**Nietzsche & Nihilism: Boedeker’s attempt to axiomatize of the moral value-system of “good and evil”**

Symbolic abbreviations:

*x* has some degree (possibly 0) of goodness: *Gx*

The goodness of *x*: the-*G*-of-x

x is perfect: *Px*

*y* commits/causes *z*: *yCz*

*z* is evil: *Ez*

*w* suffers: *Sv*

(Note that the concepts of *perfect* (*Px*) and of *evil* (*Ez*) are both further definable; thus we only have three basic concepts: *goodness* [*Gx*], *causation* [*yCz*], and *suffering* [*Sv*].)

Definition of “*x* is perfect”: *Px* = (*y*)(*y*≠*x* ⊃the-*G*-of-*x*≥the-*G*-of-*y*)

Definition of “*z* is evil”: *Ez* = (∃*y*)[*yCz* & (*w*)(the-*G*-of-*w*≥the-*G*-of-*z*)]

Axiom 1: (It’s necessary that) if something is perfect, then it doesn’t commit evil:

(*x*){*Px* ⊃ (*z*)~[*xCz* & (*w*)(the-*G*-of-*w*≥the-*G*-of-*z*)]}

Axiom 2: (It’s necessary that) if something is imperfect, then it doesn’t cause itself: (*y*)(~*Py* ⊃ ~*yCy*)

Axiom 3: (It’s necessary that) if there are two different things *y* and *z*, and *y* is either better than or just as good as *z*, then something perfect exists: [(∃*y*)(∃*z*)(*y*≠*z* & the-*G*-of-*y*≥the-*G*-of-*z*) ⊃ (∃*x*)*Px*]

Axiom 4: (It’s necessary that) if a perfect thing exists, then someone suffers if and only if someone has committed an evil act: {(∃*x*)*Px* ⊃ [(∃*y*)(∃*z*)(*yCz* & *Ez*) ≡ (∃*v*)(∃*w*)(*vCw* & *Sv*)]}

1. Empirical premise: Evil exists: (∃*z*)*Ez*

2. Fleshing out (1) with our definition of “*z* is evil” implies that some doer *y* commits some act *z*, such that there’s nothing worse than act *z*: (∃*z*)(∃*y*)(*yCz* & (*w*)(the-*G*-of-*w*≥the-*G*-of-*z*)

3. Let’s rewrite (2), substituting the name “*d*” for the variable “*y*” and the name “*a*” for the variable “*z*”, so that the doer of the evil act is *d* and the evil act is *a*: [*dCa* & (*w*)(the-*G*-of-*w*≥the-*G*-of-*a*)]

4. Axiom 1 can get “instantiated” as: *Pd* ⊃ ~[*dCa* & (*w*)(the-*G*-of-*w*≥the-*G*-of-*a*)]

5. By *modus tollens*, (3) and (4) imply that the doer *d* of evil act *a*, isn’t perfect: ~*Pd*

6. Axiom 2 can get “instantiated” (substituting our name “*d*” for the variable “*y*”) as “If doer *d* isn’t perfect, then *d* didn’t create itself”: ~*Pd* ⊃ ~*dCd*

7. By *modus ponens*, (5) and (6) imply that the doer *d* is different from what *d* does: ~*dCd*.

8. (3) implies *dCa*.

9. (7) and (8) imply that the doer *d* is different from act *a*: *d*≠*a*

10. (3) implies that everything is at least as good as (evil) act *a*: (*w*)(the-*G*-of-*w*≥the-*G*-of-*a*)

11. (10) can get instantiated (substituting our name “*d*” for the variable “*w*”) as “Doer *d* is at least as good as act *a*”: the-*G-*of-*d*≥the-*G-*of-*a*

12. (9) and (11) imply that evil act *a* is not the same as the doer *d* of *a*, and that *d* is at least as good as *a*: (*d*≠*a* & the-*G*-of-*d*≥the-*G*-of-*a*)

13. (11) implies that there are at least two different things such that one is at least as good as the other: (∃*y*)(∃*z*)(*y*≠*z* & the-*G*-of-*y*≥the-*G*-of-*z*)

14. By *modus ponens*, (13) and Axiom 3 imply that something perfect exists (∃*x*)*Px*

15. (14) and Axiom 4 imply the “law” of slave morality, i.e., that someone commits an evil act if and only if someone suffers: (∃*y*)(∃*z*)(*yCz* & *Ez*) ≡ (∃*v*)(∃*w*)(*vCw* & *Sv*).