrangement of the world. For example, the most fortuitous thrust or oscillation determines for all time the obliquity of the ecliptic and the velocity of rotation, and the final result must be the presentation of its entire nature just because such is already active in those original forces themselves. Now in the same way, all the events that determine a man's actions together with the causal connection that brings them about, are likewise only the objectivation of the same will that manifests itself in him. From this it may be seen, although only very obscurely, that they must harmonize and agree even with the special aims of that man. In this sense, they then constitute that mysterious power that guides the fate of the individual and is spoken of allegorically as his genius or his Providence. But considered purely objectively, it is and continues to be the universal causal connection that embraces everything without exception—by virtue whereof everything that happens does so with strict and absolute necessity—a connection that takes the place of the merely mythical control of the world, and indeed has the right to be so called.

The following general consideration can help to make this clearer. 'Accidental' means the concurrence in time of that which is causally not connected. But nothing is *absolutely* accidental; on the contrary, even the most accidental is only something necessary that has come to us on a more distant path, since definite causes lying high up in the causal chain have long ago necessarily determined that that something was bound to
TRANSCENDENT SPECULATION

occur precisely at this moment and, therefore, simultaneously with something else. Thus every event is the particular link in a chain of causes and effects which proceeds in the direction of time. But in virtue of space, there are numberless such chains side by side; yet they are not entirely foreign to one another and without any interconnection; on the contrary, they are intertwined in many ways. For instance, many causes now operating simultaneously, each of which produces a different effect, have sprung from a common cause higher up and are, therefore, related to one another as great-grandchildren are to their great-grandfather. On the other hand, a particular effect occurring now often requires the coincidence of many different causes which, each as a link in its own chain, have come to us from the past. Accordingly, all those causal chains, that move in the direction of time, now form a large, common, much-interwoven net which with its whole breadth likewise moves forward in the direction of time and constitutes the course of the world. Now if we represent those individual causal chains by meridians that would lie in the direction of time, then that which is simultaneous, and for this reason does not stand in direct causal connection, can be everywhere indicated by parallel circles. Now although all things situated under the same parallel circle do not directly depend on one another, they nevertheless stand indirectly in some connection, though remote, by virtue of the interlacing of the whole net or of the totality of all causes and effects that roll along in the direction of time. Their present co-existence is therefore necessary; and on this rests the accidental coincidence of all the conditions of an event that is necessary in a higher sense, the happening of that which fate has willed. To this is due, for example, the fact that, when in consequence of the migration of the German tribes Europe was overrun with barbarism, the finest masterpieces of Greek sculpture, the Laocoon, the Vatican Apollo, and others disappeared at once as if by a trap-door by finding their way down into the bowels of the earth, there to await unharmed for a thousand years a milder, nobler era that would understand and appreciate the arts. When that time finally arrived at the end of the fifteenth century under Pope Julius II, those masterpieces reappeared as the well-preserved specimens of art and the true type of the human form. In the same way,
the arrival at the right moment of the decisive and important occasions and circumstances in the course of an individual’s life rests on the same ground; finally even the occurrence of omens, the belief in which is so general and ineradicable that not infrequently it has found a place even in the most superior minds. For nothing is absolutely accidental; on the contrary, everything occurs necessarily and even the simultaneity itself of that which is causally not connected, and thus what we call chance, is necessary since what is now simultaneous was as such already determined by causes in the remotest past. Therefore everything is reflected and echoed in everything else and that well-known utterance of Hippocrates that applies to the cooperation within the organism is applicable also to the totality of things: Ἐν στοιχεία μία, στήμπνοια μία, πάντα συμπαθεία.11 (De alimento, opp. ed. Kühn, Tom. ii, p. 20.) Man’s ineradicable tendency to observe omens, his extispicia and ἀποθοσκοπία,12 his opening of the Bible, his telling of fortunes by cards, his casting of lead for the purpose of foretelling the future, his looking at coffee-grounds, and similar practices testify to his assumption (defying rational explanation) that it is somehow possible to know from what is present and clearly before his eyes that which is hidden by space or time and thus is remote or in the future, so that from the present he could read the future or the remote if only he had the true key to the cipher.

A second analogy that from an entirely different angle can help towards an indirect understanding of the transcendent fatalism we have been considering, is given by the dream to which life generally bears a resemblance that has long been recognized and often expressed, so much so that even Kant’s transcendental idealism may be conceived as the clearest exposition of this dream-like nature of our conscious existence, as I have observed in my criticism of his philosophy. Indeed it is this analogy with the dream which enables us to observe, although again only remotely and obscurely, how the mysterious power, governing and controlling the external events that affect us with a view to their purpose for us, might yet have its root in the depths of our own unfathomable nature. Thus, even in the dream, circumstances by pure chance coincide and there

11 ['It is only a flowing, only a blowing; all is in sympathy.‘]
12 ['Prediction from the entrails of victims and augury from the flight of birds'.]
become the motives of our actions, circumstances that are external to and independent of us and indeed often abhorrent. But yet there is between them a mysterious and appropriate connection since a hidden power that is obeyed by all the incidents in the dream controls and arranges even these circumstances and indeed solely with reference to us. But the strangest thing of all is that this power can ultimately be none other than our own will, yet from a point of view that does not enter our dreaming consciousness. And so it happens that the events in a dream often turn out quite contrary to our wishes therein, cause us astonishment, annoyance, and even mortal terror, without the fate that we secretly direct coming to our rescue. In the same way, we eagerly ask about something and receive an answer whereat we are astonished. Or again, we ourselves are asked, say in an examination, and are incapable of finding the answer, whereupon another, to our shame, gives a perfect answer; whereas in the one case as in the other, the answer can always come only from our own resources. To make even clearer this mysterious guidance of the events in the dream, a guidance that comes from ourselves, and to make its operation more intelligible, there is yet another explanation that alone can do this, but it is necessarily of an obscene nature. I therefore assume that my worthy readers will neither take offence nor treat the matter as a joke. It is well known that there are dreams of which nature avails herself for a material purpose, namely the discharge of the overfilled spermatocysts. Dreams of this kind naturally indicate lascivious scenes. But sometimes the same thing also occurs with other dreams that do not at all have or achieve that purpose. Now here there is a difference that in dreams of the first kind attractive women and the opportunity soon prove favourable to us, whereby nature attains her object. In dreams of the other kind, however, the path to the thing most ardently desired by us is constantly obstructed by fresh obstacles which we vainly attempt to overcome, so that in the end we still do not reach the goal. But what creates these obstacles and constantly frustrates our ardent wish is simply our own will, yet from a region that lies far beyond the representing consciousness in the dream and thus appears therein as inexorable fate. Now might it not be possible for fate in real life and for that systematic planning which perhaps everyone
comes to know from an observation of his own life, to be analogous to the position set forth in the dream?* It sometimes happens that we have devised and enthusiastically adopted a plan from which it is evident that it was by no means suited to our true welfare. Yet while we are eagerly pursuing it we experience against it a conspiracy of fate, which sets in motion all its machinery to defeat it. In this way, fate finally thrusts us back, against our will, on to the path that is truly suited to us. In view of such opposition that appears intentional, many a man uses the phrase: 'I note that it ought not to be;' others call it ominous; others again call it a hint from God. All, however, share the view that, when fate opposes a plan with such obvious doggedness, we should give it up since, as it is unsuited to our destiny that to us is unknown, it will not be realized and by wilfully pursuing it we simply draw down upon us the harder blows of fate until in the end we are again on the right track; or because, if we succeeded in forcing the issue, this would tend merely to our harm and undoing. The above-mentioned ducunt volentem fata, nolentem trahunt⁰ is here fully endorsed. In many cases, it actually turns out subsequently that the frustration of such a plan has in every way been beneficial to our true welfare. And so this might also be the case where it is not generally known to us, especially if we regard as our true welfare the metaphysically moral. Now if from here we look back to the main result of the whole of my philosophy, namely that what presents and maintains the phenomenon of the world is the will that also lives and strives in every individual; and if at the same time we call to mind the universally acknowledged resemblance of life to a dream, then, summing up all that has been said so far, we can quite generally imagine as possible that, just as everyone is the secret theatrical manager of his dreams, so too by analogy that fate that controls the actual course of our lives ultimately comes in some way from the will. This is our own and yet here, where it appears as fate, it

* Objectively considered, the course of an individual's life is of universal and strict necessity; for all his actions appear just as necessarily as do the movements of a machine, and all external events appear on the leading line of a causal chain whose links have a strictly necessary connection. If we adhere to this, we need not be so surprised when we see the course of an individual's life suitably turn out for him as if it were systematically planned.

¹¹ ['Fate leads the willing but drags along the unwilling.']
operates from a region that lies far beyond our representing individual consciousness; whereas this furnishes the motives that guide our empirically knowable individual will. Hence such will has often to contend most violently with that will of ours that manifests itself as fate, with our guiding genius, with our ‘spirit which dwells outside us and has its seat in the stars above’, which surveys the individual consciousness and thus, in relentless opposition thereto, arranges and fixes as external restraint that which it could not leave the consciousness to find out and yet does not wish to see miscarry.

In the first place, a passage from Scotus Erigena may help to reduce the surprising extravagance of this bold sentence where it must be borne in mind that his Deus which is without knowledge and of which time, space, and Aristotle’s ten categories are not to be predicated, indeed for which generally only one predicate remains, namely will—that his Deus is obviously nothing but what I call the will-to-live: *Est etiam alia species ignorantiae in Deo, quando ea, quae praescivit et praeestimavit, ignorantur dicitur, dum adhuc in rerum factarum cursibus experimento non apparuient*14 (*De divisione naturae*, p. 83, Oxford edition). Shortly afterwards he says: *Tertia species divinae ignorantiae est, per quam Deus dicitur ignorantae, quae nondum experimento actionis et operationis in effectibus manifeste apparent; quorum tamen invisibles rationes in seipso, a seipso creatas et sibi ipsi cognitas possidet.*15

Now if, to make somewhat clearer to ourselves the view we have expounded, we have availed ourselves of the acknowledged similarity of the individual life to a dream, we should nevertheless note the difference that in the mere dream the relation is one-sided, that is to say, only one ego actually wills and feels, whereas the rest are nothing but phantoms. In the great dream of life, on the other hand, a mutual relation occurs, since not only does the one figure in the dream of the other exactly as is necessary, but also that other figures in his dream. Thus by virtue of a real *harmonia praestabilita*, everyone dreams only

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14 ['It is yet another kind of ignorance in God in so far as we say that he does not know that which he foreknows and has predetermined, so long as it has not yet shown itself in the course of the actual things of experience.]

15 ['A third kind of divine ignorance consists in our saying of God that he does not know that which has not yet come to light in effects through the experience of doing and performing, although in himself he possesses the invisible grounds as such which he himself has created and which are known to himself.']
what is appropriate to him in accordance with his own metaphysical guidance; and all the dreams of life are so ingeniously interwoven that everyone gets to know what is beneficial to him and at the same time does for others what is necessary. Accordingly, some great world event conforms to the fate of many thousands, to each in an individual way. Consequently, all the events in a man’s life are connected in two fundamentally different ways; first in the objective causal connection of the course of nature, secondly in a subjective connection that exists only in reference to the individual who experiences them. It is as subjective as his own dreams, yet in him their succession and content are likewise necessarily determined, but in the manner in which the succession of the scenes of a drama is determined by the plan of the poet. Now those two kinds of connection exist simultaneously and yet the same event, as a link in two quite different chains, exactly fits them both, in consequence whereof one man’s fate is always in keeping with another’s, and everyone is the hero of his own drama, but at the same time figures also in that of another. All this, of course, is something that surpasses all our powers of comprehension and can be conceived as possible only by virtue of the most marvellous harmonia praestabilitia. On the other hand, would it not be on our part a want of courage to regard it as impossible that the lives of all men in their mutual dealings should have just as much concentus\textsuperscript{16} and harmony as the composer is able to give to the many apparently confused and stormy parts of his symphony? Our aversion to that colossal thought will grow less if we remember that the subject of the great dream of life is in a certain sense only one thing, the will-to-live, and that all plurality of phenomena is conditioned by time and space. It is the great dream that is dreamed by that one entity, but in such a way that all its persons dream it together. Thus all things encroach on and are adapted to one another. Now if we agree to this; if we accept that double chain of all events, by virtue whereof every being, on the one hand, exists for his own sake, behaves and acts with necessity according to his own nature, and pursues his own course, but, on the other, is also as completely determined and adapted for perceiving another being and for influencing him as are the pictures in his dreams,

\textsuperscript{16} ['Harmony, concord'.]
then we shall have to extend this to the whole of nature, and
hence to animals and beings without knowledge. Once more,
then, we have the prospect of the possibility of omena, prassagia,
and portenta, since that which necessarily occurs in the course
of nature is again to be regarded, on the other hand, as a mere
image or picture for me, as the subject-matter of my life-dream,
happening and existing merely with reference to me, or even
as a mere reflection and echo of my action and experience.
Accordingly, that which in an event is natural and can be
causally demonstrated as necessary, does not by any means
do away with the ominous element therein; and in the same
way, the ominous element does not eliminate the other. And
so those people are entirely mistaken who imagine they remove
the ominous element of an event by their demonstrating the
inevitability of its occurrence, in that they show quite clearly
its natural and necessarily operating causes and also, when it
is a natural event, do so physically and with an appearance
of learning. For no reasonable man doubts these and no one
will pretend that the omen is a miracle; but precisely from the
fact that the chain of causes and effects that stretches to infinity
with the strict necessity and eternal predestination peculiar to
it has inevitably established the occurrence of this event at such
a significant moment, does the event acquire an ominous ele-
ment. And so the would-be wise, especially when they become
physically minded, should specially remember Shakespeare’s
words: ‘There are more things in heaven and earth than are
dreamt of in your philosophy’ (Hamlet, Act i, Sc. 5). Yet with
the belief in omens we see the doors reopened to astrology;
for the most trifling event that is regarded as ominous, the
flight of a bird, the meeting of a person, and so on, is con-
ditioned by a chain of causes just as infinitely long and as
strictly necessary as is the computable position of the stars at
any given time. Of course, the constellation is high enough in
the heavens to be seen at the same time by half the inhabitants
of the globe, whereas the omen appears only in the sphere of
the individual concerned. Moreover, if we wish to picture to
ourselves the possibility of the ominous, we can do so by com-
paring the man who sees a good or bad omen and is thus
warned or confirmed at an important step in his life whose
consequences are still hidden in the future, to a string which,
when struck, does not hear itself and yet hears the sound of
another that is emitted in consequence of its vibration.

Kant's distinction of the thing-in-itself from its phenomenon,
together with my reference of the former to the will and of the
latter to the representation, enables us to see, although only
imperfectly and remotely, the compatibility of three antitheses.

They are:

(1) That between the freedom of the will-in-itself and the
universal necessity of all the individual's actions.

(2) That between the mechanism and technique of nature,
or between the nexus effectivus and the nexus finalis, or between
the purely causal and the teleological explicability of the pro-
ducts of nature. (In this connection see Kant's Critique of Judg-
ment, § 78, and my chief work, vol. ii, chap. 26.)

(3) That between the obvious contingency of all the events
in the course of an individual's life and their moral necessity
for the shaping thereof in accordance with a transcendent fitness
for the individual, or in popular language, between the course
of nature and Providence.

The clearness of our insight into the compatibility of each of
these three antitheses, although not perfect with any of them,
is yet more adequate with the first than with the second, but
is least in the case of the third. At the same time, an understand-
ing of the compatibility of each of these antitheses, although
imperfect, always sheds light on the other two by serving as
their image and simile.

Only in a very general way can it be stated what is really
meant ultimately by the whole of this mysterious guidance of
the individual's course of life which we have been considering.
If we stop at individual cases, it often appears that such guid-
ance has in view only our transient welfare for the time being.
Yet this cannot seriously be its ultimate aim, in view of the
insignificant, imperfect, futile, and fleeting nature of that wel-
fare. And so we have to look for this ultimate aim in our eternal
existence that goes beyond the life of the individual. And then
it can be said only quite generally that the course of our life
is so regulated by means of that guidance that, from the whole
of the knowledge accruing to us in the course of it, there arises
metaphysically the most suitable impression on the will as being
the kernel and essence-in-itself of man. For although the will-to-live obtains its answer generally in the course of the world as the phenomenon of its striving, yet every man is that will-to-live in quite a unique and individual way. He is, so to speak, an individualized act thereof; and so its adequate answer can be only a quite definite shaping of the course of the world, given in events and experiences that are peculiar to him. Now as we have recognized from the results of the serious part of my philosophy (in contrast to mere professorial or comic philosophy) the will’s turning away from life as the ultimate aim of temporal existence, we must assume that everyone is gradually led to this in a manner that is quite individually suited to him and hence often in a long and roundabout way. Again, as happiness and pleasure militate against that aim, we see, in keeping therewith, misery and suffering inevitably interwoven in the course of every life, although in very unequal measure and only rarely to excess, namely in tragic events where it then looks as if the will should to a certain extent be forcibly driven to turn away from life and to arrive at regeneration by a Caesarian operation so to speak.

Thus that invisible guidance, that shows itself only in a doubtful form, accompanies us to our death, to that real result, and, to this extent, the purpose of life. At the hour of death, all the mysterious forces (although really rooted in ourselves) which determine man’s eternal fate, crowd together and come into action. The result of their conflict is the path now to be followed by him; thus his palingenesis is prepared together with all the weal and woe that are included therein and are ever afterwards irrevocably determined. To this is due the extremely serious, important, solemn, and fearful character of the hour of death. It is a crisis in the strongest sense of the word—a day of judgement.