WILLING AND UNWILLING
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Julian Young

Willing and Unwilling: A Study in the Philosophy of Arthur Schopenhauer

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To

Percy and Renée
Foreword

The Anglo-Saxon reception of Schopenhauer has a long and valuable tradition. An early reaction to Schopenhauer's thought from outside the German-speaking world was the appearance in the *Westminster Review* for 1853 of "Iconoclasm in German Philosophy", an insightful essay of appreciation written by John Oxenford. A gratified Schopenhauer was able to remark: "my philosophy has just set foot in England" (To Lindner, 27.4.1853). It remained there and spread throughout the English-speaking countries. In the following decades Schopenhauer's works were translated into English; carrying on the task of translation begun in the nineteenth century there stands out, particularly, the masterly achievement of Eric F. Payne. No less active, however, has been the philosophical discussion devoted to Schopenhauer in books and journal-articles. In 1890 Wallace published the first biography of Schopenhauer in English, and the monographs by Caldwell (1894) and Coppleston (1946) are cornerstones of a continuous, if not widespread, concern with Schopenhauer's philosophy in the English language. An increased interest in Schopenhauer in the Anglo-Saxon countries has manifested itself in the last twenty-five years (Gardener (1963), Hamlyn (1980), Fox (ed.) (1980), Magee (1983) *inter alia*).

The present study carries on this tradition. Its distinctiveness consists in its explicit connecting of Schopenhauer's work to the philosophy of Kant. The author's intimate knowledge of both thinkers has already been established in previous studies. The present work offers a systematic, critical discussion of Schopenhauer's central ideas that is insightful, equally, with regard to both Schopenhauer and Kant. Of particular value for Schopenhauer-scholarship is the fact that, along with Schopenhauer and Kant, the presence of Ludwig Wittgenstein makes itself felt throughout the book even where Wittgenstein (for contemporary Anglo-Saxon philosophy the decisively important thinker in so many areas) is not mentioned explicitly. This points to the task of bringing about an examination of Schopenhauer's metaphysics from the standpoint of contemporary analytic philosophy. Here Julian Young is a pioneer upon whom we can rely.

Rudolf Malter.

(Translated from the German by Julian Young.)
Preface

Kant thought to reform metaphysics by showing, once and for all, that knowledge of the transcendent is, for human beings, impossible. Philosophy was to become more respectable by becoming more modest, by recognising that "all possible speculative knowledge of reason is limited to mere objects of [sense] experience" (CPR Bxxvi). Yet even before his own death Kant's counsels of moderation and self-discipline were already being cast aside in what developed into a positive orgy of metaphysical speculation of the most outrageously ambitious character.

By popular repute, no-one bears greater responsibility for this distasteful spectacle than Arthur Schopenhauer. With his claim that the world in itself is not, as Kant held, unknowable but is rather "will", he breached, it is supposed, the Kantian limits to the legitimate deployment of human reason with a flagrancy second to none.

Yet all his life Schopenhauer claimed to be a faithful disciple of the great man. He viewed himself, in fact, as the only genuine disciple left, and claimed to experience a truly Kantian disgust at the metaphysical excesses of his contemporaries.

In this study I am concerned, firstly, to excavate, reconstitute, and exhibit the rich vein of truth that is to be found in The World as Will and Representation. Concerning, in particular, the foundations of natural science, concerning art and genius, and concerning the mistakenness of allowing life to be dominated by the will, Schopenhauer has, I believe, deep and sometimes wonderful things to say. But, secondly, I am concerned with the question of how to read Schopenhauer. My answer to this question is dominated by the idea that his claim "ich selbst Kantianer bin" (PP I p.42) is to be taken absolutely seriously. Following this thread, I argue that he does not, in fact, claim the world in itself to be will at all. Rather, he agrees with Kant that it is, to the rational mind at least, unknowable. As I read him, while the world may appear "as Representation" and, on a deeper level, "as Will", it remains, like an actor who appears as Macbeth and as Hamlet but never as himself, in itself, inscrutable.

I should like to express my deep thanks to Ron Atkinson, Jenny Diepraam, Andrea Dye, Gottfried Gabriel, Denis Robinson, Carol Schmid, Krister Segerberg, Stan Surma, and Martin Tweedale, who, in various ways, have helped this book to appear and to be better than it would otherwise have been. I should like to thank, also, the University of Auckland for the study leave that provided the time during which most of it was written, and the Universities of Exeter and Constance whose hospitality provided the place. And I should like to thank the German Academic Exchange Service for the grant which made six months at the edge of the magical Lake Constance possible. Finally, I should like to thank the editor of the Schopenhauer
PREFACE

*Jahrbuch*, Rudolf Malter, for allowing me to use material from my 'A Schopenhauerian Solution to Schopenhauerian Pessimism' (vol 68, 1987) in Chapter X, and for writing the foreword to this book, and the editors of *Kant-Studien*, Gerhard Funke and Rudolf Malter, for allowing me to use material from my 'The Standpoint of Eternity: Schopenhauer on Art' (vol 78, 1987) in Chapter VII.

The translations from the German used in the text are my own but I have not gratuitously departed from those cited in the bibliography. Serious departures are generally accompanied by the German original in parentheses. Frequently cited works are abbreviated in the following manner:

Schopenhauer

The World as Will and Representation vol I, vol II
The Fourfold Root of the Principle of Sufficient Reason
On the Will in Nature
On the Basis of Morality
On the Freedom of the Human Will
Parerga and Paralipomena vol I, vol II

Kant

The Critique of Pure Reason
The Critique of Judgement
Prolegomena to any Future Metaphysics
Foundation of the Metaphysics of Morals

Wittgenstein

Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus
Notebooks 1914-16
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PART I

THE KANTIAN LEGACY
Chapter 1  Idealism

§ 1 Introduction

Schopenhauer says that his philosophy grows out of Kant's, as from its "parent stem" (WR I p.501). The first part of his philosophy (roughly speaking, Book I of The World as Will and Representation together with On the Fourfold Root of the Principle of Sufficient Reason) is preoccupied with the task of coming to terms with this revered, but not uncriticised, parent, with the problems of comprehension, assimilation, rejection and development. This is what I shall be concerned with in the Part I of this study. In this first chapter I shall look at Schopenhauer's adoption of Kant's "transcendental" idealism and in Chapter II at the (much more critical) stance he takes towards Kant's account of the nature and limits of human reason. Finally, in Chapter III, I look at the question of how, while claiming to remain always, in essential respects, a "Kantian" (PP I pA2), he feels nonetheless able to ignore Kant's prohibition on metaphysical speculation and produce what is, in fact, one of the most exotic metaphysical accounts of the world in the history of philosophy.

§ 2 Kantian Arguments for Idealism

Idealism is the first thing one confronts in the main work: "The world is my representation" are its opening words. But very soon one is liable to become worried by the paucity of argumentation for this (these days) not uncontroversial doctrine. In Schopenhauer's day, however, the view was uncontroversial: Schopenhauer's attitude towards idealism as, simply, an unquestionable result of "the philosophy of modern times" (WR II p.3) is explained by the fact that in the first decades of the nineteenth century no one was prepared to question it. Whatever their differences, the one thing the German idealists all had in common was — idealism.

The "philosophy of modern times" is, of course, Kant's, and Schopenhauer's reluctance to argue for idealism is a reluctance to repeat the details of the Critique of Pure Reason. Nonetheless, what he does say about idealism is not without interest. There are two reasons for this. The first is that although he regards the proof of idealism as Kant's greatest achievement, his approach to Kant, even on this topic, is not entirely uncritical: he completely rejects, for instance, Kant's attempted indirect proof of idealism in the first two Antinomies — Kant's argument, that is to say, that conceived realistically, the world is, self-contradictorily, both finite and in-
finite (WR II p.8). The second is that there is one very interesting (although problematic) argument for idealism presented by Schopenhauer which is quite unlike anything in Kant.

* * * * * * *

Kantian or "transcendental" idealism is the view that properties which presuppose the spatiality and (or) temporality of their bearers (properties pertaining to extension, location, duration, weight or colour, for example) characterise nothing as it is in itself (an sich). In itself, therefore, nothing is a natural or material object (CPR A 369): natural things, nature in general, exist only in our representation of the world. On the other hand, the Kantian idealist is completely clear that over and above the world as we represent it there is a world in itself: our world may therefore be said to be an "appearance" (or "phenomenon") of that underlying reality (or "noumenon") (see especially, Prol. § 13 note II). This distinguishes transcendental from "absolute" or Berkeleian idealism, according to which nature is ideal yet not an appearance of anything. Schopenhauer puts the point by saying that while Berkeley's idealism concerns "the object in general", Kant's (and his own) concerns only the "mode and manner" in which we comprehend a reality that is, in itself, mind-independent (WR II p.8).

Why does Schopenhauer believe this position to have been so conclusively established by Kant? Part of the answer depends on his estimation of the Aesthetic of the first Critique as above all criticism, a repository of nothing but "incontestable truths" (WR I pp.437-8). This is certainly an over-estimation. The central argument of the Aesthetic is that space and time must be conceived, not as properties of things in themselves, but rather as structures ("forms") which the mind brings to and imposes upon all its experience. Only thus, only in terms of the mind's incapacity to experience anything that does not conform to its structures, Kant reasons, can we explain the fact that mathematics provides us with a body of propositions which while being, on the one hand, genuinely informative descriptions of physical space and time are, on the other, radically unlike normal descriptions of the physical world being utterly incapable of falsification.

This argument (for reasons that need not detain us here) has been almost universally rejected as based on a misconception of the nature of mathematical truth. It should, however, be said that while accepting Kant's account of mathematic truth, what Schopenhauer mentions (ibid.) as really impressive about the Aesthetic is not the argument from mathematical truth as such, but rather the general strategy it employs, the idea that if there is any kind of a necessary order to nature (if we have any kind of "synthetic a priori" knowledge about it) this can only be explained in terms of nature's
having to conform to the structure prescribed to it by the mind. And it may be that in spite of Kant's mistake about the character of mathematical truth, there are other kinds of propositions which really are informative ("synthetic") yet irrefutable ("a priori") truths about nature (Schopenhauer thinks there are many such – the infinite divisibility of time and space, the one-dimensionality of the former, the three-dimensionality of the latter, for example (WR II pp.48-51) and which hence provide the material for carrying out a successful argument for idealism along the general lines suggested by the Aesthetic. On the other hand, it should be noted that there are those who, as we will shortly see, are not prepared to acknowledge any kind of a priori structure in nature at all.

What else by way of arguments for transcendental idealism does Schopenhauer discover in Kant? In § 5 of the main work there is a long discussion of the mistake made by the "dogmatic realist" in supposing that material objects are the causes of our perceptual experiences. The assumption is pernicious, for it breeds scepticism about our knowledge of nature: since we can never step outside the realm of our experience to see if its causes resemble it — or indeed if it has any causes at all — we can never, on the assumption, know anything about the material world. But, says Schopenhauer, the problem is a spurious one since material objects are not causes but rather contents of our representations (WR I pp.13-14).

One can see here a repetition of Kant's argument in the Fourth Paralogism (an argument deployed by Berkeley also) that our commonsense assumption that we have knowledge of material objects requires their location at the level of representation since otherwise, as the postulated causes of representations, they have "merely doubtful existence" (CPR A 366). (The weakness in this argument is that it is not clear what is so terrible about abandoning the assumption. We are, after all, reasonably happy to postulate molecules, electrons and the rest as the causes of experience, and it is far from clear that we ought to believe, with any greater degree of certainty, in the middle-sized objects of commonsense; we might indeed, as Arthur Eddington once suggested, wish ultimately to deny the objects of common sense, affirming to exist only those of natural science.)

A more interesting and, in Kant's own eyes, more fundamental reason for adopting transcendental idealism (again his preoccupations parallel rather closely those of Berkeley) concerns the need to render our theoretical and practical beliefs coherent with each other.

Kant wrote the first Critique, he states in its Preface, in order to "sever at the root" the evils of "materialism, fatalism, atheism" (CPR B xxxiv). Immensely impressed by the power of Newtonian science, convinced in fact of its potential omniscience with regard to nature, he perceived that if the whole of reality is accessible to natural science then there exists nothing but matter in strictly deterministic motion. The consequence is the expulsion of God, human freedom, and (since these two, according to Kant, are presupposed
IDEALISM

in the moral life) morality, from the cosmos. To preserve this trinity, therefore, the pretensions of natural science "to make the boundaries of sensibility co-extensive with the real" (CPR B xxv) must be defeated. Kant's strategy is to confine nature to the level of representation securing thereby a transcendent domain where God can exist and freedom be actual. Transcendental idealism thus recommends itself as the means required to secure a reconciliation between our theoretical and practical beliefs, an argument Kant makes out in detail in his discussion of the Third and Fourth Antinomy.

Now Schopenhauer has no affection for Kant's God. And he believes that the notion that He is presupposed in the moral life reduces moral action to prudential action that is motivated by fear of divine punishment or hope of divine reward. Nonetheless, he shares with Kant the conviction that "materialism" (WR II p.12) (the doctrine that material nature is, in Kantian terms, transcendentally real, a mind-independent thing in itself) is incompatible with human freedom and hence with moral responsibility: idealism, he argues, is the only viable way of accommodating the latter (WR I p.422, cf. BM p.51). The only rival solution, Cartesian dualism or "spiritualism" (WR II p.13), with its postulated intervention in the material world by the uncaused, free acts of mental substances, he regards as entirely "specious" (ibid.), since the supposed meddling of the mental in the physical world proliferates throughout the latter numerous first causes. The disastrous result of this is the destruction of that fundamental presupposition of natural science, the principle of universal causation. Any genuine reconciliation of the scientific and practical outlooks must preserve the integrity of the fabric of the former, and that, Schopenhauer holds, only idealism can do.

I spoke of the need to effect a reconciliation between the theoretical and practical outlooks as being, for Kant, a "reason" for adopting idealism. The question might be raised, however, as to whether I meant "motive" or "argument". The answer is: both. In the first Critique the need appears, principally, as a motive, a reason why it is very important for us to try to find an argument for idealism, a proof that the "boundaries of sensibility" are not "coextensive with the real". But in the third Critique the tension between freedom and determinism becomes itself the basis of an argument for idealism. For there Kant speaks of an "antinomy of ... practical ... reason" which agrees with the "theoretical" antinomy "in forcing reason to abandon the otherwise very natural assumption which takes the objects of sense for things in themselves and to regard them instead merely as phenomena and to lay at their base ... something supersensible" (CJ § 57, 19-20). Now, as I noted earlier, Kant argues, in the first two Antinomies of the first Critique, that we are forced to accept the ideality of space and time because otherwise we can prove the contradiction that they are both finite and infinite. From a realist standpoint, that is, we can deny neither the one nor the other. Similarly — such is the implication of Kant's remarks in the third Critique —
we are, from a realist standpoint, forced to affirm of one and the same action both that it is free and that it is unfree. Hence we have to adopt idealism and its two worlds, the one of determinism, the other of freedom. The important thing to notice here is that, for Kant, there does not exist the option of resolving the dilemma by denying that human beings really have (contra-causal) freedom. (Otherwise reason would not be "forced" to abandon realism.) The reason this is so is that, for Kant, freedom is a "postulate of practical reason", an unavoidable presupposition of the commitment to morality which, as human beings, we all have. (It is this last claim, the claim that morality is part of humanity that, in my view, represents the weak point in the argument.) The point I wish to emphasise, however, is that from the perspective of, at least, the third Critique, transcendental idealism is itself a postulate of practical reason.

This ambivalence as to whether the need to resolve the tension between the theoretical and the practical is a motive or an argument for idealism is present also in Schopenhauer. The dominant theme is that transcendental idealism can be known to be true in a purely theoretical way quite independently of any consideration of our practical lives; hence theoretical philosophy shows our practical commitments to be well-grounded. But there is also a sub-motif that runs in the reverse direction. Transcendental idealism must be true because only thus can our inescapable practical commitments be shown to be well-grounded. At WR I p.422, for example, he praises Kant for seeing that idealism is the only way of accommodating the "undeniable moral significance of human conduct" (my emphasis). So for Schopenhauer, too, transcendentalism, the idea of a world beyond nature as we know it, appears sometimes as a practical postulate rather than an item of theoretical knowledge. I shall return to this matter in Chapter VIII.

* * * * *

Of all the considerations in favour of idealism offered by Kant, that which Schopenhauer regards as the most important is also the simplest: "Kant's greatest merit", he writes, "is the distinction of the phenomenon from the thing in itself, based on the proof that between things and us there always stands the intellect, and that on this account they cannot be known (erkennen) according to what they may be in themselves" (WR I pp.417-8). On a naive view, the mind, in perception, is entirely inert, a tabula rasa on which the world imprints its nature. On this view the character of the world can be simply read off from experience, for there can be no more question that the world in itself corresponds to the world as represented than that a foot corresponds to a footprint. But the whole of Kant's philosophy is a destruction of this picture, an emphasis on the multifarious ways in which the mind is an active constructor of experience. If, then, experience is a function of, not
just of the world, but also of the nature and activity of the mind, it follows
that the naively assumed correspondence can no longer be maintained:
Kantian sophistication "deprives the direct utterances of nature of their
unconditioned validity" (WR II p.288).

Kant, as I mentioned in discussing the argument to idealism from the
nature of mathematical truth, believes that the mind must be an active
contributor to the character of experience because only thus can the synthetic
\textit{a priori} structure of the latter be explained. This approach is open to the
objection of Wittgenstein (followed by the logical positivists) that there is,
in fact, no such structure and hence nothing to explain.\footnote{3} Schopenhauer,
however, though entirely endorsing Kant's argument from the synthetic
\textit{a priori} to an active view of the mind, believes that he can reach the same
position (and proceed from there to an idealist conclusion) by an entirely
independent route; a route which starts with an appeal, not to philosophical
considerations, but to natural science: "empirico-physiological contem­
plation", he claims, brings us to exactly the same point as does Kant's

\section{3 Biological Idealism}

Schopenhauer's argument to idealism from natural science is the one
point at which his case for idealism becomes genuinely independent of Kant.
It has two aspects to it, one physiological, the other biological. I begin with
the former.

The argument from physiology begins by identifying the mind (or
"intellect", cf. FR p.77) with the brain: our perceptual consciousness of the
world is, says Schopenhauer, "a physiological phenomenon, a function of the
brain" (WR II p.285). Given this identification, the Kantian view of the
mind as an active constructor of experience can now be supported, not by
appealing to a supposed \textit{a priori} structure to experience, but simply by
observing the massive discrepancy between the poverty of the input received
by the mind (sensation) and the richness of its output (perceptual
consciousness). Perception, says Schopenhauer, must be "intellectual":
consciousness of objects "cannot just step into our heads from without, already
cut and dried, through the senses and the openings of their organs". For all
that is given to the brain is sensation, a "poor wretched thing" that "cannot
contain anything ... resembling intuitive perception." It follows that
consciousness is something which is "created", "constructed" by the brain out
of the "raw materials" provided in sensation (FR pp.76-79).

In \textsection 21 of the \textit{Fourfold Root}, Schopenhauer gives a theory of the
operations by which the brain constructs, from sensory cues, features of
perceptual objects such as depth, volume, distance, and relative size,
representing these operations as unconscious causal inferences from aspects of sensations to properties of their causes: from tonal change, for example, the brain infers change in spatial plane, from the size of (i.e. the amount of the visual field occupied by) a sensation or from "atmospheric perspective" (the blueness of a colour) the distance of its source.\footnote{This is the physiological side of Schopenhauer's argument: because of the massive intervention of the brain, it is appropriate to speak of the world of ordinary perceptual consciousness as its creation. But although we can in this way see natural science as validating the Kantian dictum that mind creates nature, none of this constitutes an argument for idealism — for any form of idealism, that is, which, like transcendental idealism, affirms an actual, as opposed to merely possible, disjunction between the way the world appears and the way it really is. For what physiological considerations cannot do is rule out the possibility that it so happens that there is a (more or less) exact correspondence between the world we construct and the world as it really is.

It is at this point that the biological side to Schopenhauer's argument becomes relevant. From the biological point of view, Schopenhauer reminds us, the human brain is simply "the one great tool" (WR II p.280) by means of which a relatively weak and defenceless animal has managed to survive in a competitive environment \textit{(ibid., cf. WN pp.272-3, WR II pp. 204-6)}. What follows from this is that at least the everyday representation of the world generated by the human brain will be one that is calculated to promote survival rather than truth: the intellect, says Schopenhauer, is "thoroughly practical in tendency", a "medium of motives" designed for comprehending those ends on the attainment of which depends individual life and its propagation" but "by no means intended to present the true absolutely real inner nature of these things in the consciousness of the knower" (WR II pp.284-6).

But surely, it might be said, comprehending the "true nature" of things is the way to survive. Creatures who habitually get things wrong about the character of their environment have, in W.V. Quine's words, a pathetic but praiseworthy habit of dying out before reproducing their kind. Truth is a survival-promoting attribute.

Initially, at least, Schopenhauer's point seems to be the denial, not that truth is survival-promoting, but that all of it is. In practical life, he points out (cf. also Chapter VII § 2), consciousness is schematised, etiolated. To the traveller in a hurry, for example, a bridge over the Rhine appears as little more than a dash intersecting with a stroke (WR II p.381). We tend, he continues, to categorise objects in terms of roles determined by human needs and purposes and hence notice only as much of their intrinsic character as is necessary to fitting them into those categories. The chess-player, for example, does not have the time to see in the chess-piece anything save what is necessary to knowing its role in the game (PP II p.69).
Schopenhauer's point here is absolutely correct. Truth is not, invariably, a survival-promoting attribute. Many truths are irrelevant to our practical concerns and need to be discarded from a manageable representation of the world. If they are not it becomes too cumbersome, too demanding in the time and energy required for its operation.

It might be objected that the conclusion these observations point to is not, as Schopenhauer claims, that practical interest "falsifies ... not merely judgement but even the original perception of things" (WR II p.373: my emphasis), but only that it simplifies it. But simplification is, often, falsification. If I deliberately ignore the 'chop' in the sharemarket chart and represent the day's trading as a smooth wave order to try to grasp the underlying trend, then there is simplification without falsification. But if someone takes the smooth wave to represent the actual course of events then he has made a mistake. And the point is that ordinary consciousness corresponds, of course, to the second case rather than the first: we are not aware of the elimination of useless 'chop' in our consciousness of the world.

I suggest, therefore, that Schopenhauer's argument is quite correct: the survival-value of simplifying falsehood makes it reasonable to believe in a significant disjunction between the world and our everyday representation of it, and hence supports an idealist position with regard to the latter. How radical the disjunction is, however, the argument provides no means of assessing; and it of course provides no warrant at all for transcendental idealism, for counting space and time as among the survival-promoting falsifications present in ordinary conscious.

* * * * * *

Yet, as has been said, Schopenhauer claims that he is a transcendental idealist and hence, presumably, sees his biological considerations as part of an overall defence of that position. But given the position, is there not, it might well be asked, something immensely peculiar in his appealing to biology or physiology to try to establish anything at all? For surely, any argument which appeals to biological or physiological considerations to do with brains in its premises presupposes, at the very least, that there really are such things as brains and is hence committed to a realist stance towards, at least, space, time and matter in general. It seems to follow, therefore, that Schopenhauer is confronted by the following dilemma: either he remains committed to the propriety of his appeal to the physiology and biology of the brain — in which case transcendental must be abandoned in favour of a less radical kind of idealism — or else he preserves transcendental idealism but concedes that the attempt to support it by other than orthodox Kantian methods is an aberration.

What is to be said about this dilemma? The first point to be made is
that Schopenhauer is not unaware of the apparent paradoxicality of his position. On the contrary, he delights, sometimes, in highlighting it:

In spite of all transcendental ideality, the objective world retains empirical reality: it is true that the object is not the thing in itself; but as empirical object it is real. It is true that space is only in my head (Kopf); but empirically my head (Kopf) is in space (WR II p.19).

Notice, firstly, the word-play on "head". Its second occurrence has literal meaning, but the first — for of course Schopenhauer does not believe that the whole of space is "in" a proper part of itself — it must be intended metaphorically ("Kopf," it may be noted, has the same range of figurative uses as its English counterpart.) So the conclusion appears inescapable that Schopenhauer is deliberately compounding the appearance of paradox.

The second point to observe is that the quotation indicates the general direction Schopenhauer's intended resolution of the paradox must take. Following Kant, he is at pains to insist that while the world of material things is transcendently ideal "it is not on that account falsehood or illusion" (WR I p.15): propositions about it (propositions such as that the head occupies space) may be true in the sense of belonging (as isolated incoherences such as dreams and hallucinations do not) to that coherent set of propositions which makes up our normal account of the world (cf WR I p.18). Yet such truth is confined to the empirical viewpoint: from a transcendental viewpoint all such propositions are false, for there is no space, no material head or brain, since these have no existence outside our representations.

This containment of the truth of matter-presupposing propositions within a perspective ultimately to be rejected, reappears in slightly different terminology in the chapter (ch. XXII of WR II) which is the locus of the main statement of the biological argument for idealism. For, as the chapter-title — "Objective View of the Intellect" — indicates, the whole discussion of physiology and biology is prefaced by the rubric: "this is how things stand from the objective standpoint". Now what Schopenhauer means here by "objective standpoint" is realism with regard to that image of the world presented by natural science (WR II p.272). As such, it is ultimately to be rejected: "on the purely objective path, we never attain to the inner nature of things" (WR II p.273, cf. PP II p.107). For all that matter-presupposing natural science can do is to describe the world as representation. And this means, again, that the brain has no existence outside our representations, a point Schopenhauer occasionally makes quite explicitly: the intellect, he says at WR II p.286, "appears objectively as brain". "In itself and ... outside the representation", he says at WR II p.273, "the brain ... like everything else is will".

But if then, to repeat our original worry, the brain, as a material entity, does not really exist, how can bio-physiological considerations be appealed
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to as evidence for anything? The answer must be, I think (though Schopenhauer is disconcertingly unhelpful here about the logical geography of his discussion), that the argument is intended to have the form of a *reductio ad absurdum*. Suppose, it must run, that the scientific image presents the world as it really is. One thing which then follows is that the way humans represent the world is determined by biology and physiology. But that makes it reasonable to believe, as we have seen, that human representations of the world falsify reality. Hence, since the objective view is itself a human representation, it follows that it too, to some degree or other, is probably a falsification of reality. So the objective view entails its own falseness as an account of how the world really is. The objective view, such is the point of the argument, undermines its own credentials as a rival account of the world to transcendental idealism.

Plausible though the argument is, it remains open to the scientific realist to claim the same kind of exemption from survival-serving falsification for his account of the world as Schopenhauer claims (sometimes) for his. Schopenhauer claims, that is (cf. WR II p.377), that certain rare minds, minds of "genius" (of which more in Chapter VII), are endowed with so much energy that even after serving all practical needs, there remains, still, a surplus which enables them to rise above the practically determined image of the world and construct a completely (or, at least, more than usually) truthful account of how it is. In speaking of genius Schopenhauer has in mind, in the first instance, great artists and in the second philosophers (such as presumably, himself). But it is not at all clear why the scientific realist should be precluded from claiming a similar objectivity.

§ 4 Summary

What are we to say, overall, of the case Schopenhauer makes for idealism? We saw, first of all, that none of the arguments which he takes over from Kant could be said to be entirely convincing. On the other hand his own bio-physiological version of Kantianism does provide a compelling argument with regard to the everyday image of the world: the world of that image really is a world of "appearances". What follows from that is that if any progress is to be made in understanding how the world really is, it can only be achieved by "ingenious" and "roundabout reflection" (WR II p.288): we have disposed of the possibility of naively reading off the way the world is from the way it is presented. What we have not done, however, is to dispose of the possibility that it is the natural scientist rather than the metaphysician who provides the appropriate roundabout ingenuity, for, as we saw, the attempt to show that the scientific image entails its own falsehood was not entirely convincing. This is a way of saying that we have
not yet been provided with any reason for thinking of our idealism as transcendental: it may be that, though esoteric, the world in itself remains a natural rather than supernatural entity.

In a way, this is not too disturbing a conclusion for Schopenhauer. For, as will appear in Part II of this study, though he calls himself a transcendental idealist, much of the time his account of that which underlies the ordinary representation of the world is highly naturalistic: the portrait of the world "as will" drawn in Book II of the main work is, I shall argue, a portrait of (as the title of Book II's companion work, *On the Will in Nature*, indicates) what goes on "in", not above, nature.

This is not, however, to say that, transcendentalism is irrelevant to Schopenhauer's philosophy. The point, rather, is this. Schopenhauer has, it seems to me, two conceptions of the task of philosophy (a duality he rather obscures by speaking repeatedly of the task of philosophy being to solve the "riddle of existence" (e.g. WR II pp. 170-1)). According to one conception, this task is to complete the scientific image of the world. This conception, which naturally suggests that metaphysics is a naturalistic enterprise, is the one that is predominant in Book II. But philosophy is concerned, too, with practical as well as theoretical "riddles"; with questions such as whether we survive death, whether there is any ultimate point to morality, and whether there is any "salvation" from the misery that is inseparable from this world. Insofar as it is concerned with these questions, as Schopenhauer's philosophy is in Book IV, it is natural to look to a transcendent metaphysics for a solution. So my thesis is that Schopenhauer's transcendentalism, while largely irrelevant to the concerns of Book II, comes into its own in Book IV.
Chapter II  Reason

§ 1 Introduction

Kant's idealism, we saw in the last chapter, finds in Schopenhauer a responsive audience. His account, of the nature and capacities of human reason, however, has a far more mixed reception. At the root of this lies the fact that whereas Kant (as part of his conscious identification with the eighteenth-century enlightenment) sees reason as the seat of all that is dignified, virtuous, and hopeful in human nature, Schopenhauer's stance towards reason (a stance which marks the beginning of the romantic, indeed the modern image of man) is depreciatory, even hostile. Thus, while insisting on the essentially rational character of philosophy (as will be seen in this and subsequent chapters, Schopenhauer vigorously opposes the intrusion of all forms of irrationalism into philosophy) he nonetheless sees reason as, in the final analysis, epistemologically insignificant; though morality and "salvation" are dependent on knowledge this, we will see, is "intuitive" not "rational" knowledge. Furthermore, towards things that matter like art, morality, and happiness, reason is positively hostile. In art it is responsible for the lifeless, imitative and second-rate, in situations of moral choice it produces selfishness, and in life it produces unhappiness: the reasonless animals who lack the wit to contemplate anything (such as death) which exists outside the present, possess a, to us, "enviable tranquility" (PP II p.294, cf.ch.X § 3 below.)

Leaving aside these underlying attitudes, two things of a more technical kind can be said about Schopenhauer's response to Kant's account of reason. The first is that that while he entirely approves Kant's "critique" of reason (the attempt by reason at self-discipline, at a determination of its own proper limits (CPR A xi-xii)) he believes that, under the influence of vestigial rationalist sympathies, Kant transgresses the limits he himself imposes. Thus, Schopenhauer holds, though in his theoretical philosophy Kant enunciates the thoroughly admirable dictum that thoughts (the conceptual) without intuitions (the sensory) are "empty" (CPR A 51), in his practical philosophy he contravenes this very dictum by making reason, all by itself, a source of (moral) knowledge. The second general line of criticism pursued by Schopenhauer, concerns the mutuality of the dependence Kant perceives between reason and sense. Though the "emptiness" of concepts unaccompanied by intuitions makes reason dependent on sense, Kant believes also in a reverse dependence: intuitions without concepts, he holds, are "blind" (ibid.). This, in effect, Schopenhauer entirely rejects. For him the dependence between reason and sense runs in one direction only.
§ 2 Practical Reason

A salient feature of Schopenhauer’s philosophy is the extraordinarily energetic invective he never tires of directing at his fellow post-Kantians; at Fichte, Jacobi, Schelling and, above all, the "mind-destroying" (WR II p.40) Hegel. What he objects to, in these "professors of philosophy" (FR p.164) (Schopenhauer always uses "professor" as a sneer-word, holding financial to be a precondition of intellectual autonomy) is, above all, the fraudulence, as he sees it, of their response to the predicament in which they were placed by the argument of the Critique of Pure Reason (an argument which will be examined in Chapter III) that metaphysical knowledge is impossible. Faced with the financial necessity (FW p.45) of presenting an appearance of regular metaphysical discovery, their response to this predicament was to invent, under the name of reason, a faculty of supposedly metaphysical, "supersensuous", perception, an "oracular ability" to have an "immediate rational intuition of the Absolute, or even ad libitum of the infinite, and of the infinite's evolution into the finite" (FR pp.166-7).

What Schopenhauer finds outrageous about this is, firstly, the always turgid, often actually meaningless, "scribble" (FR p.174) produced by the professors under the guise of reporting the deliverances of "rational intuition", and, secondly, that in their postulation of a supposedly perceptual capacity on the part of reason, these grubby, avaricious little men simply ignore (fail, that is, even to do combat with) the accumulated wisdom of the giants of philosophy, of, in particular, Locke and Kant, concerning the nature and limits of human reason (FR p.173).

Against the professors, Schopenhauer insists that reason is a conceptual, not a perceptual faculty which, as such, is of a dependent, "feminine" (FR p.171) nature. By itself, it is nothing but a set of "mere forms and rules for the operations of thought" (rules that are articulated in the formation and transformation rules of logic). To transmute its forms of thought into actual thoughts, reason is "compelled to take its material form without, from the representations of perception" (ibid.). It follows from this that thought or talk that fails to be rooted in sense-experience is devoid of content, of meaning (FR pp. 170-2, WR II pp. 40-1, pp. 70-2).

Schopenhauer takes himself here merely to be repeating Kant’s point concerning the "emptiness" of thoughts without intuitions; the point, at least, made by the Kant who is the continuator of the empiricist tradition, the developer of the works of Locke (FR p.175, WR II pp. 40-1). Unfortunately this same man, holds Schopenhauer, in his role as philosopher of practical reason, bears a heavy responsibility for the recrudescence of metaphysical mumbo-jumbo among his successors. For, as the source of the "categorical imperative", reason, in Kant’s hands, suddenly casts off its feminine nature; it becomes, as discoverer of the moral laws, a faculty which, all by itself,
acquaints us with moral facts. Given, then, that reason, in this way, has been turned into a "practical oracle", it requires only "a little audacity" on the part of, for example, an F.H. Jacobi to associate with it a "theoretical oracle", so that the faculty ends up as "so to speak a little window that admit[s] us to the superlunal and even supernatural world (FR. p.180-1).

* * * * * *

In line with the above diagnosis, a critique of Kant's conception of practical reason forms a necessary part of Schopenhauer's endeavour to puncture the pretensions of the professors and to restore men to a properly modest conception of reason and its possibilities.

Pure reason is, for Kant, practical in the sense that reason, all by itself, places us under certain (moral) obligations not hypothetically, not under the condition that we have (from a source outside reason) certain ends, but rather unconditionally or categorically; its obligations hold regardless of what our other ends may be. Reason, in short, is practical in that it determines, by itself, what some of our ends should be.

Against this, Schopenhauer wishes to reinstate a conception of practical reason which is, in fact, just Hume's: reason has no role in the determination of ends but is entirely concerned with the calculation of means. The dependence of the rational upon the sensory is as evident in the practical as in the theoretical sphere: just as theoretical reason without intuitions is empty, so practical reason without desires is impotent.

This demotion of practical reason to a merely calculational role manifests itself in various ways. It shows itself, for instance, in Schopenhauer's rejection of the idea of a categorical imperative as an absurd self-contradiction. (It is indicative of the generally Anglo-Saxon tenor of his thinking on the topic of reason that it is Locke he credits with the good commonsense to have seen the truth that every (successful) command is relative to a reward or punishment, that every obligation is, in other words, hypothetical (BM pp. 55-56)). And it shows itself in the selection of Machiavelli's prince (a man brilliantly intelligent in realising his end of "unconditionally keep[ing] himself on the throne") as a paradigm of practical rationality (WR 1 pp.515-6) — a calculated afront to the Kantian conviction that a fully rational agent is also a completely virtuous one.

A further manifestation of Schopenhauer's demotion of practical reason to a purely instrumental role is his choice of the figure of the stoic sage as the exemplification of complete practical rationality (WR 1 p.16, cf. WR I pp. 519-20, WR II Ch XVI). The highest human goal is happiness, so it follows that the most rational life is that which (a) possesses the best set of hypothetical imperatives for its achievement and (b) is steadfast in living by them. The stoic recipe for the avoidance of suffering via the abandonment
or reduction of desire satisfies, he holds, the first condition, while the picture of the sage, being an idealisation, a picture of someone who has completely internalised stoic doctrine, satisfies, by definition, the second condition.

The most striking feature of Schopenhauer's conception of practical reason is its (self-consciously) reactionary character: in rejecting the Kantian conception of reason as a determiner of moral and therefore socially unifying ends, Schopenhauer returns to a pre-Kantian, Anglo-Saxon view of practical rationality as residing, purely, in the maximisation of individual happiness, of self- (typically selfish) interest. This accounts for the moral dimension to Schopenhauer's antipathy to reason: far from being the Kantian seat of all that is noble and virtuous in human nature, reason is actually in its fundamental tendency, an anti-moral force. (At least it is when it operates within the context of our usual atomistic metaphysics according to which the world contains a plurality of objects, a plurality of, in particular, selves; as will appear in Chapter VIII, Schopenhauer sees the possibility of reason becoming a pro-moral force if combined with a metaphysics postulating a trans-individual self whose interests the rational agent then seeks to maximise.)

§ 3 Reason and Perception

I turn now from Schopenhauer's differences with Kant over practical reason, to his criticisms of Kant's account of theoretical reason. What these amount to is a rejection of the whole line of thought which Kant summarises in the dictum that intuitions without concepts are "blind".

In making this claim, Kant does not mean that in the absence of concepts there can be no conscious experience at all. One clear reason for saying this (an unclear reason is an obscure letter to Herz (Prussian Academy vol. XI p.52) in which, while denying that animals have concepts, he seems to allow that their behaviour is influenced by conscious representations of their environment) is that, according to the third Critique, the essence of aesthetic experience is its freedom from concepts: in enjoying the beautiful what we take delight in is consciousness of the pure form of an object to appreciate which we must either have no concept of the object at all, or else abstract from any concept under which, in non-aesthetic experience, we subsume it (CJ § 15).

What Kant means by the claim, rather, is that in all "cognitive" consciousness, all experience, that is, in which we see and are aware of an object as an object of a certain kind (i.e. believe it to be of that kind on the basis of the experience) concepts are deployed. To put the point in Kantian language, to experience an object and be aware of it as the kind of object it is is to make a conceptual judgement: it is, that is to say, to organize the
"manifold" of sensation into a whole, a whole that is "recognised" (CPR A 103) as falling under a given concept. (Aesthetically appreciated, therefore, an object is an 'unrecognised' whole.)

This thesis of the conceptually judgemental character of all cognitive experience is absolutely central to Kant's enterprise in the first Critique. For on it depends his "deduction" of the "categories", his demonstration that our cognitive experience cannot but be experience of, for example, a casually ordered realm of substantival entities. Thus, so Kant argues, while ordinary empirical concepts are rules according to which the "imagination" organizes the sensory manifold into perceptual wholes, the categories are the second-order rules according to which these empirical concepts are themselves formed (CPR A 124-5, CJ § 36.1). Hence, the argument concludes, given that all cognitive experience is a matter of conceptual judgement, it follows that all such experience must be of a categorised realm.

Schopenhauer completely rejects this mingling of the conceptual with the perceptual. "Knowledge of perception", he claims, exists entirely independently of concepts: animals, for instance, have it though they have no concepts at all (WR II p.59, FR p.110). Our whole "world of perception" (WR I p.41, WR II p.72), "empirical reality", that is, is given to us entirely independently of any conceptual activity whatsoever (WR I p.443). Given this position it is no surprise that, in contrast with his admiration for the Aesthetic of the first Critique, Schopenhauer has little time for the Analytic (see, especially, WR I p. 446), and completely rejects "the whole doctrine of the categories" (WR I p.452). Naturally Schopenhauer has little time for the Analytic, for if the conceptual is excluded from the perceptual then the Analytic, which seeks to elaborate and explain the a priori structure introduced into our experience of the world by the conceptual faculty, is a work without any subject-matter.

It has to be said that in this matter Schopenhauer's line of criticism is totally misguided. Although he has some good points which he uses the phrase "knowledge of perception" (or "intuitive knowledge, or "knowledge of the understanding") to make, insofar as the phrase encapsulates the notion that our awareness of the world as containing the kinds of objects we take it to contain is independent of the concepts that we have, it encapsulates, I will suggest, a serious error.

The reason Schopenhauer thinks he can dispense with concepts in general and Kant's categories in particular, in accounting for the genesis of perceptual consciousness, is that he believes the whole job to be accomplished by his theory of unconscious causal inference from sensation to hypothesised cause to which I referred in § 3 of Chapter 1. Now although I made some complimentary remarks about the theory (fn. 4), it now needs to be added, on the debit side, that Schopenhauer vastly over-estimates what the theory can be a theory of. The reason is that each of the brain-operations Schopenhauer takes to be, collectively, generative of (visual) perception is,
in fact, concerned with one of just three tasks: explaining how the brain rights
the retinal image, how it unifies the image belonging to each eye, and —
Schopenhauer's major preoccupation — how it constructs and organizes the
dimension of depth.

Now it is clearly quite wrong to suppose that operations belonging to just
these three types could be anywhere near adequate to explain everything
there is to explain about the generation of our "world of perception". What
they can explain, perhaps, is how visual perception is non-inverted, unitary
and stereoscopically organized. But they cannot begin to explain how we see
the world as containing the objects it does, for us, contain. To put the point
another way, the question Schopenhauer's theory is really an answer to is: given
that we are disposed to see the world as populated by items such as
shoes, ships and sealing-wax, how is it that we see one and not two of each,
see them the right way up, and are able to recognise such features as volume,
relative size, and distance. But as to why we populate the world with those
kinds of objects in the first place, Schopenhauer actually has no answer at all.

Kant, on the other hand, does. His insight, regrettably lost on Schopen­
hauer, was to see that how we cognise the world, what kinds of objects we
find in it, depends on the concepts we have. For there are many ways of
dividing up the sensory manifold; "theory", as W.V. Quine puts it (and here
it does not matter whether we are talking about the consciously formulated
theory of science or about the unconscious 'theory' which is our particular
way of conceptualising sensation) is "under-determined" by sense-experience
(cf. Word and Object ch. 2.)

What Kant saw was the essential role of concepts, conceived as rules for
organizing the sensory manifold, in determining how we objectify experience.
For these rules perform two essential functions: firstly they organize present
sensation into figure and ground — concepts of spatial things determine their
spatial boundaries — and secondly, they determine which past experiences
belong together with present ones as experiences of one and the same object —
concepts determine the temporal as well as spatial boundaries of objects.
(Kant calls the first operation the "synthesis of apprehension", the second
the "synthesis of reproduction" (CPR A 97-A102).)

But Schopenhauer, as I have said, completely misses out this revol­
tutionary insight into the concept-determined nature of perception. The
result, his insistence that our awareness of the "world of perception" is
constructed in complete independence of concepts, is responsible for some
serious errors and incoherences which disfigure his philosophy. For, in the
first place, it leads to the incoherence of supposing, in effect, that while
genus-terms denote concepts, (lowest) species terms do not. The problem here
is created by the fact that since, in, for example, the case of the higher
animals, there is said to be awareness of individual objects as objects of the
kinds they are independently of concept-possession, Schopenhauer is unable
to affirm the truth that any classifying of objects as belonging to kinds is bringing them under concepts: some classifyings are, for Schopenhauer, non-conceptual. The question then arises as to which classificatory abilities make one a concept-possessor and which do not. Schopenhauer's implicit, and occasionally fairly explicit (FR p.147) answer, is that genus-classifications imply concept-possession while (lowest) species classificitions do not. This leads to incoherence in Schopenhauer's semantic theory, for according to that, it is concepts which are the meanings of predicative expressions (WR II p.67). He is then committed to the view that while "dog" has a meaning, "corgie" does not — not, that is, in the way predicates do. This would suggest that lowest species terms must have meaning in the way proper names of individuals do, an absurd idea Schopenhauer uneasily flirts with in suggesting that lowest species terms denote "almost the individual and thus almost the [extra-conceptually] real" (WR II p.64).

A further pernicious consequence of Schopenhauer's failure to assimilate the Kantian insight that conception determines perception, is an incoherent account of what concepts are. For the idea that perceptual consciousness of a world divided up into species of things exists on a pre-conceptual level, makes possible, and naturally leads to, the abstractionist account of the acquisition and nature of concepts provided by classical English empiricism. Schopenhauer takes over this account; at least, he does so with certain reservations. The child forms, he says, the concept of, for example, a dog by noticing similarities and ignoring differences between the different species of dog it encounters in perceptual experience (FR pp.146-7). But now, if this is how concepts are formed then what they are, as Locke in effect held, are images: for nothing, surely, can be constructed out of sense-experience save a further sensory item. But Schopenhauer rejects this: though concepts resemble "images of perception" in being "representations", individual mental objects, they are distinguished from them in being "abstract", that is, indeterminate; whereas a perception or image of a dog must be fully determinate (it must be of either a long or short-haired, snub-nosed or non-snub-nosed etc. animal) the concept of a dog is an indeterminate representation of "dog in general" (FR p.152). But how can there be indeterminate representations? Surely, one might reflect, every representation is encounterable in consciousness, and everything encounterable in consciousness is determinate. This latter claim Schopenhauer rejects. Edmund Burke, he notes, confronted the problem that in comprehending the words of a language it is clear that concepts are deployed, yet equally clear that "pictures in our head" are by no means always present. From this he concluded that there is no particular kind of representation which has to accompany the comprehension of a word. But Burke was wrong, says Schopenhauer: what he should have concluded was, rather, that not all representations are image-like or determinate (WR II p.67). But what then are these indeterminate representations? They
have arisen through abstractions and are wholly universal representations which differ from all particular things. In this property they have, to a certain extent, an objective existence that yet does not belong to any time series. Therefore to enter the immediate present of an individual consciousness... they must to a certain extent be brought down again to the nature of particular things, individualised, and thus linked to a representation of the senses; this is the word. (WR II p.66).

Plainly Schopenhauer has landed himself in a terrible muddle here (a muddle his uneasy use of "to a certain extent" shows him to be at least half aware of). What he really wants to enunciate in the first sentence is the truth that concepts are not representations at all, something he would have seen how to say if he had grasped the Kantian insight that concepts are rules for organizing (sensory) representations, not representation themselves. But this is something Schopenhauer cannot bring himself to say; concepts, he insists, are representations. As such — the logic is inexorable — they must be like images. Yet Schopenhauer knows that they cannot be anything like images, for, he agrees with Burke, if they were "what a tumult there would be in our heads while we listen to a speech or read a book" (WR I p.39). The result of this conflict is the total incoherence of saying that concepts are quasi-things, mysterious non-particulars, which yet make a quasi-appearance in consciousness in the form of words. In short, Schopenhauer is baffled by the nature of concepts: the above quotation is not an account of what they are but simply a record of puzzlement. The source of this puzzlement is abstractionism. For once that account of concept-formation is adopted, it becomes inevitable that concepts should be thought of as mental particulars, representations. And the source of abstractionism is, as I have said, the notion that perceptual consciousness of the world is concept-independent.

§ 4 Concept-Empiricism

In the last section I looked at Schopenhauer's (misguided) rejection of Kant's dictum that intuitions without concepts are "blind". In this I want to look at what he approves of in Kant's account of reason, the position expressed in the dictum that concepts without intuitions are "empty".

Kant uses this dictum to summarize a doctrine which, following Jonathan Bennett, I shall call "concept-empiricism". Concept-empiricism is a doctrine which, described in general terms, insists on the connection between cognitively significant thought or discourse on the one hand, and sense-experience, on the other. To understand the influence Kant's concept-empiricism exercised over Schopenhauer, however, it is important to
understand just what, in Kant's version of the doctrine, the connection is claimed to be.

Bennett offers a relaxed, liberal interpretation of Kant's position:

To put his position as a thesis about language: a general term makes sense only if it has a working role in sentences which have implications for experience. We have a sense for 'electron', for example, because we can use it in theories with empirical cash-value (op.cit.p.29).

He goes on to contrast Kant's criterion, as he understands it, with the criterion of Kant's empiricist predecessors that requires us, in effect, to be able to imagine that which it "makes sense" to talk about. Such a theory, suggests Bennett, is in serious difficulties over the 'electron' example, but Kant, by allowing that "meanings are answerable to experience in looser and more complex ways" (ibid.) avoids such problems.

I want to argue that this liberal interpretation of Kant (for which Bennett offers no textual support) is quite wrong. What Kant requires, in demanding that concepts be accompanied by intuitions, I shall argue, is, in effect, that topics of cognitively significant discourse be, in principle, perceptible; objects of possible sense-experience. I shall argue, in short, that Kant requires just what Bennett says he does not require — that we should be able to imagine sensory confrontations with the objects of significant discourse.

The first point to make is that while Bennett, as both a believer in modern science and a concept-empiricist, is worried about electrons and the other in principle unobservable entities of modern science, Kant was not. For him, as for Locke before him, if some of the theoretical entities postulated by natural science are unobservable, this is a purely contingent, 'medical' fact. Thus, for example, discussing "magnetic matter" at CPR A 226, he says that though in fact we can only perceive its effects, we would be able to perceive it itself "were our senses more refined". And he uses the example to caution us to remember that "the grossness of our senses does not in any way decide the form of possible experience". So for Kant there is no difficulty in allowing significance to scientific theories: the entities they talk about are, in principle, perceptible and hence provide no impetus towards a "looser and more complex" account of the relation between meaning and experience.

The second point is that although Kant's formulations of concept-empiricism are occasionally compatible with the liberal interpretation (for example: "all concepts [must] ... relate to empirical intuitions, that is, to data for a possible experience. Apart from this relation they have no objective validity" (CPR B 298)), his detailed discussions of the nature of the doctrine are not.

Concepts, as we have seen, are conceived by Kant as rules for organizing the sensory manifold. To fulfil their function, therefore, they must be
"determinable by means of predicates borrowed from sensible intuition and capable of corresponding to it" (CJ § 57.2, cf. § 36.1). A concept, that is, must supply what may be called "encounterability conditions", a specification of perceptual conditions such that we know of anything meeting those conditions that it is an instance of the concept in question. From this it follows that *bona fide* concepts must all have instances in possible experience: they must be "applied to objects of possible experience that is to the world of sense" (CPR B 724), and "have no meaning at all if no object is given for them" (CPR A 139).

Perhaps the most decisive piece of evidence against the liberal interpretation is Kant's appeal to *ostension* to discriminate between concepts which pass the test of concept-empiricism and those, the "ideas of reason", that fail. The latter are distinguishable from the former in virtue of being "indemonstrable". What, that is to say, marks them out as ideas of reason is our inability to "demonstrate (ostendere, exhibere)" them, a term which derives its meaning from the anatomical context in which the lecturer is said to demonstrate the concept of the eye by dissecting an actual organ (CJ § 57.12-13). Clearly this requirement of the possibility of sensory "presentation" (ibid.) of instances of *bona fide* concepts is something quite other than the "loose and complex" relation of Bennett's interpretation.

I have laboured the wrongness of the liberal interpretation because, as will be discussed in the next chapter, concept-empiricism forms the basis of Kant's central challenge to the enterprise of metaphysics. Schopenhauer, we will see, seeks to respond to this challenge but — this is the crucial point — he *accepts* its concept-empiricist premiss. This determines the nature of his response. The fact that what he accepts is the requirement of the perceptibility of topics of significant discourse makes intelligible, I shall suggest, both his meta-philosophical discussion of how metaphysics might survive the Kantian challenge, and the particular character of his own metaphysical account of the world. On the liberal interpretation neither of these phenomena are explicable.

As it is, Schopenhauer embraces the illiberal doctrine with both ease and enthusiasm. His enthusiasm is due to the fact that concept-empiricism provides him with a weapon with which to expose the mumbo-jumbo of pseudo-metaphysicians for what it is — in this connection, he speaks of their pseudo-assertions as the product of their favourite "trick or blunder" of taking a respectable concept such as *cause* or *substance* with a purely natural extension and then deploying it "too widely" to embrace supposedly non-natural instances (such as God) (WR II pp.39-44, FR p.134) — while the ease is due to the fact that the very same doctrine is the inevitable consequence of his own abstractionist account of concept-formation. For if concepts are things which are abstracted out of sense-perception then, as Schopenhauer says, it must be possible.
for us to go back from every concept, even if through intermediate stages, to the perceptions from which it has ... been drawn .... In other words it must be possible to verify the concept with perceptions which stand to abstractions in the relation of examples (WR II p.71).

In other words, on the abstractionist view, for every *bona fide* concept, or every element out of which a concept (such as that of a unicorn, for example) is compounded, there will always be a perceptual object which stands to the concept as both instance and source. (Of course, this route to concept-empiricism is a *genetic* one whereas Kant's is a functional one — derived, that is, not from the way concepts are generated but from the role they perform in the economy of the mind. It is a measure of Schopenhauer's incomprehension of Kant's account of the nature of concepts that he views him as a super-Locke, someone who, with Locke, "in order to counteract all ... dogmatic unreality insisted on an investigation of the origin of concepts, and thus led back to what is perceptive and to experience" (WR II (140-1)).)
Chapter III  Metaphysics

§ 1 The Kantian Challenge

In Chapter I we saw Schopenhauer adopting the view that the world with which we have experiential acquaintance is of merely ideal, phenomenal status. In Chapter II we saw his endorsement of a version of concept-empiricism according to which cognitively meaningful discourse is restricted to discourse about that to which we have, in principle, experiential access. If we add to these two parts of the Kantian legacy the idea that metaphysics is the study of that which lies "beyond experience" (CPR B 18, Prol. § 1) an idea which, so it seems, at least, Schopenhauer also endorses —

By metaphysics I understand all so-called knowledge that goes beyond the possibility of experience, and so beyond nature or the given phenomenal appearance of things, in order to give information about that by which, in one sense or another, this experience or nature is conditioned, or in popular language about that which is hidden behind nature and renders nature possible (WR II p.164) —

a further aspect of Kantianism seems to be something Schopenhauer ought also to endorse — the impossibility of metaphysical knowledge. But in fact he does not. Though Kant has indeed demolished the assumption of the "pre-Kantian dogmatics" that pure thought can reveal to us the nature of ultimate reality (WR II, p.182; cf. WR I p.426), properly conducted, he holds, the metaphysical enterprise still remains a viable one: Kant's "despair" (WR I p.428) was premature.

But plainly, then, there must be something in Schopenhauer's position that we have so far missed. For to evade the Kantian conclusion his endorsement of the Kantian premisses must be somehow only partial, qualified in some manner that has not yet come to light. To make this apparent (and also to introduce some clarity into what is a difficult passage in Schopenhauer's thought) let me set out what Kant takes to be his most fundamental argument against the possibility of metaphysics (cf. CPR B xxv - B xxvi) in a reasonably formal manner. It can, I suggest, be represented as follows:

(1) The world to which we have experiential access is ideal.

(2) Cognitively meaningful discourse (and so, of course knowledge) is limited to that to which, in principle, we
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have experiential access.

Hence (3) Our knowledge can concern only an ideal world.

And so (4) We can have no knowledge of ultimate reality.

But (5) Metaphysical knowledge is knowledge of ultimate reality.

So (6) Metaphysical knowledge is impossible.

Since the conclusion of this argument ("the argument from concept-empiricism" I shall call it) clearly follows from the premisses, and since Schopenhauer agrees (WR II p.196) that it is the principal Kantian attack on the possibility of the metaphysics, appearances to the contrary, he must (assuming him not to be simply inconsistent) take exception to one of the premisses. The question to be discussed in this chapter is: which?

§ 2 A Naturalistic Metaphysics

The almost universally received interpretation has it that Schopenhauer's response to the Kantian argument is, in effect, to deny premiss (1). While most of our experience indeed acquaints us with the merely ideal, we have also, Schopenhauer is interpreted as holding, an especially privileged kind of experience which acquaints us with the ultimately real. Thus Karl Popper, to take a representative example, describes Schopenhauer's metaphysical position as "voluntarism: in [being aware of?] our own volitions we know ourselves as wills. The thing-in-itself is the will". More surprisingly, even as recent and specialist a study as Hamlyn's offers a version of this interpretation. Schopenhauer's argument "for the identification of the will with the thing-in-itself" (op. cit. p.92) rests he claims, on the idea that we have a unique kind of awareness of a non-phenomenal kind: Schopenhauer holds, but "does not really succeed in saying it clearly" that we "know directly and in an unconditioned way" not indeed "what we will" but the "fact of willing", the fact of agency (op. cit. p.85).

Now although I believe that this interpretation is incompatible with central commitments of Schopenhauer's philosophy and has, therefore, to be rejected, I do not wish to deny that he gives, sometimes severe, provocation to those who would read him in this way. Consider for example, this:

What Kant opposed as thing in itself to mere phenomenon—called more decidedly by me representation—and what he held to be absolutely unknowable, ... this thing in itself, this substratum of all phenomena,
and therefore of the whole of Nature, is nothing but what we know directly and intimately and find within ourselves as the will (WNp.216).

Or consider Schopenhauer's observation that while he agrees with Kant that "on the path of objective knowledge, thus starting from the representation, we shall never get beyond the representation i.e., the phenomenon",

as a counterpoise to this truth, I have stressed that [since] ... we ourselves are the thing in itself ... a way from within stands open to us to that real inner nature of things which we cannot penetrate from without. It is, so to speak, a subterranean passage, a secret alliance, which, as if by treachery, places us all at once in the fortress that could not be taken by attack from without. Precisely as such, the thing in itself can come into consciousness only quite directly, namely by it itself being conscious of itself (WR II p.195).

In the immediate continuation of this discussion at the beginning of the next paragraph, Schopenhauer makes it explicit that his direct concern here is with formulating a response to the argument from concept-empiricism:

Kant's principal result may be summarised in its essence as follows: "All concepts which do not have as their basis a perception in space and time (sensuous perception), or in other words, have not been drawn from such a perception, are absolutely empty, that is can give us no knowledge. But as perceptions can furnish only phenomena, not things in themselves, we too have no knowledge of things in themselves". I admit this of everything, but not of the knowledge everyone has of his own willing. This is neither a perception (Anschauung) (for all perception is spatial) nor is it empty (WR II p.196).

If these passages are to be taken at face-value, then Schopenhauer's response to Kant's argument is indeed to deny premiss (1). But surely they cannot be taken at face value. For how could a man who takes such relish in lampooning the idea of "rational intuition", of little "windows" through which Hegelians peer at the Absolute (cf. ch. II § 2), entertain seriously, even for a moment, the idea of "subterranean passages" to the noumenal? Why should a tunnel be any better than a window?

Let me dwell a little, in the enormity of Schopenhauer's crime if he really does believe in the idea of tunnelling to the noumenal, as the standard (Popperian) reading would have us believe. If he does, then, in the first place, his claims to endorse orthodox Kantian idealism and his professed admiration for the Aesthetic of that first Critique are revealed as based on crude misunderstanding. For a fundamental feature of transcendental idealism is the view that the self in itself is just as inaccessible to human
experience as is the object in itself. The reason for this is that, according to Kant, time, as much as space, is a mere form of experience, and hence the objects of inner (temporally though not spatially organised) experience are no less phenomenal than are the objects of outer. All this is set forth in unmistakable terms in the Aesthetic, so that, coming from someone who claims to accept transcendental idealism, the parenthetical remark, in the last of the passages quoted above, that all intuition (Anschauung) is spatial, taken seriously, represents a ground-level, first-year undergraduate misunderstanding of the doctrine. In the second place, "Fichtean humbug" (FR p.120) becomes a self-description: for the claim that one has inner, "intellectual" intuition of the self in the "immediated consciousness" that one acts (in short, something very like the view Hamlyn attributes to Schopenhauer) represents just Fichte's response to Kant's claim that the world in itself is unknowable. 14

In fact, however, Schopenhauer flirts with, rather than embraces, the idea of experiential encounters with the noumenal. For having, in the last passage quoted, apparently made the outrageous claim that the merely phenomenal status of the experienced applies only to outer experience, he starts to retreat from it almost immediately. In the very next paragraph we are required to "carefully note" that "even the inward observation we have of our own will still does not by any means furnish an exhaustive and adequate knowledge of the thing in itself". One reason for this is that inner experience though free of the form of space remains subject to the form of time and hence "still remains phenomenon" (WR II p.196-7).

So, after all, it seems, there is nothing special about inner experience. But Schopenhauer is not quite happy to embrace this idea either. Though the an sich does not appear "quite naked" in inner experience, being "veiled" still by the form of time, it has "to a great extent cast off its veils", so that the "stirrings and acts of our own will" provide "the nearest and clearest phenomenon of the thing in itself", our "most immediate", "closest" encounter with it. In consequence of this, says Schopenhauer, "I will call the will the thing in itself" (ibid.).

Why all these tortuous tergiversations? Why the attempt to "modify" (ibid.) Kant, to flavour him with just a dash of Fichteanism? Why does Schopenhauer bother with extraordinarily weak arguments like the one above? (That it is not the case that the apparent features of an object are the more likely to correspond to its true features the fewer 'filters' or 'veils' it is seen through, can be seen by observing that grass is perceived with greater verisimilitude through a blue filter superimposed on a yellow filter than through a yellow filter alone.)

The answer to these questions lies in the fact, as I argued in the previous chapter (§ 4), that premiss (2) in Kant's argument, the narrow version of concept-empiricism, is something Schopenhauer endorses. This being so, he is inevitably impelled, by semantic considerations, towards an affirmation of
the experiential encounterability of instances of his fundamental metaphysical term. Consider, for example, this:

if I use the words 'Will, Will to Live' this is no mere *ens rationis*, no hypostasis set up by me, nor is it a term of vague, uncertain meaning; on the contrary, I refer him who asks me what it is to his own inner self, where he will find it entire, nay, in colossal dimensions as a true *ens realissimum* (WN p.376).

In a similar vein, he criticises the identification of the "inner being" of the world as "world-soul" on the grounds that soul is a mere *ens rationis*. Will, on the other hand, is something "actually and empirically given" (WR II p.349).

Now an *ens rationis* is just what Kant called an"idea of reason". Ideas of reason, as I observed in Chapter II, are "indemonstrable" in that there is no possibility of ostending instances of them in perceptual experience. In these passages, therefore, what Schopenhauer is doing is providing his metaphysical account of the world with a clean bill of semantic health by pointing out the, in Kantian terms, "demonstrability" and hence legitimacy of his fundamental metaphysical concept. There are, he is implicitly saying, no "Absolutes" in my philosophy (cf. WR II p.185), no vacuous expressions, no fictional objects of non-existent perception. On the contrary, my fundamental metaphysical entity is something "actually and empirically" given, so that my metaphysical story is something you can get your imagination around, something you can clearly comprehend.

Given this position in the theory of meaning, given the endorsement of the second premiss in Kant's argument, Schopenhauer cannot allow any gap between experience and the metaphysical will. Experience must reach right up to and touch metaphysical reality: hence the attractions of the Fichtean option of allowing a special sort of experience to break, like a laser-beam, through the Kantian barriers between us and the ultimately real. But this is not the only option compatible with concept-empiricism. The alternative would be to withdraw the metaphysical to our side of the Kantian barriers thereby obviating the need for any special acts of metaphysical penetration.

What I am suggesting, as an alternative response to the Kantian challenge, is a rejection of premiss (5): in other words, the adoption of an understanding of the topic and nature of metaphysics other than that indicated by the quotation given on the first page of this chapter. Such an understanding would be possible if we were to abandon the simple Kantian dichotomy between appearance and ultimate, noumenal reality and adopt instead a trichotomy, interposing between noumenal reality on the one hand and the ordinary world (the world as conceived by commonsense and natural science — the latter being merely a systematic version of the former (WR I p.177) —) on the other, a third world distinct from either. This third world,
non-noumenal and hence situated within the Kantian boundaries, yet esoteric and so distinct from the ordinary world, could then constitute the topic of metaphysical investigation. And such an investigation could satisfy the constraints of concept-empiricism yet, at the same time, provide a genuinely extraordinary, exotic, world-description worthy of the adjective "metaphysical", were it the case that in constructing its world-description it made use of some aspect of experience neglected by our ordinary world-view (for example, inner experience of our own wills) or, at least, extended the concept of the object of such experience radically beyond its usual sphere of application.

To my mind there is no question but that this is the best interpretation of Schopenhauer's response to the argument from concept-empiricism. Apart from the drawbacks we have observed in the rival interpretation there are a number of independent reasons for reading Schopenhauer in this way.

In the first place, in spite of the quotation on the first page of this Chapter, Schopenhauer's detailed discussions of the nature of philosophy suggest that its interest is in a natural rather than supernatural domain. Thus, philosophy is, says Schopenhauer, that discipline which "begins where the sciences leave off" for "just what the sciences presuppose and lay down as the base and limit of their explanation is precisely the real problem of philosophy" (WR I pp.81-2). Natural science, Schopenhauer believes, is in a certain fundamental respect inadequate: "Physics is unable to stand on its own feet but needs a metaphysics on which to support itself, whatever fine airs it may assume towards the latter" (WR II p.172). At a fundamental level, we will shortly find him arguing, science proves incompetent to carry out its self-appointed task of providing a comprehensive explanation of nature and must turn to philosophy for the completion of that task. (One may think here of the way in which (according to logicists) the foundations of mathematics are to be found in the separate science of logic.)

This conception of philosophy as having the task of completing the scientific image of the world is the one which fits Schopenhauer's construction of the account of the world "as will" in Book II of the main work. (There is another conception of philosophy as having a practical rather than theoretical task, but that does not become relevant until Book IV.) In my view, a view I shall be concerned to substantiate in Chapters IV, V and VI, there is no doubt at all that the world-view constructed there is an account of the natural, not of a transcendental world. (Hence, as I remarked at the end of Chapter I, the unimportance that transcendental idealism should be true, so far as Book II is concerned.)

A second reason for understanding Schopenhauer in the way I suggest is that he often says he should be so understood. At WR II p.183, for example, he says that the "kernel of the phenomenon can never be entirely separated from the phenomenon and regarded ... as an ens extramundanum ". And at PP I p.42 he affirms "I am myself a Kantian" on the grounds that he "admit[s]"
the fundamental Kantian position that "we cannot know (wissen) anything beyond experience and its possibility". Finally at WR I p.428 we find him stating that the metaphysics of will constitutes an account of the real nature of the world "only within certain limits inseparable from our finite nature". Consequently, he concludes, "my path lies midway between the doctrine of omniscience of the earlier dogmatism [the claim of rationalist metaphysicians to be able to know by pure thought the character of ultimate reality] and the despair of the Kantian critique", a conclusion which affirms precisely the trichotomy I have proposed.

§ 3 Mysticism and the Limits of Philosophy

A further important reason in favour of the interpretation I propose has to do with Schopenhauer's practical philosophy. On pp.26-7 above we looked at the tortuous passage in which he at first seems to affirm, but then in the end denies, that inner experience provides direct access to the an sich. The passage concludes by asserting that since, after all, the object of inner experience "still remains phenomenon", the question may still be raised

What that will which manifests itself in the world and as the world is ultimately and absolutely in itself; in other words, what it is, quite apart from the fact that it manifests itself as will, or in general appears (WR II pp.197-8).

This question, he says, "can never be answered" (ibid.).

This theme of the ultimately "negative" (WR II p.612) character of philosophy, its inability, the inability of human reason in general, to know, or even conceive, the character of ultimate reality ("if a being of a higher order came and took the trouble to impart it to us, we should be quite unable to understand any part of his disclosures" (WR II p.185)) is, of course, something to which Schopenhauer is lead by his commitment to the combination of idealism and concept-empiricism. But it should not be thought of as something in which he takes a purely semantic interest, and neither should it be supposed that there is any reluctance or sense of disappointment in his endorsement of it. For in fact, the inability of human reason to "speak ... of things in themselves" and hence its incapacity to provide the "ultimate ... positive solution to the riddle of the world" (ibid.) is a crucial part of Schopenhauer's practical philosophy, where it provides the one ray of hope in an otherwise desolate landscape.

To understand the importance of the theme of the inevitably bounded character of all rational endeavour, it is necessary to re-examine Schopenhauer's attitude towards "rational" or "intellectual" intuition. We have
observed the satirical scorn he pours upon the idea of little windows onto the Absolute, but where, in fact, is the argument? Why should there not be a rent in the veil Kant places between us and ultimate reality, a mode of experience that gives us direct access to the noumenal?

In *Parerga* (PP II pp.9-11) "illuminism", the claim that there is a capacity for "inner illumination, intellectual intuition, higher consciousness, immediate knowing reason" receives a much more sympathetic treatment that it does in the *Fourfold Root* (the locus of the purest of the vitriol Schopenhauer hurls at the "professors"). For there it appears no longer as a localised and fraudulent effort to escape a specifically Kantian impasse, but as the eternal antithesis to "rationalism", appearing, it is true, in Jacobi, Schelling and Fichte, but appearing also in the objects of Schopenhauer's reverence, the "divine Plato" and the "divinely inspired" (WR I p. xv) works of the Indian and Christian mystics.

What Schopenhauer says about illuminism in *Parerga*, is not that it is a fairy-story invented by charlatans and humbugs, but rather that the deliverances of supersensible intuition are mystical; "its knowledge... is not communicable." Philosophy, however,

should be communicable knowledge and must therefore be rationalism. Accordingly at the end of my philosophy I have indicated the sphere of illuminism as something that exists, but I have guarded against setting even one foot thereon.

So, apart from *ad hominem* considerations, Schopenhauer's real objection to Fichte *et al.* is not that they have fabricated a faculty, but rather that they have no business bringing it into philosophy. It is no accident, I think that the position can be summarised in Wittgenstein's words: "There are things which cannot be put into words .... They are what is mystical (Tr. 6. 522) .... What we cannot speak about we must pass over in silence" (Tr.7).

In reality, then, Schopenhauer is not unsympathetic to the idea that there is experiential access to ultimate reality: a "sphere of illuminism" is accepted. This might be an expression of a tolerant but uninterested agnosticism, but, in fact, Schopenhauer's attitude towards the idea of mystical insight is very far from that. For, as we will see in Chapter IX, it is upon the veridicality of mystical insight into another, ecstatic, world, a world relative to which this one is a mere "dream", that, for Schopenhauer, our only chance of "salvation" depends.

Schopenhauer, then, allows us to hope for "salvation". His philosophy must, therefore, allow that it is at least a *possibility*. But — this is the point I have been leading up to — the possibility of salvation *demands* that the metaphysical account of the world as Will should not be an account of the world in itself. For the world as will is, as we will see, a world *inalienably* permeated by suffering and evil. So were the world as will the world in
itself, suffering would be *absolutely* inescapable and salvation impossible. Schopenhauer himself makes this point. Salvation, he says, demands that one should have "stepped outside the phenomenon", that one should have transcended, "abolished", the self and the world "as will". But if the thing in itself were will, then to have transcended the will would be to have "passed over into empty nothingness": "If the will were positively and absolutely the thing in itself, then this nothing would be *absolute*". As it is, however, the nothingness that is beyond the will is only a "*relative* nothingness": only relative to "our knowledge" can it be said that there is nothing beyond the will (WR II p.198).
PART II

THE WORLD AS WILL
Chapter IV  The Limits of Natural Science

§ 1 Introduction

In Part I of this study I was concerned with topics Schopenhauer discusses in Book I of the main work. In this second part I shall be concerned with topics from Book II.

Book II opens with an argument that appears to be of a purely negative character. Book I, Schopenhauer reminds us, was concerned solely with the world as representation so that the natural topic for its successor is the question of the "inner nature" of the reality behind this representation. We are then provided with what turns out to be a quite elaborate argument to the conclusion that whatever discipline might discover this inner nature it will not, at any rate, be natural science.

I should like to make two comments about this 'first act' of Book II. The first concerns a peculiarity it has in relation to the official structure of Schopenhauer's philosophy. The peculiarity is that, in terms of that structure, the claims of natural science to discover the reality behind the representation have already been disposed of, long ago, in Book I. In Book I, that is, we are supposed to have seen the truth of transcendental idealism according to which doctrine the whole space-time world, the whole of nature, is a mere mind-created phenomenon. But then, since the topic of natural science is, by definition, nature, it follows immediately and quite trivially that natural science cannot, indeed does not even purport to, deliver any information about supra-representational reality. So really, it is a waste of time to argue the point in Book II: the job has already been done.

Yet Schopenhauer does, and at length, argue the point in Book II. The significance of this is to confirm the suggestion I made at the end of Chapter I that, actually, Schopenhauer's transcendentalism, the insistence on the truth of, specifically, transcendental idealism, has no serious role to play prior to Book IV. Book II, in my view, (apart from passages which are pre-echoes of the concerns of the later Books) is free of transcendentalist presuppositions. Certainly the manifest world, the world of commonsense is assumed to be ideal. But there is no exclusion of the possibility that the reality underlying it is, though abstruse, still a natural reality. That is why, at the beginning of Book II, it still remains a possibility which stands in need of refutation, that it is to natural science we should turn for an account of the 'deep' character of the world.

My second comment concerns Schopenhauer's reasons for wishing to dispose of this possibility. One motive, certainly, is the desire to defeat the traditional rival to philosophy for the title of "the deep science". To that
extent, Schopenhauer's motive for arguing the deep-level incompetence of natural science is a negative one. But there is more to be said than this. We saw in the last chapter that, according to one of Schopenhauer's conceptions, the task of philosophy is to bring to completion that image of the world which science begins to construct but, he believes, can never itself complete. And we saw that the point at which "physics" stops and "metaphysics" starts (a frequent Schopenhauerian pun) is discovered by determining the ultimate presuppositions of natural science: "just what the sciences presuppose and lay down as the basis and limit of their explanation is precisely the real problem of philosophy" (W I p.82). Now such a determination is, as we will see, precisely what is achieved by the argument which opens Book II. So, assuming the correctness of the claim I made that it is this science-completing conception of philosophy which is predominant in Book II, the principal point of Schopenhauer's argument can be seen as the constructive one of defining the philosophical task; it constitutes, so I shall suggest, "the corrected statement of the problem of metaphysics" (WR II p.178).

§ 2 Science and Natural Forces

Nature is, Schopenhauer holds, without exception, lawful. Everything that happens is, in principle, subsumable under a law of nature, a rule "according to which one state of matter is necessarily followed by another definite state" (WR I p.97). The discovery of the particular laws of nature is the interest of natural science, for science aims at explanation, and scientific explanation consists in the discovery of a law which, in conjunction with antecedent conditions, entails the occurrence of the event to be explained at the particular point in space and time at which it does occur (ibid.). But, so Schopenhauer's argument continues, to claim that a certain repetitive pattern in the flow of events constitutes a law inescapably "presupposes" (FW p.48,p.49) the existence of Naturkräfte, natural "forces" or "powers". Yet science is forever precluded from comprehending the nature of such forces: to it they are "unknown X"s (WR II p.318, WN pp.317-320), "qualitates occultae" (WR I p.125), their character an "eternal secret" (WR I p.97). Hence natural science can never discover the "inner nature", the "essence" of the world. It is, rather, a discipline which, while usefully describing, botanizing (WR II p.174) the surface of nature, never fully explains anything. The scientific image is essentially facile, two-dimensional: it is like "a section of a piece of marble showing many different veins side by side, but not letting us know the course of the veins from the interior of the marble to the surface" (WRI p.98). Science then is an essentially incomplete, "inadequate" (WR II p.176), dependent discipline, dependent, in fact, on philosophy for the attainment of its goal of the comprehensive explanation of nature:
physics, in the widest sense of the word [is] concerned with the explanation of phenomena in the world; but it lies in the nature of the explanations themselves that they cannot be sufficient. Physics is unable to stand on its own feet but needs a metaphysics on which to support itself, whatever fine airs it may assume towards the latter (WR II p.172).

For ease of discussion I propose now to set out this argument in a regimented form. The following, I suggest, captures its essence:

(1) Natural science is committed to there being laws of nature.

But (2) if there are laws of nature then there are natural forces.

(3) Science cannot discover the nature of these forces.

So (4) natural science is incomplete in that it presupposes entities of which it can have no knowledge.

And (5) it stands in need of supplementation by a further discipline (metaphysics) to complete what it itself cannot.

Since premiss (1) is uncontroversial, the first point here which requires discussion is premiss (2). To understand it we need to understand what Schopenhauer means by "natural force".

Natural forces, he holds, are those entities which constitute the natures of physical bodies: constellations of them, with varying degrees of complexity, constitute the natural kinds that there are. Similarities and differences in these constellations account for similarities and differences in the behaviour of bodies; two pieces of metal respond differently to the presence of iron filings, for example, because, though they have forces such as gravity and inpenetrability in common, magnetism belongs to the nature of the one but not the other (cf. WR I pp.135-6). Forces, then, contribute to the course of history. But they are neither causes nor effects; properly speaking, the cause of a stone's falling is not gravity, but the proximity of the earth (WR I p.131). Gravity is rather that which "endows a cause with efficacy" (ibid.) and accounts for the necessity with which the effect succeeds the cause (FW pp.48-9). The forces inherent in a body constitute, therefore, as it were, an "inner mechanism" (WR I p.100), an "inner conditioning of ... [its] reaction to external causes" (FW p.34). They account, that is, for the laws which govern the behaviour of bodies of that kind. Fundamentally conceived, therefore, forces are those entities which account for there being the laws of nature that there are. And they are responsible, too, for conserving the "unalterable constancy" (WR I p.97) of those laws through time.

Is it true that natural science is committed to forces? Schopenhauer's
argument is simply that there cannot be laws without forces to ground them and here, surely, he is right. It is true that Hume denied that anything can be said to ground the regularities in nature (all there is is the pseudo-grounding of our psychological compulsion to anticipate, at the appearance of an antecedent event, its customary successor), but then Hume’s business was to be sceptical about the rationality of science. The scientist, on the other hand, committed to the rationality of his enterprise, to the rationality, in particular, of projecting past regularities into the future, must assume some feature of reality to ground these regularities, to make them, in other words, laws rather than mere regularities.

Why, however, should these grounding features be mysterious? Why, as premiss (3) claims, should natural forces be inaccessible to natural science? Schopenhauer is acquainted with the project of theory-reduction in the natural sciences. And though he believes its scope to be strictly limited (it is futile, he holds, to hope that the life-sciences could ever be reduced to the physical (WR I p.142)), he acknowledges, with approval, that it is sometimes successful: the laws governing one set of bodies may, he accepts, be derived from an account of their constitution as a structure of more fundamental bodies, together with laws governing the behaviour of the latter (WR I pp.123-4). So, in fact, not all natural forces are mysterious to science. Sometimes it can describe the "inner mechanisms" which ground certain of the laws of nature. But eventually, theory-reduction must come to an end (if it does not then science can never claim to have arrived at the fundamental nature of reality and is for that reason incomplete), at which point science will deal in a set of what it regards as primitive, most fundamental, entities, together with the laws governing their behaviour. And it is the forces presupposed by these laws, the ultimate, "original" forces of nature, which constitute the unavoidable mystery, the "insoluble residuum" (ibid.), of natural science.

But why, exactly? Why should any force escape capture in the net of scientific description? The reason lies in the fact that the procedure of science, in so far as it is able to give an account of that which grounds the laws governing a body, does so in terms of its spatial structure; the laws, that is, governing the powers or, more generally, dispositions of perceptible bodies — elasticity, impenetrability, solubility and so on — are grounded, in the first instance, in molecular configuration. Now the dispositions of the elements of the configurations can, in turn, be explained by exhibiting them as structures of still more refined bodies. But, as a matter of definition, fundamental bodies must be structure-less; if they were not there would have to be still more fundamental bodies of which they were structures. Hence Schopenhauer is quite correct: the scientific mode of understanding forces by grounding them in structure cannot be applied to the forces inherent in fundamental entities.

Yet, and here we come to the inference from premiss (3) to (4), why
exactly should the inability of science to provide a structural grounding to the laws or dispositions of ultimate entities amount to any incompleteness or inadequacy in its account of the world? To claim that it does would seem to assume that to every disposition there must correspond a structural base (in which case the incompleteness of science would reside in the impossibility of there being fundamental entities, the impossibility of an end to theory-reduction). But that is an assumption which might be challenged.

Such a challenge has recently been instigated by Harre and Madden. Observing the impossibility of grounding the laws governing ultimate entities in spatial structure, they argue that to avoid the view of science as a tragic, necessarily incomplete enterprise, one is compelled to adopt the view that the fundamental entities in nature are "pure potentialities", entities whose powers are devoid of structural ground. That any candidate for the status of scientific ultimacy must be of this ontological type is, they suggest, something we must stipulate as an a priori requirement. Concluding the discussion on an optimistic note, they observe that at least this requirement is satisfied by the entities of modern field theory.

A response Schopenhauer might make to this would be doggedly to insist that, without exception, disposition must be grounded in structure, and to castigate the notion of a "pure potentiality" as a conceptual absurdity. But in fact, this cannot be his response. For, as I now wish to show, the pure-potentiality account of the ultimate entities of nature is something Schopenhauer accepts.

§ 3 The Nature of Matter

Scattered throughout Schopenhauer's writings are a number of remarks concerning the nature of matter. Properly understood, I shall suggest, it is these which add up to a pure-potentiality view of nature.

Matter, says Schopenhauer — "pure" matter as distinct from empirically given "material" (Stoff) (WR II p.45) — cannot, in itself, be perceived. It is, rather, something which underlies the empirically perceived; it "exhibits itself as body" (WR II p.305, p.309). In itself, matter is non-material; it is "not extended and consequently is incorporeal" (WR II p.308). What it is is "through and through pure causality" (WR II p.305); its "whole essence consists in acting" (ibid.). Furthermore, matter is the only "true content" of the concept substance (WR I p.458), the concept, that is, of the subject of predication (WR II p.307, p.309). And since force and substance are identical (WR II p.309), it follows that matter is identical with force. (It is also frequently said to be identical with will, but that is a topic for a later chapter.) Finally, at WR I p.458, we are told that judgements which apparently say of a body that it is "hard, heavy, fluid, green, sour, alkaline,
organic and so on" in fact always express an "action or effect" of matter so that judgements apparently attributing accidents to bodies really report the effects of matter.

This somewhat bewildering set of remarks becomes intelligible, I believe, if it is connected with Schopenhauer's derisory attitude to "French" atomism — that version of the atomic theory of matter which conceives of the world as made of little chunks of extended but non-divisible matter in terms of whose properties, properties such as "impenetrability, form, shape, hardness and other primary qualities", everything that happens is supposed to be explicable (WR II p.302). This view, which he calls a "revolting absurdity", though ultimately derived from Locke, flourishes particularly in France due to the "backward state of [French] ... metaphysics" (ibid.).

What is wrong with atomism? Schopenhauer's principal objection is simply that it ignores the correct view of matter propagated in Germany by Kant who "(after the example of Priestley) has quite rightly reduced matter to forces" (WR II p.303, cf. p.309).

Schopenhauer is considerably exercised by the relation between Kant and Joseph Priestley. At WR II pp.52-3, he described it in rather less neutral terms than those of the above quotation. The main idea of Kant's Metaphysical Rudiments of Natural Science (1786) is, he says, expounded so "distinctly and in detail" in Priestley's "excellent" Disquisitions relating to Matter and Spirit (1777) that one is lead to wonder whether Kant "silently appropriated that very important idea of another man, and this from a book that was still new at the time" (a thought, he adds, which is extremely distressing, since plagiarism in a great mind is even more disgraceful than in a second rate one, just as theft is even less excusable in a rich man than in a poor one).

Leaving aside the question of plagiarism, what is clear from these passages is that Schopenhauer regards Priestley's account of matter as substantially correct. But now, what Priestley did, in the work Schopenhauer cites, was, for purposes of his own, to take over (with acknowledgement) the account of matter proposed twenty years earlier by the Jesuit mathematician Roger Boscovich in his Theoria Philosophiae Naturalis (1758) (a work which also influenced Nietzsche in his rejection of atomism: "Boscovich has taught us to abjure the belief in ... "substance", in "matter", in the earth-residuum [material seat of a causal power] and particle atom". So it seems that the source of Schopenhauer's view of the nature of matter is ultimately to be found in Boscovich.

Boscovich rejected the 'chunky' view of atoms as little bits of extended matter. In its place, he postulated the idea of space as filled with a finite number of "puncta ", centres of force each at a finite distance from every other such centre. Since these centres are extensionless points, we can say that, according to Boscovich, the ultimate constituents of matter are disembodied forces.
If we now return from this excursion into the history of science to Schopenhauer, we can see, I think, that it is the Kant-Priestley-Boscovich view of matter which is embodied in the remarks I quoted earlier. Thus, Schopenhauer's claim that pure matter is not extended and is therefore incorporeal corresponds to the extensionlessness of Boscovich's puncta, while his claim that matter is "pure causality", action, or force reproduced the Boscovichian idea of puncta as force-centres. To these ideas Schopenhauer, in claiming that statements attributing properties to extended material bodies are really statements of the effects of "matter", intends to add, I think, the claim that all properties which presuppose the spatial extendedness of their bearer are, in Locke's sense, secondary properties, subjective effects in the human mind of a reality which contains no extended bodies at all. In other words, the ordinary world of commonsense is, Schopenhauer holds, an appearance of a reality of disembodied forces. (Notice, however, that it is still a natural reality; Boscovichian forces are all located in space, not in a transcendent 'beyond'.)

§ 4 Science and Semantics

The purpose of the previous section was to show that Schopenhauer endorses the idea that nature is ultimately composed of pure potentialities, entities whose powers or dispositions cannot be grounded in spatial configuration or structure. Clearly, if the argument there is correct, this purpose has been fulfilled for if the 'seats' of the ultimate forces in nature are extensionless points, then there is of course no possibility of grounding those forces in any spatial structure.

From this it follows that Schopenhauer's argument for the incompleteness of natural science (his defence of premiss (4) in the argument formulated in § 2) is not based on the claim that every disposition requires a structural foundation. On the contrary, and this is part of its constructive point, the purpose of the argument is, I think, precisely to lead one to see the inevitability of the pure-potentiality view of nature. So we are still left with our original question as to why science is incomplete, and why (assertion (5)) it needs metaphysics to help it out.

Schopenhauer says (in a context of discussion connected with the present one) that "every existence presupposes an essence... a definite nature. It cannot exist and yet... be... a thing which simply is, and no more than is, without any definitions and properties" (FW p.60). Moreover, this essence must be of a categorical character: the scholastic formula "operari sequitur esse", action follows from (Schopenhauer says"manifests") essence, expresses a metaphysical law to which there are no exceptions (FW p.59-60). It cannot be, that is, that the essence of an entity is constituted by its dispositions to
action, for any "operari" must itself flow from an essence. It cannot be that all there is to be said about an entity is given by specifying its dispositions: it must always be possible to answer the question of what it is that is disposed to act in the ways in question.

This looks like a questionable exercise in grandiose metaphysics, but actually, I think, Schopenhauer is doing no more than formulating, in the "material mode", his version of concept-empiricism. For according to concept-empiricism, it will be remembered (cf. ch. II § 4), no term passes the test for cognitive meaningfulness unless its introducer renders intelligible the idea of a possible encounter with its supposed referent in sense-experience. From this point of view the attempt to specify the significance of a term purely in terms of its "operari" or dispositions is impermissible; for if I do this, while I may have indicated how the entity in question behaves in given kinds of circumstances, the entity itself remains an "unknown X". What it is that is supposed to act in these ways, what it would be like to encounter it, is left entirely undetermined.

With these consequences of concept-empiricism in mind, it can be seen, I think, that Schopenhauer's argument for the inadequacy of natural science is, fundamentally, a semantic one. Science, Schopenhauer observes, talks all the time of forces. It uses words like "gravity", "inertia", "electricity" and so on with the confident appearance of talking sense. But really, once it reached the level of ultimacy, this appearance is quite spurious. For as soon as science tries to refer to an "original" force, it produces, not a cognitively meaningful term, but merely "a symbol of an unknown quantity" (WR I p.111). In effect, then, Schopenhauer's criticism of natural science is that, so long as it is left to its own devices and is unaided by metaphysics its ultimate entities are as much "ideas of reason" as are the Absolutes and other postulates of pseudo-metaphysics.

§ 5 Summary

I claimed, at the beginning of this chapter, that the primary purpose of Schopenhauer's critique of natural science was the constructive one of discovering a precise "statement of the problem of metaphysics". The justification for this claim should now be apparent. For what has emerged from the critique is that the task for metaphysics is to provide semantic respectability to natural science at its fundamental level. On non-ultimate levels science is quite self-sufficient for it legitimises its talk about forces, satisfies the constraints of concept-empiricism, by describing the "inner nature" of forces (WR I p.98) in terms of spatial structure. But, for ultimate forces, we have seen, this cannot be done. So the task for philosophy is quite specifically defined. It is that of providing an account of the nature of
original forces in terms which are experiential but yet do not appeal to spatial structure.
Chapter V  The Individual Will

§ 1 The Inward Turn

In the last chapter we saw philosophy being assigned the task of bringing natural forces out of the realm of the occult. The effect of this would be to confer semantic respectability upon natural science by enabling it to satisfy (as, left to its own devices, it cannot) the constraints of concept-empiricism, and, simultaneously, give an account of that 'deep', metaphysical reality underlying the image of the world shared by both natural science and commonsense. The question now is: in what direction should philosophy look to discover a solution to its problem?

Schopenhauer's first step, by way of answering this question is to redescribe the failure of natural science to understand what forces are. Natural science, he claims, is to be identified as a certain "method", "standpoint", or "view" of the world, the "objective" view (WR II p.272). Hence the inability of natural science to understand the nature of forces is, at the same time, an inadequacy in the objective view of the world.

The objective view, that standpoint which looks at objects "from without" (WR I p.97), is contrasted with the "subjective". While the latter views its objects "from within ... taking consciousness as what is given" (WR II p.272), the former "takes as its object, not our own consciousness, but the beings that are given in external experience"("ibid."). This involves, sometimes, a certain fictional detachment from the world. For if an objective inquiry happens to include human beings, and hence the inquirer himself, in its field of investigation, the inquirer is required to view himself, not in the normal manner, but "as if...[he] were something foreign" (WN p.294). He ignores, that is, the fact that he himself is a physical individual, identical with one of the material bodies in his field of investigation. Instead, all bodies are treated as equally foreign, for he pretends to be "nothing more than the purely knowing subject (a winged cherub without a body)" (WR I p.99), a being whose existence is entirely external to the domain of inquiry.

It is not, I think, hard to understand what Schopenhauer is suggesting here. The objective view is the 'third-person' view of the world (and the subjective the 'first-person' view). It is a view characterised by the fact that the only phenomena it accepts as data are those accessible to external sense-perception. Psychological phenomena it either refuses to countenance at all (behaviouristic psychology), or else insists that they can only be introduced in terms of bodily behaviour — either as definitionally equivalent (philosophical behaviourism) or as unobserved, hypothesized causes of behavioural phenomena (cognitive psychology). What is disallowed is that the admission of psychological phenomena should be
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grounded simply in the claim that they are given in just the same way as are the data of external perception; from the third-person point of view, psychological phenomena are, at best, epistemologically secondary, dependent phenomena.

Understood in this way, it is easy to appreciate the force of Schopenhauer's insistence that natural science is an "objective" investigation of the world. For that insistence is, in fact, just the insistence that the data of science be publicly observable, "repeatable", phenomena, a condition widely accepted within the scientific community as a defining condition of scientific method.

If, then, forces are ultimately inscrutable to natural science it follows that they are inscrutable from the third-person point of view. And it follows, since the only alternative point of view is the "subjective", first-person, one (WR I p.105, WR II pp.273-4), that if philosophy is to succeed where science fails it must take the subjective, inward, turn.

How might this help? Let us consider the question of self-knowledge. From the objective standpoint one is to oneself, as was said, simply one physical object among many, "like any other, an object among objects" (WR I p.99). As with all natural objects, the behaviour of this one is entirely law-governed, and (though the laws of human behaviour are much more complex and hard to formulate than those governing any other kind of natural object) these can in principle, all be discovered. If one did discover them then one would record one's faith in their lawfulness by postulating, as in the case of any other object, grounding forces, an "inner mechanism" which explains them. But that is all such a postulation would achieve; for ultimately, these forces would be just as "incomprehensible" to one as those grounding the laws governing other natural objects (WR I p.100).

But of course, Schopenhauer points out, objectivity does not constitute the only mode of access we have to ourselves. In (but only in) one's own case one has "double knowledge" (WR I p.103) of one's bodily behaviour, not only objective, but subjective knowledge too. And the point Schopenhauer wishes to highlight is that from the subjective viewpoint, one does not seem to be as inscrutable as one would be, were one's only mode of self-acquaintance objective. For if we take a subjective view of those (as we assumed, lawful) regularities of behaviour which were objectively incomprehensible, we seem now to understand them. The question of why we act, why we respond to features of the environment in the way we do, the question of what the "influence of motives" (WR I p.100) is, is something which, speaking as agents rather than as observers of agents, we can now answer. For the first-person viewpoint seems to supply precisely what the third-person could not— an "inner mechanism" of one's own action (ibid.). Perhaps, then, one has here, at least with regard to one's own body, the "clue" (WR II p.274) to the nature of the forces that underlie its actions. Perhaps, that is to say, if we are able to connect together the objective and subjective images of the self
in a suitable manner, the result will be to demystify, subjectively, that which is objectively occult.

§ 2 Will as Character

What is it that one discovers subjectively to be the "inner mechanism" of one's actions? Schopenhauer says that the answer "is given in the word Will" (WR I p.100) and it is time, now, to come to grips with what is obviously the single most important word in Schopenhauer's entire philosophy.

Schopenhauer tells us that under the term "will" (Wille) he includes "not only willing and deciding in the narrowest sense" (WR II p.202), but also all desiring, striving, wishing, demanding, longing, hoping, loving, rejoicing, jubilation, no less than not willing or resisting, all abhorring, fleeing, fearing, being angry, hating, mourning, suffering pains — in short all emotions and passions (F.W. p.11, cf. WR II p.202).

Thus, included under "will" are (a) willings in the narrowest sense — executive mental acts, decisions (Entschlüsse) or volitions (Willensakte) (cf. also WR I p.100), (b) desires and emotions and (c) pleasures and pains. Schopenhauer makes it clear that the inclusion of (b) and (c) under "will" is not intended as a merely stipulative extension of the term; he laments the tendency of "modern thinkers" to separate (b) and (c) from (a) by sequestering them in an "alleged feeling faculty", a move which obscures the "essential element" that unites the three classes (ibid.). His point, clearly, is that action-directedness is the characteristic which unites the three classes: while desires and emotions, pleasures and pains, do not, like volitions, determine actions, they nonetheless tend to action: they grow into action (or, in the case of pleasure, conserve action) unless something occurs to inhibit them.

So far we have looked at "will" as a general term. We have looked at what it is Schopenhauer considers to be a "modification" or "affection" of will, a conative or practical state. But a further way in which he uses the term is in the construction of singular terms: for he speaks repeatedly, of the will of an individual person.

What is the will of an individual? What is the point of introducing reference to such an entity over and above his particular willings? Schopenhauer says that the "particularly and individually constituted nature of ... [a person's] will ... makes up that which one calls his character" (FW p.49). And about character he tells us a great deal. Character is, he says, both innate and unalterably the same throughout a man's life (FW
At different times in his life, to be sure, he may experience different passions and pursue different goals; but such changes (the change, perhaps, from the petty villainy of the youth to bloody conquest of nations by the adult (cf. WR I pp.138-9 and pp.158-9)) are attributable always to a change in circumstances, never in fundamental goals. These, constant from cradle to grave (FW p.58), provide every life with a "fundamental tone" that enables the perspicacious observer to see that its "manifold events and scenes are at bottom like variations on one and the same theme" (WR II p.35).

Schopenhauer chooses to represent this fundamental tone in terms of a "maxim characterising the whole of my willing", a willing, that is, "in general" (WR I p.106). A man's life, he says, can be thought of as flowing from a single act of choice (FW p.96) (a choice which, it needs to be emphasised, must be conceived as allowing considerable internal complexity, for a person can have, clearly, several most fundamental goals.)

Particular choices, that is, "what I will at this time, in this place, in these circumstances"(ibid.) can be thought of as flowing from the fundamental maxim of one's life in the manner of the practical syllogism; one's fundamental volition, that is, together with knowledge of particular circumstances, determines particular decisions as to what to do here and now. (But cf. § 6 below.)

§ 3 Character and Force

Human character, we have observed, Schopenhauer claims to be innate and unalterable. A further feature is that (unlike that of all but a few of the higher animals (FW p.49)) it is individual: although the "character of the species" is common to us all, every human character differs, if only subtly, from every other. Why should we suppose this? Because "the reaction to the same motives, is, in every man, different" (ibid.), and because character is that "by means [of which] ... the ways in which various motives affect the given man is determined" (ibid.). We are compelled then, to regard human character as individual for the reason that we have each our own idiosyncratic responses to the world and because character is that which grounds and mediates such responses. Since people respond differently to identical circumstances, it follows that such circumstances are never, by themselves, sufficient to determine action. Action, rather is determined by motive together with character: "Only on the presupposition of my ... character is the motive a sufficient ground of explanation of my conduct" (WR I p.106, cf. PP II p.231).

By now some of the significance of this excursion into Schopenhauer's concept of character should be apparent. The point, it will be remembered, of the subjective turn, of our interest in the first-person image of the self, was
that it seemed we might there discover, as we could not in the third person image, something which could be said to constitute the inner nature of natural forces.

It is clear now that it is character which is being groomed for this role. For it has been presented as something which, from the subjective point of view, underlies the regularities in our behaviour in just the way in which, from the objective point of view, force does. It is, in short, being presented as an exact subjective analogue of natural force, a point Schopenhauer is concerned to emphasise: with respect to explaining behaviour, he says, the human will "plays exactly the same role as is played by the mysterious forces of nature which underly the course of events in a physical or chemical causal chain" (WR II p.249, cf. FW p.49).

§ 4 Integrating the Objective and Subjective Images

Character appeared in the last section as an analogue, as what we might call the "subjective correlate" of force. But if it is to be true that subjective access to character constitutes, also, access to the inner nature of the forces inherent in one's body, a stronger claim than this must be made: character must be argued to be identical with a force or set of forces.

Schopenhauer's way of arguing for this stronger conclusion is to provide a philosophy of mind. This philosophy can, he says, be expressed in a number of ways: we can say

My body and will are one; or, what as representation of perception I call my body, I call my will insofar as I am conscious of it in an entirely different way ... or, my body is the objectivity of my will (WR I pp.102-3).

For present purposes, the important part of this thesis of the "identity of the will and of the body"(ibid.) is expressed by the proposition that "motivation is causality seen from within", a proposition Schopenhauer describes as "the cornerstone of my whole metaphysics"(FR p.214). What this proposition amounts to is the claim that what I perceive subjectively as a correlation between motive and volition is the very same thing as what is perceived objectively as a correlation between physical stimulus and behavioural response: motive-volition patterns are identical with stimulus-response patterns. The patterns are identical because, firstly, volitions are identical with bodily movements — "Every true, genuine, immediate act of will (Akt des Willens) is at once and directly a manifest act of the body" (WR I p.101) — and, secondly, because a motive is "an external stimulus, whose action first of all causes an image to arise in the brain through the medium of which the will carries out the effect proper — an outward action
of the body" (WN p.239). (But cf. pp.49-50 below.) So a (subjectively given) motive is identical with an (objectively given) environmental stimulus and a volition with a bodily response, from which it follows that motive-volition patterns are, as we said, identical with stimulus-response patterns. Given this, we are now in a position to state the Schopenhauerian argument for the identification of character and force. We start by observing that, as we have seen,

(1) A person's character is that which grounds the set motive-volition patterns he exemplifies.

And we record further that

(2) A constellation of forces, $F$, is that which grounds the set of behavioural stimulus-response patterns he exemplifies.

To this we add that

(3) the set of motive-volition patterns is identical with the set of stimulus-response patterns,

from all of which it follows that

(4) his character is identical with the constellation of forces $F$.$^{18}$

There are a number of difficulties pertaining to this argument. To start with, premiss (3), as it stands, is clearly false. For even if we accept Schopenhauer's view that every volition is identical with a bodily movement, and every motive with an environment stimulus, while it follows that every motive-volition pattern is identical with some stimulus-response pattern, the converse does not follow, and is clearly false: where involuntary responses to environmental stimuli are concerned (flinchings, blinkings, knee-jerks and so on) it would obviously be absurd to suppose acts of will to correspond to them. For only where one is prepared to regard a bodily movement as being an intentional action can it be said to be, express, "objectify", or in any other way correspond to an act of will. So, really, premiss (3) must be understood as identifying the set of motive-volition patterns with a subset of the set of stimulus-response patterns and (4) as identifying character with a proper part of the constellation of forces mentioned in (2).

Of course, Schopenhauer wants eventually to claim that all natural forces are to be identified with "will", and these will include the forces which ground one's involuntary behaviour. So he wants, ultimately, to claim that not only intentional, but in some way involuntary behaviour too,
manifests will. But two points need to be made about this claim. The first is to stress that, to date, all we have is an argument for identifying the forces which ground intentional behaviour with will, and have no warrant yet for supposing any other behaviour to be so grounded. In Chapter VI, I shall be looking at Schopenhauer's arguments for identifying will as the character of natural forces in general. The point I want to emphasise, however, is that it is to these arguments, arguments for the "extension" of the will beyond its normal sphere of application, and not to the present one that we should look for a validation of the claim that one's involuntary behaviour manifests will. The second point is that in whatever way it turns out that involuntary behaviour is will-manifesting, it must be a way that is somehow different from the way in which voluntary behaviour is. Some distinction in Schopenhauer's 'extended' account of will must be present that accommodates the commonsense distinction between voluntary and involuntary behaviour.

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I have discussed one problem concerning premiss (3). There remains, however, a further difficulty, one that can be approached by raising the question of what, precisely, that which is, subjectively, a "motive" is to be identified with in the objective image. Earlier, I quoted a passage identifying motives as physical stimuli in the agent's environment. But that cannot really be correct. For, as Schopenhauer himself emphasises (PP II pp.231-2, FW pp.53-4), (a point which, as we will see in § 6, he uses to accommodate a practical role for reason in human life), what moves human beings to action is not how the world is but how it is taken to be. Two (unsporting) duck-shooters, for example, may both be presented with the same visual stimulation from a distant object yet the one shoot and the other not, the reason being that, having better eyesight, he sees it to be a duck while the other takes it to be a rabbit. What this shows is that motives are not states of the world but representations of states of the world. Hence, from the objective point of view, they must be identified with states internal, not external, to the agent, with, in particular, brain-states. And, in fact, in more considered passages, this is just what Schopenhauer says; "the cerebrum is the place of motives", he writes at WR II p.249. In the same passage he goes on to explain that while the nervous system is responsible for the presentation of information, it is muscular "irritability" that enables humans to act on it. And it is irritability, he says, which is, objectively, a "qualitas occulta" but is "revealed in self-consciousness as will" (ibid.). The implausible details of physiology here need not detain us. The main point to notice is that will, that is, character, is conceived as identical with a force which spans the gap between not, in fact, environmental stimulus and gross bodily response, but between, rather, a state of the brain and the first member of
that chain of neurological and muscular events which results in a bodily response to the information codified in the brain-state. Carefully formulated, I think, Schopenhauer's view is that the objective correlates of motive and volition are those items which represent, respectively, the terminus of the information-reception process and the initiation of the process which culminates in a bodily-response to it. 20

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I have raised a number of questions, so far, about how we are to understand the Schopenhauerian argument (premiss (3), in particular). What now of its soundness? There are a number of objections which, from different standpoints, might be raised against it.

Premiss (1), first of all, might be objected to by an "eliminative materialist". Certainly, he might say, we talk in the "first-person" way Schopenhauer suggests of desire or will as grounding the choices or decisions we make in response to information about the world, but really all this "folk psychology" is nothing more than a low-level theory of human behaviour that will one day be abandoned in the face of the superior explanatory and predictive power of neurological theory. When we do this we will recognise will or character as an outmoded superstition; we will see that there really is no such thing at all, just as we now recognise that there is no such thing as phlogiston. A Cartesian dualist, on the other hand, might reject the second premiss, insisting that only involuntary behaviour has any ground in the scientific image, while a Leibnizian parallelist, though admitting an isomorphic correspondence between (mental) motive-volition patterns and a subset of (physical) stimulus-response patterns, would deny any identity-relation and so reject premiss (3). Finally, a modern mind-brain identity theorist, one who also accepted the Schopenhauerian point about the commitment of science to natural forces, might begin an objection by reminding us that, according to Schopenhauer, force-constellations are not merely the grounds but are the ultimate grounds of stimulus-response patterns in the objective image. Hence the logic of the argument, he might say, requires that character, in premiss (1), should be claimed as the ultimate ground of motive-volition patterns. But that, it might be said, is false. Certainly character grounds motive-volition patterns. But character is not to be identified with any force but with, rather, a certain structure of neural pathways. Of course, the objector would continue, there are forces which underly the operations of these brain-structures but these, the ultimate grounds of motive-volition, i.e. neurological stimulus-response patterns, underly the operations of character too. So character is a non-ultimate entity and premiss (1), understood as it needs to be understood, is in fact false.

To all these objections, however, Schopenhauer will make the same response; that to resist the conclusion of the argument is to abandon the only
possibility of attaching significance to scientific discourse at its fundamental level. Each of the grand theories of mind deployed against it, he will say, shares the very serious deficiency of entailing the impossibility of completing the scientific image of the world. Along with so much else, it seems to me, Schopenhauer's ultimate defence of the argument will consist in an appeal to concept-empiricism.

§ 5 The Empirical Nature of Character

Schopenhauer is a master of the controlled digression: many of his most interesting discussions occur at a tangent to the main line of argument. In this section I follow up one of these digressions.

In § 3 we observed Schopenhauer drawing attention to a number of points of similarity between character and natural force. A further point of analogy is that character, like force, is, he claims, "empirical". Natural forces are empirical in that, he emphasises (WR I p.122), if we wish to know which forces are inherent in a given object our only recourse is to the "experimental method"; only by intelligent and patient observation can one discover the powers and dispositions of a given body. But this, suggests Schopenhauer, is also the situation with regard to human character: the character of a human being is always something to be learnt through observation and can never be known in any other way.

There is nothing particularly startling about this claim insofar as it concerns the characters of other people. What makes it challenging, however, is that Schopenhauer applies it also to oneself - "The character of man is empirical; only through experience can one get to know it. This applies not only to others but also to oneself" (FW p.50) — attacking thereby, our deeply entrenched commitment to the idea of a contrast between the opacity of other natures and the transparency of one's own.

What has Schopenhauer to say by way of defending the claim that one has merely empirical access to one's own character? The heart of his defence lies in his, as I see it, deeply perceptive discussion of what he calls "acquired" character.

Human beings, he observes, commonly lead confused, "zigzag" (WR I p.303) lives. Often they live one style of life for a time, but then a quite different style at a later time. And often they pursue incompatible goals at the same time. People whose lives are in this way confused, lacking in clarity, coherence, "solidity" (WR I p.304), lack "what in the world is called character" (WR I p.305). Character in this sense Schopenhauer calls "acquired" character, the purpose of the terminology being to distinguish it from the innate direction of one's willing — character as we have used the term so far. People who lack acquired character (In the next four paragraphs I shall
take the prefix to be understood) increase thereby the misery of their lives; zigzag lives are characterised by humiliating failures to achieve goals, frustrating exposures of weakness (as, for example, when a man sets himself a task "too noble for his character" (WR I p.304)) and by a sense of never actually doing, or having done, what one really wants to do — of having, somehow, missed out in the main point of one's life.

On Schopenhauer's analysis, lack of character is attributable to lack of self-knowledge, to the fact that, often, we do not know "what we will and what we can do" (ibid.). Several factors contribute to this. One is our propensity to form other-determined self-images; we are prone to construct accounts of our own natures in imitation of the qualities of others we admire, or whom society tells us we ought to admire.

A related factor is the phenomenon of repression. Often, says Schopenhauer, (in a passage acknowledged by Freud (somewhat belatedly) to anticipate a central doctrine of psychoanalysis) we only discover quite incidentally and belatedly what we desire or fear. It may, for example, be only a feeling of "jubilant, irresistible gladness diffused over my whole being and taking permanent possession of it to my own astonishment" on hearing of the feasibility of a plan I had previously thought to be uncertain, which acquaints me with the fact that it was not, as I had supposed, scruple which stopped me trying to put it into effect (WR II p.209). Or again, it may be only a feeling of "joy not unmixed with shame" on hearing of the death of a near relative whose heir we are, which acquaints us with a desire we have harboured for years (WR II p.210). Furthermore, it may be only thoughtful rumination upon the frequency with which accountancy errors in business transactions operate in rather than against one's own favour, that reveals to one, not, certainly, any conscious dishonesty, but rather, "an unconscious tendency to diminish one's debit and increase one's credit" (WR II p.218). And, it may be only an intelligent awareness that seemingly precipitate behaviour (Hamlet's stabbing the "rat behind the arras", perhaps) can in fact be "secretly considered" action, which reveals one as having acted upon a desire one has refused to acknowledge (WR I p.296).

It is no accident that the self-discoveries mentioned in these examples are all unpleasant. Self-esteem is, says Schopenhauer, a basic human need and hence it is precisely in the case of reprehensible impulses that the human psyche is liable to deny them admission to "clear consciousness": "the intellect is not to know anything about [them] ... since the good opinion we have of ourselves would inevitably suffer" (WR II pp.209-10). Repression and self-deception are not isolated malfunctions but are, rather, woven into the fabric of human nature.

But even more important, I think, in Schopenhauer's account of the factors contributing to ignorance of one's own nature (the mechanisms of repression operate, after all, only on desires that are detrimental to self-esteem, not on the many that are either neutral or favourable to it) is the
problem of discovering, not what one's desires are, but rather their relative weight.

In virtue of our common human nature, people, says Schopenhauer, find within themselves traces of every human aspiration and ability (WR I p.303). To know one's innate character, to avoid the fluctuating life of indulging all and none of them, one must know which of them predominate in one's own personality. One must, that is, understand the subtle chemistry which constitutes one's individuality. This task (the task, in fact, of discovering the "fundamental tone", the "maxim characterising the whole of my willing" discussed in § 2 above) is, Schopenhauer is surely right to emphasise, one of great difficulty.

Schopenhauer's analysis of the causes of self-ignorance support, in each case, his central point that only empirically can I achieve self-knowledge and with it the coherence of living that constitutes acquired character. Only by scrutinising myself in the same detached manner in which I scrutinise another I want to understand can I hope to circumnavigate the effects of repression. Only by constructing, inferring my own less-flattering desires from my actions and reactions in the same way in which I try to infer to yours, can I hope to know them. And only by reflecting on the "manifold events and scenes" of my life, only by learning to read them with something of the subtlety and shrewdness of a playwright or novelist, can I hope to understand the fundamental tone of my willing, the particular chemistry which makes me the individual that I am. The first and essential step, therefore, in carrying out the practical task of achieving character is to recognise the illusory and destructive nature of the (as we might call it, Cartesian) assumption that character is transparent to its owner.

§ 6 Some Objections

Several objections have been raised against Schopenhauer's philosophy, each of which is particularly connected to the themes discussed in the preceding section.

The first concerns the question of privileged access. Patrick Gardiner raises the suggestion that in emphasising, to the extent that he does, the empirical character of self-knowledge Schopenhauer reduces us to the status of "mere spectators of the workings of... [our own] inner nature" (op. cit. p.168). If this is true then he would appear to be engaged in two kinds of conflict. First, with the truth; for we surely do have a privileged, first-person knowledge of ourselves which makes us more than mere self-spectators. Second, with a crucial part of his own argument; for, as we saw in § 1—§ 4, the claim that we have not merely external, spectatorial, knowledge of ourselves but access, too, to the inside story, constitutes the key to his
argument that with regard to the self, at least, the objective image finds its completion in the subjective.

In fact, however, Schopenhauer does not reduce us to self-spectators. Properly understood the thesis of the empirical nature of character does not deny that I have an epistemic relation to my own psychological states which is unique and different from my relation to the inner states of another. Certainly Schopenhauer emphasises, absolutely correctly in my view, the need for study, thought, inference, conjecture and refutation, if one is to understand repressed aspects and the overall chemistry of one's psyche. To this extent my position vis-à-vis my character is just like my position vis-à-vis yours: in both cases character is something to be learnt, to be discovered rather than simply noticed. But what the objection fails to observe is that while Schopenhauer emphasises the importance publicly observable behaviour has for me as well as for you with regard to the task of understanding my psyche, he also mentions, most conspicuously, among the data I am required to note and reflect upon, emotions and feelings: "jubilant gladness", "joy", "shame" (cf. p.52 above), and so on. These, clearly, Schopenhauer takes to be objects of immediate, non-inferential awareness so that it is not his position that my access to all my "willings" is just the same as that of another person.

In other words, although Schopenhauer emphasises that I am a spectator with regard to certain important aspects of my nature — my will in the sense of character, in particular — I am a spectator with a larger range of evidence than you, since, in addition to all the behavioural data we both have access to, I have access, also, to inner data which you (unless I tell you about it) do not. (This is not to say, however, that I am better placed than you, for your exclusion from some of the relevant evidence is compensated for, perhaps more than compensated for, by the fact that you are free of the epistemic obstacle to self-knowledge posed by the need for self-esteem — a need "cleverer than the cleverest man in the world" (WR11 p.210)).

I suggest, then, that Schopenhauer concedes to the claims of first-person knowledge just what should be conceded to be in harmony with the truth of the matter. What now can be said of the appearance that the thesis of the empirical character of self-knowledge is in conflict with Schopenhauer's own appeal to first-person knowledge in his argument for the subjective completeability of the objective image of the self? The point, I think, is this: that while first-person access to the self does not reveal one's character to one, and hence does not reveal the "inner mechanism" of one's actions, it does reveal many instances of the kind of thing character is. For in very many, often quite trivial, cases (those which I described as neutral with regard to self-esteem — toothbrush-buying, armpit-scratching, tea-drinking and so on) it is unproblematically true that we know why we act. The willing, the subjective "mechanism" of these actions is immediately obvious to one. And what this enables one to know — as one could not know if one had only
third-person access to the self — is the kind of thing one's character is. The importance of inner experience, therefore, is not that it provides one with immediate access to character, but rather that it gives one the conceptual resources to construct an account of it, a subjective account of the mechanism of action, that one would not have had were one to inhabit, solely, the third-person perspective on the world. Subjective experience provides one, then, not with direct access to the inner nature of forces, but with, rather, a vocabulary for describing what, from the objective standpoint, cannot be described.

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A second objection (one, in fact, anticipated by Schopenhauer himself (WR I p.303)) which might be raised against the ideas discussed in § 5 concerns the relation between the two kinds of character we have discovered. If, the objection runs, we all have characters in the sense that there is a fundamental direction to our willing that is innate and unalterable, how is it possible that there should be any task of achieving acquired character? Surely if our willing is always and unalterably the same then our lives will have a natural consistency to them and there cannot be any problem about avoiding "zigzags".

A preliminary point which can be made in reply to the objection is that it ignores the fact that it may be, precisely, confusions and wrong-turnings which reveal to the discerning observer the underlying constancy of a person's character. It may, that is, be precisely the sense that a given life is being lived 'out' of character, that the role is being played without the "grace" which comes from self-knowledge (FW p.51), which reveals what the character of a person really is.

The principal Schopenhauerian response to the objection can, however, be discussed in conjunction with a further objection. This is the claim that Schopenhauer denies reason any practical role in human life, picturing us, in a manner that is both implausible and dangerous, as nothing but victims of inscrutable forces over which the conscious mind has no control.

Now there are, it is true, dramatic passages in which Schopenhauer speaks of the intellect as excluded from the "secret workshop" where our lives are determined, and confines it to presenting motives for the will to decide upon like a "lame sighted man" sitting on the shoulders of a "strong blind man" (c.f. particularly, WR II p.209, p.224, p.44). But, really, all these passages amount to is the Humean truism that reason alone never moves us to act, plus the necessary corrective to Hume's (Cartesian) assumption that all desires are transparent to their owners. They are completely compatible with the other Humean truism that reason does move us to act.

In fact, Schopenhauer no more excludes reason from practical life than
does Hume. Indeed he actually assigns it a larger role that does the latter. For he provides it with two roles whereas Hume allows only for one. The first is that of making sure that the motives from which we act are true rather than false beliefs. As we saw in § 4, what moves people to act is not how the world is but how they take it to be. So changes in a person's life can come about through changes in his knowledge of the world. The second role Schopenhauer provides for reason is, as we have seen, that of acquiring knowledge of one's own will. People, that is, often act not merely out of false representations of the world but also out of false representations of their own desires. The practical syllogism, that is to say, can malfunction at two points, and in each case it is the business of reason to provide the remedy.

This is why, even given the unalterability of one's fundamental character, there remains a task of achieving acquired character. It is a task of acquiring knowledge of both the self and the world.
Chapter VI  The World as Will

§1 Introduction

In the previous chapter we saw it argued that in one's own case, at least, forces, those which manifest themselves in one's voluntary behaviour, are to be identified with will. And in the chapter before that we saw that whatever can be discovered about forces is to be accounted a discovery about the metaphysical reality underlying the world-representation constructed by commonsense and natural science between them. So we initiated, in the last chapter, the process of bringing to light the metaphysical character of nature. In this chapter I shall be concerned with Schopenhauer's completion of the process; with his claim that in its "inner", metaphysical being, the character of every natural phenomenon is "homogeneous" (WR I p.105) with one's own, so that it is not just one's own metaphysical nature, but the metaphysical nature of everything else too, that is will.

Schopenhauer calls this process of expanding outwards the domain of will "paradoxical" (WN p.216). But actually only part of it is. For so far as other human beings are concerned, so far as one is merely making the move from what is true in my to what is true in our case, there is nothing paradoxical at all in acknowledging others as, like oneself, possessing will. (The paradox would lie, rather, in refusing to do so.) So it is only when the process of expansion takes the application of "will" beyond the human case that any appearance of paradox can arise. (More exactly, it can arise only when we start to see will as manifested in behaviour that we do not normally regard as voluntary.) There are then two broadly distinguishable phases to Schopenhauer's "extension" (WR I p.111) of the will: the non-paradoxical phase of extending it from one's own case to the human case in general, and the paradoxical phase of extending it into the rest of nature.

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The first phase Schopenhauer deals with in a rather summary fashion. On the question of whether other human bodies are, like my own, "phenomena of a will" (WR I p.104), Schopenhauer says he will simply "assume" an affirmative answer. The denial of this position, "theoretical egoism", can, he says, never be "refuted by proofs". But this does not matter since no one (save the mad) holds the position as anything more than a "sceptical sophism" (ibid.).

The problem of theoretical egoism is the problem of scepticism about
other minds. (In § 3 we will see that Schopenhauer does not really sever the
cognitive from the conative in the way he sometimes appears to think he
does, so it is, I believe, a mistake to regard Schopenhauer's problem as, ex­clusively, an "other wills" problem, as a sub-problem of the full, traditional
problem of other minds.) Schopenhauer's treatment of it has been criticised
as altogether too cavalier: P.M.S. Harker refers to his "glib dismissal" of
the problem, while A. Phillips Griffiths reports Schopenhauer as believing
that theoretical egoism can never be "refuted":22 What these authors fail to
attend to, however, is the reference to ethical considerations in the passage
under consideration: the theoretical egoist, Schopenhauer says, regards
"only his own person as a real person" "just as practical egoism does in a
practical respect" (ibid.). As we will see (chapter VIII § 3 and 4), Schopen­hauer regards practical and theoretical egoism as, really, the same position:
the practical egoist expresses, in his self-regarding deeds, the very same
thing as the theoretical egoist expresses in words — that he alone is capable
of emotion or desire, of feeling, of pleasure or pain. Now practical egoism,
we will see, Schopenhauer does in fact "refute": not only is it morally wrong
and prudentially wrong (egoism is an extremely miserable state to be in), it
is also, as we will see, cognitively wrong, the inarticulate expression of false
metaphysics. So there is in fact a Schopenhauerian refutation of "egoism"
but one that is to be found in his practical rather than theoretical
philosophy. Though "by-passing" (ibid.) the problem in Book II, he returns
to it in Book IV.

§ 2 The Will in Nature

I want now to turn to the "paradoxical" aspect to the extension of will,
its extension beyond the human case into the rest of organic nature and, in the
end, into inorganic nature too.

Before turning to this, however, it should be noticed that there would be
nothing at all paradoxical about the claim that it is will which, for
example, accounts for a stone's flying through the air (WR I p.126) or a
magnet's turning to the pole (WR I p.118), were we to introduce, at this point,
a new, especially tamed and disinfect ed sense of the word "will" according
to which it means "no more than a universal, aimless, non-individualised,
non-alive force", a sense it would in fact have been "preferable" to express by
the word "force" or, "better still", "energy". Such is Brian Magee's suggest­ion (The Philosophy of Schopenhauer p.144).

Magee is concerned to lay to rest the idea that Schopenhauer is a "bit of
a crackpot" (ibid.), a popular notion based, he says, on the misunderstanding
that the will Schopenhauer sees as underlying the whole of nature, the will
referred to in the title of "The World as Will and Representation", is will
"in something akin to the ordinary sense of the term" (ibid.: Magee's emphasis).

Yet, as we know, Schopenhauer insists on the startling, challenging, "paradoxical" character of his metaphysics of will, and this quality, we will see, depends, in fact, precisely on its being will in "something akin to" the usual sense that is claimed to permeate the whole of nature. So, actually, Schopenhauer would not at all welcome the attempt to sanitize his term "will" so as to bring his metaphysics comfortably into line with conventional modes of thought about nature. (Neither would he much welcome being rescued from the charge of being "a bit of a crackpot" believing, as he does, that being regarded by the world as possessing a certain "admixture of madness" (WR I p.190) is a condition of genius.)

Schopenhauer, in fact, explicitly and emphatically rejects the attempt to tame the word "will". "I should", he says, be misunderstood by anyone who thought that ultimately it was all the same whether we expressed this essence in itself of all phenomena by the word will or by any other word .... Hitherto, the concept of will has been subsumed under the concept force; I, on the other hand, do exactly the reverse, and intend every force in nature to be conceived as will. We must not imagine that this is a dispute about words or a matter of no consequence; on the contrary, it is of the very highest significance and importance. For ... if we refer the concept of force to that of will, we have in fact referred something more unknown to something infinitely better known .... If, on the other hand, we subsume the concept of will under that of force we renounce the only immediate knowledge of the inner nature of the world that we have (WR I pp.111-112).

It is true that earlier in the same passage Schopenhauer speaks of his "extending the concept" of will which Magee takes to be a warning that "will" is to be used technically, "certainly not in its normal sense" (op.cit. p.141). But the phrase does not demand this interpretation since it may refer to an extension of the reference (extension) rather than to an extension of the sense (meaning) of the concept (term). By way of explaining the nature of the envisaged extension, Schopenhauer says that, prior to him, will was thought to occur only in "the circumstance of being accompanied by knowledge (Erkenntniss) and the determination by motives which is conditioned by this knowledge" (WR I p.105); the circumstance of its being "under the guidance of the faculty of reason" (WR I p.111). But he himself proposes, says Schopenhauer, to use "will" as the name of the genus of which "will guided by knowledge" (ibid.) is only the most important species. But this does not entail a change in the meaning of "will" any more than the discovery of black swans, which revealed white swans to be a mere species of the genus, entailed a change in the meaning of "swan". I suggest therefore,
that we have no reason for, and good reasons against, the thesis that the
main work ought to be re-titled "The World as Energy and Representation".
The will that is to be extended throughout nature is "will" in the same sense
as the word has possessed in the discussion to date.

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Let us consider, first of all, organic nature. Here, Schopenhauer holds,
the extension of will is unproblematic. It is, indeed, demanded; given that
we have rejected solipsism and are prepared to extend will throughout the
human realm, we have no choice but to continue the extension on into the
animal and plant world. So far as the higher animals are concerned the
reason is that they are, in no relevant way, different from humans, for their
actions are guided by "motives", by conscious representations of the
environment just as human actions are. But even leaving this aside, the
extension of will remains unproblematic, for "we see at once from the instinct
and mechanical skill of animals that the will is active" (WR I p.114). In,
for example, nest-building, web-spinning, beehive-construction, we see
activity which, while clearly not guided by any conscious representation of
the end to be achieved, is nonetheless activity in which "will is obviously at
work" (ibid.). And the same is true with regard to the activity of plants. In,
for example, the modification of the direction of growth by light, there can
be no doubt that here too we have a manifestation of will, of a "striving
determined by needs" (WR II p.295) or "wants" (WN p.293).

Why does Schopenhauer take it to be so unproblematically true that the
instinctive behaviour of animals and the behaviour of plants (as well as, we
may add, non-voluntary activity, such as the beating of the heart, on the
part of the human body (WR II p.255)) must, like human action, be regarded
as manifesting will? The answer lies in his understanding of teleology.

Organic nature, he holds, is universally purposive; there is no feature of
an organism — either a mode of behaviour or an aspect of its "form and
shape" (WR II p.327) — that does not have a purpose or "final cause" which
contributes, ultimately, to its survival (WR II p.329). But how is it
explicable that final causes are effective? In our own actions, says
Schopenhauer, we find an identity between final and efficient cause; they
"directly coincide since in them the final cause, the end or aim, appears as a
motive" (WR II p.331). This is how we render final causation intelligible to
ourselves. It is, in fact, the only way we can do so for "we cannot clearly
conceive a final cause except as an intended aim or end i.e. as a motive" (WR
II p.332).23 It is on account of this idea that Schopenhauer holds that the

universal suitability of organic nature relating to the continued existence
of every being cannot be easily associated with any philosophical
system except that which makes a will the basis of every natural being's existence" (WR II p.327).

What follows from this, says Schopenhauer, is that where we are dealing with instinctive behaviour, or with the morphological features of organisms,

we must not shrink from a contradiction and boldly state that the final cause is a motive which acts on a being by whom it is not known. For the nests of termites are certainly the motive that has called into existence the toothless jaw of the ant-eater, together with its long, thread-like, and glutinous tongue. The hard egg-shell, holding the chicken a prisoner, is certainly the motive for the horny point with which its beak is provided, in order with it to break through that shell; after this the chicken casts it off as of no further use" (WR II p.332).

He adds that though it appears contradictory to speak of motives acting on beings by whom they are not known it is not really so since we are dealing here with the "transition of the physical into the metaphysical" (ibid.).

What does all this add up to? The situation is as follows. The chicken, we say, adopting the teleological mode of discourse, has the horny point in order to break out of the egg. We can only make comprehensible to ourselves how the end explains the means, suggests Schopenhauer, by supposing that something wills the end of breaking the egg and so 'constructs' the necessary means. But it cannot, of course, be the chicken; not at any rate the physical chicken. So it must be its metaphysical counterpart, that constellation of forces, that is, volitions, which expresses, "objectifies", itself as the physical chicken; as the will to fly objectifies itself in wings, the will to escape the egg does so in the horny point. And the same is true of all the morphological features of organisms. With regard to the human body, for example,

teeth, gullet and intestinal canal are objectified hunger, the genitals objectified sexual impulse; grasping hands and nimble feet correspond to the more indirect strivings of the will (WR I p.108).

And it is true, too, of the instinctive behavioural routines which animals perform. The bird, for example, has no notion of the eggs for which it builds the nest (WR I p.114). But this is just another example of a "motive which acts without being known" (WR II p.342). The will to foster offspring, that is, is part of that constellation of forces which is the "inner being", the metaphysical essence of the bird, and it is this which expresses itself in nest-building activities.

Schopenhauer has been heralded as an anticipator of Darwin. And in so
far as he perceives over-population and the struggle for survival as fundamental features of the organic world (cf. § 4 below) he does indeed anticipate Darwin. But in the views presented in the last few paragraphs he is conspicuously non-Darwinian. For what Darwin showed was that there is no necessity to the assumption of irreducible teleology in nature; he provided that is, in the mechanism of natural selection, a demonstration that it is possible to explain, purely in terms of efficient causes, all those features of organisms we speak of as having final causes. From this point of view, therefore, it can be seen that Schopenhauer's confidence in the undeniable ability of teleology in organic nature and hence the inevitability of the metaphysics of will is misplaced. The theory of evolution does not, of course, show that one has to deny irreducible teleology in nature. But it does show that Schopenhauer's extension of will to organic nature stands in need of a supporting argument other than that which he explicitly provides.

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Schopenhauer is convinced, we have seen, that teleology demands agency, a will. Assuming the inescapability of teleological explanation on the organic level, therefore, there is, for him no question but that will must be extended throughout organic phenomena. But on the inorganic level the existence of final causes is, he says, "problematical" (WR II p.334), "ambiguous", in that we may wonder whether the appearance of teleology here is "merely a subjective view, an aspect of things conditioned by our point of view" (WR II p.335); we may suspect, that is, that inorganic teleology is a mere romancing, a projection, a mere seeing of nature as if it were purposive. Certainly the projection of will into the inorganic realm is something we can do. Let us observe

the powerful, irresistible impulse with which masses of water rush downwards, the persistence and determination with which the magnet always turns back to the North Pole, the keen desire with which iron flies to the magnet, the vehemence with which the poles of the electric current strive for reunion and which, like the vehemence of human desires is increased by obstacles .... Let us observe the choice with which bodies repel and attract one another ... (WR I p.118),

the "perpetual struggle" between the magnet and gravitation, (WR I p.146), the "contest", the "strife", and the "subjugation" of each other which occurs between phenomena such as centrifugal and centripedal forces (WR I p.148), and "it will cost us no great effort of the imagination to recognise again our own inner nature, even at so great a distance" (WR I p.118). But what the persuasive tone of the reference to the low "cost" of seeing the world in this
way suggests, is that, in contrast to the demand for the extension of will to organic nature, we have a certain freedom of choice about extending it any further. So why should we do it? Why that is, should we regard the "choices", "strivings", and "struggles" of non-living bodies as anything more than anthropomorphic metaphors?

Schopenhauer has, I think, two reasons to offer. The first has to do with what he calls the "law of homogeneity", the quest for a highest genus under which to subsume all the species in nature (FR p.1), for "knowledge of the identical in different phenomena" (WR I p.111). This law, he says, constitutes a fundamental constraint upon philosophical method. Applied to a metaphysical theory of nature it requires of it that it should "spread a uniform light over all the phenomena of the world, and bring even the most heterogeneous into agreement, so that the contradiction may be removed even between those that contrast most" (WR II p.184). If, then, given that we are required to extend will to the organic realm, we refuse to extend it further to the inorganic, the result is a bifurcated metaphysics that fails to satisfy the law of homogeneity. And this fact removes the appearance that it is optional whether or not we extend will to non-living matter. If, that is, we can, then, on methodological grounds, we must do so.

The other reason Schopenhauer will give for the final extension of will will be to remind us, once again, of the demand on philosophy that is should bring to completion the scientific image of the world. To refuse, that is, to see will at work in the operation of inorganic forces is, Schopenhauer will hold, to condemn the character of such forces to irredeemable obscurity and the scientific account of inorganic nature to ultimate meaninglessness. For since, as we know, the concept of force cannot be rendered intelligible in terms of objective experience, then the only alternative is to appeal to the subjective. As Schopenhauer asks rhetorically: to "what other kind of existence or reality" could we turn? "From what [other] source could we take the elements out of which to construct [the "inner nature" of the] ... world? Besides will and representation absolutely nothing is known or conceivable for us" (WR I p.105).

I suggested earlier that the impact of the theory of evolution is to suggest that Schopenhauer is mistaken in believing that we are compelled to see will at work in organic nature. But its force is not, we said, to deny that we can do so, only that we need to appeal to something other than teleology to justify doing so. It may now be observed that the two arguments for extending will to the inorganic realm can be applied with equal force to the organic domain. If will is necessary to render inorganic forces intelligible it is equally so, of course, with regard to organic forces. And if we are constrained to regard, if we possibly can, all beings as sharing an ultimately homogeneous nature then, since we cannot but attribute will to ourselves, we must attribute it to all beings throughout both the organic and inorganic domains. If, as Schopenhauer puts it, man is to be the "microcosm" so that
what he "recognises as his own inner being also exhausts the inner being of
the whole world, of the macrocosm" (WRI p.162), then there must be no
natural phenomenon of any kind that is anything other than objectification
of will.

§ 3 Can the Will be "Blind"?

Schopenhauer says that although he wishes to see will as the
metaphysical reality underlying all of nature he hopes that no one will take
him to wish to extend knowledge (Erkenntniss) in a similar way: "know­
ledge and the determination of the will by motives which is conditioned by
this knowledge" belongs, he says,

not to the inner nature of the will, but merely to its most distinct phen­
onomenon as animal and human being. Therefore if I say that the force
which attracts a stone to the earth is of its nature, in itself, and apart
from all representation, will, then no one is to attach to this proposition
the absurd meaning that the stone moves itself according to a known
motive, because it is thus that the will appears in man (WR I p.105).

And in an accompanying footnote Schopenhauer disassociates himself
from Bacon's view that physical bodies move only after a preceding percep­
tion, and Kepler's claim that the planets must have knowledge in order to
keep so accurately to their orbits.

It is this attempt to disconnect will from "knowledge" which explains at
least many of the occasions on which Schopenhauer refers to the meta­
physical will as "blind". Although the metaphor is, in fact, of somewhat
variable import, most commonly, will is described as "blind" insofar as it is
determined by causes rather than motives (e.g. WR I p.115). When, that is to
say, behaviour is explicable in terms of will, but will unaccompanied by
representations ("knowledge"), Schopenhauer describes it as the product of
"blind" will. I wish now to raise the question of whether there can, in fact,
be any such behaviour: can the will be, in the sense described, "blind"?

The answer is that it can — sometimes. Schopenhauer observes that

even those parts of the body whose movements do not proceed from the
brain, do not follow upon motives, and are not voluntary are nevertheless
ruled and animated by the will [as can be] ... shown by their parti­
cipation in all unusually violent movements of the will i.e. emotions and
passions. We see, for instance, the quickening pulse in joy or alarm, the
blush in embarrassment, the cheek's pallor in terror or suppressed anger,
the tears of sorrow, the difficulty breathing and increased activity of
the intestines in terror, watering of the mouth at the sight of dainties ... (WN p.246).

And his point is quite correct. What needs to be noticed, however, is that all these examples are, in a certain way, deviant. For the standard fashion in which will figures in the explanation of behaviour is (to employ a technical use of the term introduced by Donald Davidson 25) to occur in "rationalisations". Normally, that is, to mention a desire in the course of explaining an item of behaviour is to indicate what the point was the agent saw in doing it. If I explain a women's putting herself conspicuously in the path of the great film producer by reference to her desire to be noticed by him, what is true is that she puts herself in the producer's path in order to be noticed. But although her blanching, blushing, pulse-quickening and so on may receive a causal explanation in terms of the very same desire, it will not be the case (save in very extraordinary circumstances) that she blanched or blushed in order to do anything at all. So Schopenhauer's examples are deviant in that the bodily changes mentioned are caused but not rationalised by the will.

The point to notice is that while behaviour can be caused by will alone it can only be rationalised by will where it operates in conjunction with beliefs ("motives", "knowledge"). Though the beliefs may be too obvious to be worth mentioning, they are presupposed, along with desire, in every rationalising explanation. My desire to be noticed by someone can render intelligible my presence at a certain spot only on the presumption that I believe it likely that the person in question will be at that spot. The conclusion is, therefore, that the will which Schopenhauer extends through nature can be, in the relevant sense, "blind" only if the explanations in which it figures are always of the non-rationalising kind.

But this is patently not the case: What Schopenhauer extends throughout nature is not just will but the rationalising mode of explanation. If, for example, we return to the discussion of anatomical structure in the previous section (cf. p. 61 above), it will be remembered that the horny point was said to be on the chicken's beak in order to break out of the egg; because, that is, the constellation of forces, willings, which is the metaphysical essence of the chicken includes the will to break out of the egg. Clearly, then, this is a rationalising explanation, and equally clearly it presupposes "knowledge" on the part of the metaphysical agent that manifest itself as the chicken — the technical knowledge that horny points are good things for breaking egg-shells. And the same is true in all those cases where Schopenhauer wishes to speak of final causes: even on the inorganic level, if we recognise the "keen desire" with which the iron flies to the magnet or the "contest" between centrifugal and centripetal forces, then it is presupposed that the iron at least knows where the magnet is and the forces their opponent.

Insofar, then, as Schopenhauer, in describing the will as "blind", means
that it explains behaviour without the collaboration of knowledge, he
misdescribes his own procedure. For what he extends throughout nature is
the mode of explanation appropriate only to intentional agency, and such
agency presupposes, always, belief as well as desire. Schopenhauer's nature
in fact pulsates with agency, agency in the full-blooded sense which
presupposes not just will but intelligence too. Man is indeed the "microcosm";
our own nature in both its conative and cognitive aspects is what stares back
at us from all parts of the world. (Hence, it may be observed, from Schopen­
hauer's metaphysical point of view there is really no such thing as inorgan­
ic nature: everything is alive.)

So Bacon and Kepler were actually quite right; one cannot attribute a
(rationalising) will to objects without attributing also knowledge and
perception. So the will cannot be "blind" in the sense we have been consider­
ing. It can, however, be "blind" in the sense of being unaccompanied by
consciousness either of it or of its accompanying knowledge, and quite fre­
quently that seems to be the point Schopenhauer really wishes to make, but
obscures by muddling together the notions of knowledge (Erkenntnist) and
consciousness (Bewusstsein) (cf. WR II pp.135-6).

In realising that, really, it is both will and intelligence, agency in the
full-blooded sense, that Schopenhauer extends throughout nature we
confront, finally, that which is the real "paradox" in the extension of the
will. For if agency is extended throughout nature then so is the arena of
voluntary action. Given, indeed, Schopenhauer's conviction that "nature
does nothing in vain" (WR II p.340-1), it follows that every natural phenom­
enon has a final cause. Any natural phenomenon will hence be, on Schop­
henhauer's view, the product of a rationalising will and so, according to my
argument, an exercise of agency. If this is so then there is no such thing, anywhere in nature, as an involuntary act. What then becomes of the
commonsense distinction between voluntary and involuntary behaviour? What happens to the conviction that there is an important difference
between my knitting a jersey and the spider's weaving its web, between my
beating a drum and the beating of my heart? The difference turns out to be
this: that some of my actions count as involuntary on my part because it is not
(in the ordinary sense) me that performs them but rather something else: as
we might say, the will in me. So whereas I knit or beat the carpet, it is the
will that makes my heart beat and the spider weave its web. Involuntary
behaviour on the part of a natural object turns out to be, or be the result of,
voluntary behaviour on the part of its metaphysical counterpart.
§ 4 The World-Will, the Platonic Ideas and Nature Pessimism

So far, our talk of will has always been, at least implicitly, pluralistic. We have seen that the metaphysical account of the world as will amounts, in the first instance, to the view that "bodies are spaces filled with force" (WN p.207), and in the second (when we try to make the concept of force intelligible) to the view that bodies, metaphysically speaking, are centres of will or agency. It is these centres which are the "inner natures" of bodies as we represent them, natures, that is, which "objectify" themselves in the contents of ordinary perceptual experience.

All this talk is, as I say, pluralistic: there are many bodies and hence many centres of force (will). But it is time now to take into account the fact that over and above the many wills, Schopenhauer often speaks of the will. Sometimes the singular term is used just to make generalisations ("the will is x" sometimes just means "wills are x" as "the whale is a mammal" just means "whales are mammals") but by no means always: for Schopenhauer intends to postulate, over and above all the individual wills in nature, a unique entity, the will, the world-will, as we may call it. Why should he wish to do this?

The answer to this question lies, I believe, in his views on teleology. Objects, in particular organisms, exhibit an adaptation of parts to the survival of the whole. This "inner suitability" (WR I § 28 passim), as we saw in § 2, Schopenhauer believes we can only make intelligible to ourselves by supposing the organism to be the product of agency. But objects exhibit also "external suitability" (ibid.). All parts of the world are in "harmony" with each other as they must be to render the existence and continuance of nature possible (WR I p.161). There is a mutual adaptation between organisms and their environment, both organic and inorganic: "every plant is well adapted to its soil and climate, every animal to its element and to the prey that is to become its food, that prey also being protected to a certain extent against its natural hunter" (WR I p.159). But what this means is that nature as a whole exhibits an "inner suitability", an adaptation of its parts to the existence of the whole. Hence, just as their "suitability" constrains us to suppose individual organisms to be the product of a will, so we must suppose nature as a whole to be the product of a will: the world-will.

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To represent the overall "suitability" of nature Schopenhauer employs the notion of the "Platonic Idea" (a notion which will receive a fuller discussion in Chapter VII). The Platonic Ideas correspond to the species that there are in nature; they are the natural kinds (WR I p.156). But over and
above the Ideas of the particular species of natural objects is an Idea which "is related to the other Ideas as harmony is to individual voices" (WR I p.158). Schopenhauer says (echoing the Christianised version of Plato's Timaeus, in which the Forms are represented as the contents of God's will rather than being, as Plato himself conceived them, the independently existing ideals of his world-creating activity) that the particular ideas can be regarded as "individual, in themselves simple acts of will in which [the world-will's] ... inner being expresses itself" (WR I p.155). According to this mode of thinking, the Platonic Forms —the wolf, the sheep, and so on— are equated with volitions of the kind: Let the wolf be objectified, Let the sheep be objectified. But really, all these individual willings are parts of one complex volition which is the over-arching Idea in which they are all harmonised. This over-arching Idea may be regarded, says Schopenhauer, as the will's fundamental volition and as constituting its character in the same way in which (cf. Chapter V § 2) a fundamental volition was said to constitute the character of an individual human being (WR I pp.158-9). The volition is one in which the world-will selects the particular Ideas it wishes to be objectified in nature, a selection guided by the consideration that these must all be jointly realisable.

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We are now in a position to say something about Schopenhauer's nature-pessimism. (Later on (in Chapter X) we will discuss another kind of pessimism concerning, specifically, the human condition). The condition of nature is bellum omnium contra omnes. Magnetism must struggle with gravity to keep the iron aloft, animals must prey on plants and on other animals in order to survive, men prey on all of nature including other men. Thus "everywhere in nature we see contest, struggle and the fluctuation of victory" (WR I p.146). Why should this be?

Sometimes Schopenhauer is inclined to explain it in terms of a "variance with itself that is essential to the will" (ibid.). The will, he suggests, wills Ideas which compete with each other for expression, for possession of the same piece of matter (WRI p.147), and this shows that the will is in conflict with itself. If this is so then nature is irrational in that ultimately it is the product of an irrational willer of incompatible ends. The source of pessimism, on this view, is the idea that nature is, as it were, a turbulent madhouse presided over by a ruler who is himself insane, a crazed willer of contradictory goals.

Yet this theme sits most uncomfortably with the idea we looked at a moment ago of there being a harmony to nature that is to be was accounted for in terms of the will's taking care to harmonise the individual Ideas within an over-arching scheme of things. In the discussion of that idea the will
appeared as a thoroughly *rational* agent.

Schopenhauer tries to reconcile the themes of harmony and variance by suggesting that nature contains no more harmony than the bare minimum necessary to render possible the existence and continuance of the system of natural kinds that the will wills. Harmony does not extend to the relations between individuals. And in the "never-ending war of extermination of individuals", he claims, the "inner antagonism of the will continues to reveal itself" (WR I p.161).

But why should this be so? If, as he says (WR I p.351-2), the will has no interest in the fate of individuals, caring only for the continuation of the system of Ideas with which it seems "thoroughly satisfied" (*ibid.*), and if, as we have seen, that system is a completely consistent one, where is any variance *within the will* to be found? It seems to me, in short, that the theme of the inner conflict of the will mislocates the real source of Schopenhauer's nature-pessimism.

Where, then, is that source to be found? Let us observe that, as Schopenhauer says, even though there is no conflict between the particular Ideas which make up the will's overall plan of nature, conflict between the individuals which exemplify those Ideas, and hence their suffering and death, is the means by which that plan is realised. More exactly, the means consists in the massive over-population of the world by members of one species to that there remains, always, a surplus of individuals for members of another to feed on (WR II p.351). (Notice that though, as I mentioned in § 2, Schopenhauer is not to be regarded as, in all respects, a precursor of Darwin, he did anticipate the Darwinian axioms that over-population and strife (and hence suffering) are structural rather than accidental features of nature). Looked at in this light, the grounds for viewing the world-will with abhorrence are that (like the practical egoist) it treats individuals merely as "means" (*ibid.*) for the realisation of its own ends, infringing thereby the fundamental moral injunction always to treat individuals as ends, never merely as means. Were it the case, of course, that nature was evolving towards some higher end to which the sacrifice of individuals could be represented as a means, it might be possible to take a more forgiving attitude to this sacrifice. But, in fact, no such attitude is possible. There is no moral progress in the history of the world, the reason being that the will has no goal whatsoever beyond that of realising, in perpetuity, its system of Ideas (WR I pp.163-4).

In the light of this discussion it becomes clear, I think that the grounds for pessimism reside not in variance within the will but rather in variance between individuals. Nature-pessimism consists not in a sense of the world resembling a lunatic asylum run by a confused maniac (a lunatic will would, after all, have to be freed of *moral* responsibility for its acts) but in, rather, an awareness of it as like a concentration camp whose inmates, in order to survive, are compelled to destroy each other by a sadistic, "devilish" (WRII
he saw an immense field entirely covered with skeletons, and took it to be a battlefield. However they were nothing but skeletons of large turtles, five feet long, three feet broad, and of equal height. These turtles come this way from the sea, in order to lay their eggs, and are then seized by wild dogs (canis rutilans); with their united strength, these dogs lay them on their backs, tear open their lower armour, the small scales of the belly, and devour them alive. But then a tiger often pounces on the dogs. Now all this misery is repeated thousands and thousands of times, year in, year out. For this then, are these turtles born. For what offence must they suffer this agony? What is the point of the whole scene of horror? The only answer is that the will-to-live thus objectifies itself (WR II p.354).

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I suggested at the beginning of this section that it is teleological considerations which lead Schopenhauer to postulate, over and above individuals wills, the will, a will which now appears as an evil sadist.

This line of reasoning coalesces with another strain in Schopenhauer's thought. Space and time are, he reminds us (introducing transcendental idealism into the picture) ideal. But they are also the "principium individuationis": only with regard to the occupants of space and (or) time can one render the idea of a plurality of distinguishable individuals intelligible. Hence the world in itself must be "beyond plurality", that is, "one" (BM pp.205-7, WR I pp.112-3, p.128). This argument, if sound (a question I shall return to in Chapter VIII § 5), shows that the in itself has to be designated by an expression of the form: The F. But does nothing to show that it has to be designated as the will. It offers, that is, no grounds for characterising 'The One' in any way at all. The One, of course, appears in the phenomenal world as will. But it appears as many other things too. Why then, of all predicates, should "will" have the priviledge of carrying over from phenomenal reality to characterise also the thing in itself?

This question is answered by the teleological considerations we looked at. The world as a whole exhibits (a sadistic) design and that we can only render intelligible by postulating world-producing will. So The One has to be identified as the will.

As this point, however, it becomes pertinent to observe certain notes of caution that enter Schopenhauer's discussion of teleological thought. Looked at closely, he does not say, in fact, that purposiveness entails a
designing agent but rather that one cannot "clearly conceive" it otherwise. And he does not say that teleology demands will-centred metaphysics but only that it cannot be "easily" accommodated by any other (cf. pp.60-1 above). And in inorganic nature, at least, the question of the very existence of purposiveness is "problematical", "ambiguous", in that the question presents itself as to whether its appearance might not be a mere human projection without any objective foundation (WR II pp.334-6). Moreover, the thesis of Kant's *Critique of Teleological Judgement* that, even in the organic realm, purposiveness may be merely a human projection is something Schopenhauer endorses (WR I p.533).

What these observations suggest is that Schopenhauer believes, firstly that we cannot really take teleology in nature as a datum, and, secondly, that even if there is teleology perhaps it is only the limited character of human thought that forces us to conceive of it as produced by a will. Perhaps then, there is really no overall "suitability" in nature, perhaps it is a mere projection on our part; or if there is, perhaps it does not really demand a will for its explanation.

In terms of the overall structure of Schopenhauer's philosophy these reservations are highly significant. They are significant because, firstly, the attempt to infer from the teleological character of the world to the nature of the an sich is a central example of what Kant calls "transcendent metaphysics". (It will not have escaped the reader's notice that the move from teleology to the evil will is a kind of parody of the teleological proof of the existence of God, a proof which Kant specifically identifies as a leading example of illegitimate metaphysical speculation.) Hence Schopenhauer's endorsement of the inference, were it to be entirely whole-hearted, would be inconsistent with his claims to Kantianism, with his claim that according to him, too, the in itself is unknowable by the (rational) mind.

The second way in which Schopenhauer's reservations are significant is that the teleological considerations which lead us to think of nature as will-designed point, for Schopenhauer, with equal force to the evil character of that will. So were teleological inference to that character of the an sich to be of unquestionable validity then there would be no possibility of the "salvation" which Schopenhauer allows us to hope for at the end of Book IV.

What then is Schopenhauer's overall position vis-à-vis teleology? Perhaps this: so far as human reason can tell us anything about ultimate reality it points to ultimate evil. However, we have grounds for distrusting the soundness of this reasoning, and this allows us to hope that non-rational means will give us a truer and happier account of it.
PART III

THE OBJECT SEEN

SUB SPECIE AEternitatis.
Chapter VII  Art

§1 Introduction

Considered as a drama (which, among other things, *The World as Will and Representation* is) the end of Book II represents the point of catastrophe, the point at which life and the world appear as irremediably horrible and absurd. With dramatic instinct, Schopenhauer spends its closing pages intensifying the mood of despair by reminding us that not only do we inhabit a world in which incessant, pointless *bellum omnium contra omnes* constitutes the order of things, but that human life, considered quite by itself, reproduces, in the microcosm, the strife and absurdity that characterises the macrocosm. As the world as a whole has no point to its existence, so human life has none, and as the world as a whole is restless strife, so human life is restless oscillation between the pain of unsatisfied desire and the boredom of satisfied desire.

With the beginning of Book III, however, the mood suddenly lightens: all of a sudden there is something to celebrate (art) rather than to deplore (life). And, in fact, this tone of recovery, this lightening of mood continues throughout Books III and IV, culminating, at the end of the latter, in the appearance of "salvation" gleaming, albeit a little dimly, through the parting clouds.

But it is not only in dramatic terms that the junction between Books II and III is the critical point in the main work. It is critical, too, philosophically. For while the first two books acquaint us with the problem of life, the "ever-disquieting riddle" of existence (WRII p.171), Book III introduces the key to its solution: in the standpoint of art, as we will see, Schopenhauer discovers that standpoint which is also the solution to the problems posed by death, wickedness and pessimism. This is why, for Schopenhauer, art has perhaps a greater importance than it has for any other major philosopher.

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The first and central question in Book III is: what is art? In greater detail: what is it for a state of consciousness to be aesthetic rather than something else? Schopenhauer often treats these questions as equivalent, regarding art as a state of consciousness, a "way of considering things" (WR I p.185). But the more usual conception of art as a human activity essentially involving the production of works of art is something he can easily accommodate. For he regards it as of the essence of the art-work that it is
produced out of an aesthetic state with the intention of facilitating the recreation of that state in the mind of the audience (cf. WR I p.185, WR II pp.407-8). So one could, if one wished, define art as the production of artworks, yet still, on this understanding of what the art-work is, focus one's attention, with Schopenhauer, on the nature of aesthetic consciousness.

Schopenhauer regards the ability to adopt the aesthetic stance as a surprising, extraordinary transcendence of our usual, biologically determined, mode of perceiving the world; so much so, in fact, that he regards the "pre-eminent" possession of the ability as identical with the rare phenomenon of genius (WR I p.185). This makes it natural for him to delimit the character of aesthetic consciousness \textit{via} a contrast between it and ordinary consciousness. I begin with the latter.

\textbf{§ 2 Ordinary Consciousness}

For the purpose of articulating this contrast four features of ordinary consciousness are significant. The first is that, ordinarily, one identifies oneself as an individual in the world of one's experience, a particular body, "an object among objects to all of which it has many different [spatial, temporal and causal] relations and connections" so that "a consideration of these always leads back by a shorter or longer path to [one's] ... body" (WR I pp.176-7).

Schopenhauer's point here concerns, firstly, the egocentric character of all spatio-temporal identification. Objects are, and can only be, located in space and time by relating them, ultimately, to a \textit{here} and a \textit{now}, terms whose reference is dependent upon and determined by one's own bodily location. Secondy, since objects are, in this way, presented always as standing in spatio-temporal relations to oneself, they are presented also as being causally related: one's ordinary causal knowledge means that one cannot but be aware of the causal power which the self and other objects have to affect each other.

The second feature of ordinary consciousness is that we find the objects we are in the midst\textsuperscript{26} of "interesting" (WR I p.177). We view them, that is, "in relation to the will" (ibid.); we want them to be in certain states and want to prevent them being in other states. We have practical demands we place upon the world.

It is important to notice (for the purpose of the contrast to come) that these two features of ordinary consciousness are mutually dependent. For if one failed to identify oneself with anything in the world then nothing that happened there could concern, "interest", one. Conversely, if one failed to evince interest in the objects of the world, interest in the kind of fate they create for one inhabitant of the world in particular, it would be impossible to
attach credence to one's claim to identify with that inhabitant.

The third feature of ordinary experience is that our practical interest in its objects moulds and, in particular, "falsifies" the way in which we perceive them. Ordinary cognition is, says Schopenhauer, subordinate to the "services of the will" (ibid.), an agent which "twists, colours and distorts not merely the judgement, but even the original perception of things" (WR II p.373).

Part of what Schopenhauer has in mind here is the points made in connection with biological idealism (cf. Chapter I § 3). We tend, that is, to consider the "relations" rather than the "inner being" of things, to consider objects according to their relative not their absolute essences and existence. For example, we regard houses, ships, machines, and the like with the idea of their purpose and suitability therefor; human beings with the idea of their relation to us, if they have any, and then of their relation to one another, whether in their present actions or according to their position and vocation, perhaps judging their fitness for it and so on (WR II p.372).

We tend to categorise objects in terms of the functions we assign them and to be oblivious to their intrinsic qualities. As with chessmen (cf. PP II p.69), what matters is that they fulfil a certain role which we define for them, and of those qualities which they have independently of that role we are, largely, unaware.

Even when we are aware of the features of objects that are independent of human interest (one cannot be aware of an object under a functional description without also being aware of some of its intrinsic features — one cannot be aware of something as a hammer, for example, without being aware of, at least, a head and a shaft) the will nonetheless tends, as we may say, to etiolate perception, to drain it of all those features not directly relevant to practical ends; a traveller, for example, anxious and in a hurry, sees the bridge over the Rhine as little more than a dash intersecting with a stroke, while to the man of practical ambition the world appears "just as a beautiful landscape appears on the plan of a battlefield" (WR II p.381).

But if the will etiolates perception it also does the opposite: it adds to, that is "colours" it. When things go well for the will "the whole world ... assumes a bright colour and smiling aspect", when badly, it appears "dark and gloomy". Even inanimate objects yet to become the instrument of some event we abhor, appear to have a hideous physiognomy; for example the scaffold, the fortress to which we are to be taken, the surgeon's case of instruments ... indeed numbers, letters, seals can grin at us horribly and affect us like fearful monsters (WR II p.373).
The will then, by certain subtractions and additions, brings it about that ordinary consciousness of the world is distorted, falsified consciousness. Schopenhauer puts this by saying that it is "subjective", lacking in that "purely objective and therefore correct apprehension of things [which] is possible only when we consider them without any personal participation in them, that is, under the complete silence of the will" (ibid.).

A final feature of ordinary consciousness is that it is a suffering, agitated, anxious consciousness. I am, normally, an "object among objects" with practical demands as to how those objects should be related to me. But it is the nature of things that there should be, to one degree or another, a disjunction between how I want the world to be and how it is, the awareness of which constitutes suffering. So it is the order of things that one should suffer. (This is an over-simplified account of Schopenhauer's grounds for holding suffering to be written into the human condition. A full account of them will appear in Chapter X.)

Before turning to consider how the aesthetic state arises as a contrast to the ordinary, I should like to examine an objection to Schopenhauer's account of what ordinary consciousness is like. The objection I have in mind starts by conceding the perceptiveness of the account but goes on to suggest that nonetheless it is deeply flawed. It is flawed because it is, to an impossible degree, exaggerated. To many of the objects in one's world, it is pointed out, one is simply indifferent, and even where one is not, many of them lie beyond the scope of one's causal power so that one cannot will (but at best fantasize) about them.

There are two points to be made here. The first (though it should be noticed that indifference may itself be a conative attitude, the product, as it were, of a negative answer to the question: What use is this to me?) is that Schopenhauer concedes the phenomenon of indifference. And he of course concedes that there are limitations to one's causal power. But the second point is that although he holds that the pre-eminent capacity to transcend the limits of normal consciousness constitutes the extraordinary phenomenon of genius, he also believes that we all have the capacity for occasional and brief moments of transcendence (WR I pp.194-5). Moreover —this is the crux of the point — the circumstances that are ripe for such excursions are precisely those in which either we are indifferent to the object of awareness or else it is beyond our causal control. Effects of light, colour, and reflection, for example, easily become objects of aesthetic delight precisely because of their irrelevance to our practical interests (WR II p.375). And, for example, the soothing and exalting effect of the moon is (or rather was) attributable to its immunity to causal interference by us (WRII p.374). This same point is part of Schopenhauer's observation that most of us achieve aesthetic delight more readily from pictures than from nature; the picture-frame marks out, as it were, a domain that the will is forbidden to enter (WR II p.370).

The objection, then, rests on a misunderstanding. The imprisonment of
the ordinary person in the will-moulded, "interested", etiolated, anxious consciousness which constitutes the run of things is not absolute but allows, rather, for occasional remissions. Yet a problem remains. For Schopenhauer seems to assume that these remissions are always of an aesthetic nature. But are there not, one wonders, states of consciousness which while not practical, "interested" states, are not obviously aesthetic states either? In short, while the absence of practical, manipulative, action-directed interest may well be a necessary mark of the aesthetic state, has not Schopenhauer made a mistake in regarding it as sufficient? I shall return to this question in § 8.

§ 3 Aesthetic Consciousness

I distinguished, in the previous section, four characteristics of ordinary consciousness. Aesthetic consciousness is marked by the disappearance of each. How does such a transformation come about? It happens, says Schopenhauer, when "to use a pregnant expression" we "lose" ourselves entirely in the object of perception so that "we are no longer able to separate the perceiver from the perception but the two have become one since the entire consciousness is filled and occupied by a single image of perception" (WR I pp.178-9). When this happens one ceases to be aware of oneself as one spatio-temporal object among many and hence ceases to view objects through the interested eye of the will. As a consequence of this state of will-lessness, consciousness loses its falsified "subjective" character: perception becomes purely "objective", its subject the "clear mirror" of the object. And as a further consequence, the suffering anxious character of ordinary consciousness disappears; since one no longer demands anything of the world there remains no possibility of a disjunction what one demands and what it offers.

In aesthetic consciousness, therefore, there is a transformation of the subject into the "pure", will-less, timeless, subject of knowledge" (WR I p.179). But, Schopenhauer claims, "simultaneously and inseparably" (WR I p.197) connected with it, there occurs also a transformation of the object of consciousness. Since the subject ceased to identify himself as an object in the spatio-temporal world it follows that he does not view the object from a position in that world. And from this it follows (since, as we have already seen, the spatio-temporal locating of objects is dependent of one's own location) that the object ceases to be seen as at a position in the world. But having such a position constitutes what it is to be an individual: space and time are (cf. chapter VI § 4) the principium individuationis. Hence the object of aesthetic consciousness is no longer an individual but has been transformed into a "Platonic Idea". Thus aesthetic consciousness involves a double transformation: "at one stroke the individual thing becomes the Idea

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of its species and the perceiving individual the pure subject of knowing" (WI p.179). It was this double transformation, suggests Schopenhauer, that was in Spinoza's mind when he wrote that "the mind is [in contact with the: J.P.Y.] eternal insofar as it conceives things from the standpoint of eternity" (ibid.).

Such, in outline, is Schopenhauer's account of aesthetic consciousness. In order to gain a deeper understanding of it I want now to canvass some difficulties and see how they might be met. I shall begin with those relating to the subject before turning, later on, to those concerning the object.

§ 4 Sentimentality

With the transition to the will-lessness of aesthetic perception there disappears, we have seen, the anxiety of normal consciousness. It is replaced by a blissful condition of peace, a "painless state" in which, for a brief moment, "we are delivered from the miserable pressure of the will" and "celebrate the Sabbath from the penal servitude of willing" (WR I p.196). This constitutes the nature of aesthetic delight, the "feeling of the beautiful" (WR I p.202). But it seems to constitute, also, the nature of two other forms of pleasure. Firstly, the pleasure of nostalgia, that pleasure which occurs when the past, a scene from childhood perhaps, is recalled in a charmed light, when it appears as a "lost paradise" (WR I p.198). Schopenhauer explains this in terms of an unconscious censoring of the imagination: "the imagination recalls merely what was objective not what was individually subjective, and we imagine that something stood before us then just as pure and undisturbed by any relation to the will as the image now stands in the imagination" (WR I p.199). Secondly, the pleasure we take in the picturesque, that "magic gleam" which a town has for the traveller but not for the inhabitant. Schopenhauer explains this in terms of the traveller's perception being "purified of all willing" since he stands "out of all relation to the town and its inhabitants" (WR II p.371).

Schopenhauer's analysis of these modes of consciousness is persuasive. But it also raises a problem due to the fact that when consciousness is nostalgic or when it is tinted with the rosy hues of the picturesque it is falsified consciousness. In the case of nostalgia Schopenhauer himself makes this explicit. It is, he says, a form of "self-deception" since actually "the relation of objects to our will caused us just as much affliction ... [in the past] as it does now: (WR I p.118). (One sees in this deception, perhaps, a plausible explanation of the fury which greeted Freud's hypothesis of infant sexuality.) In states of nostalgia, then, we censor out, refuse to acknowledge unpleasant aspects of past reality. We indulge, in short, in a form of sentimentality. Now the picturesque (malerisch) Schopenhauer does not, in
fact, regard as a species of the sentimental. His traveller is simply captured, suddenly and without stage-setting, by a magical scene (cf. also PP II p.424). But it is possible to imagine the example developed in a way such that, as with nostalgia, there is deliberate evasion of the unpleasant. (One thinks here of that curse of the silver screen the travelogue, the sentimentality of which is so brilliantly exposed by the Monty Python Travelogue in which shots of the merry dancing of costumed, smiling, Bulgarian peasant girls is followed by the comment: "Who would think that these delightful girls are ready, at the first click of a shutter, to slap electrodes on your genitals.")

Nostalgic and, as we might call it, 'touristic' consciousness, are, then, forms of sentimental, falsified consciousness. But — and here is the problem they present — they also seem to exhibit the hallmarks of aesthetic consciousness — will-lessness and a blissful feeling of peace. Yet aesthetic consciousness is precisely where we are supposed to escape falsification: it is supposed to be "objective".

It might seem that this is an aspect of the problem mentioned at the end of § 2 of there being more alternatives to practical, "interested" consciousness than Schopenhauer allows for. But in fact it is not. For what we should say, looking at the problem from a Schopenhauerian point of view, is that in states of sentimentality we have not really transcended ordinary consciousness at all since, actually, consciousness remains "in the service of the will".

This can be seen by observing the similarities between Schopenhauer's account of madness (an account which, incidentally, made a deep impression on Freud) and what he says about nostalgia. Madness, a disease of the memory, occurs, he says, when the degree to which the will is tormented by a painful recollection becomes intolerable. The unconsciously willed response is to erase segments of the past and fill up the gaps with fictions (WR I p.192, WR II pp.399-402). Similarly, on Schopenhauer's analysis, nostalgia involves a willed erasure of parts of the past (though no replacement), and touristic consciousness is only different in that the erasures are consciously willed. Hence, in sentimental consciousness, one remains, in fact, identified with an object in the world performing (even if only unconsciously) acts of will in order to escape knowledge of the unpleasant.

There remain, with regard to this, broadly speaking, Schopenhauerian response to the problem of sentimentality, two difficulties. The first is that in classifying sentimentality as ordinary, will-moulded consciousness, we seem to have allowed that, whatever its faults, a state of ordinary consciousness can yet be blissful, totally unanxious. The answer to this must be, I think, that those who fake a happy world for themselves cannot be altogether unaware of the fact. At some level of consciousness the sentimentalist must know himself to be just that so that, actually, his state is never one of pure joy but contains always an undertone of disquiet.

The second problem that remains is the question of what is to be done,
from the aesthetic standpoint, about the unpleasant in life. We cannot deceive ourselves that it is not there for that is a willed, interested response. So the artist must not evade, must not flinch in the face of the unpleasant, even the terrible, in life. But how is that compatible with the willlessness of the aesthetic stance? Schopenhauer's answer to that question will be discussed in the next section.

§ 5 Art and Emotion

Among other things, Schopenhauer's insistence on the will-less, "disinterested" character of aesthetic consciousness provides him with a criterion for distinguishing between art and (roughly speaking) pornography — the "charming" (reizend). For since art not only arises out of, but seeks also to communicate, aesthetic consciousness, it follows that objects must never be represented in such a way as to rouse the appetites. Thus, semi-draped nudes in suggestive poses, as well as photo-realistic representations of "prepared and served up dishes of oysters, herrings, crabs, bread and butter, beer, wine, and so on" (WR I p.208) are inadmissible in art. And the same is true of the "negatively charming" (ibid.) — that disturbing feature of contemporary rock culture, the deliberately disgusting, the Punk.

These observations provide a compelling account of the nature and, qua art, degenerate status of pornography and allied phenomena. Yet they also introduce a problem. For if it is true that aesthetic consciousness can only occur "under the complete silence of the will" yet also true that every emotion is a "modification of the will" (WR II p.202, cf. Chapter V § 2), then it seems that in a proper response to art, there can be no emotion. But, how then can there be emotion in art, for what it is, surely, that makes art expressive, what makes an Elgar Larghetto nobilmente, a Seurat river-scene cheerful, Romeo and Juliet sad, The Turn of the Screw terrifying, is that the art-work brings it about that we experience melancholy-combined-with-resolution, cheerfulness, sadness, or terror. A work of art, in short, expresses an emotion just where it is apt to arouse that emotion in the spectator.

Intuitively, this is the right approach to accounting for the expressiveness of art. Some philosophers, of course, reject it, but as I read him Schopenhauer is not one of them. The key to understanding how it can be compatible with the will-lessness he requires of aesthetic perception (and to seeing how some of the standard objections to this view of expression are mistaken) lies in his discussion of the sublime, a discussion which is not only the crux of Schopenhauer's philosophy of art, but also the key to the Schopenhauerian solution to the problem of life.

An object is sublime when it is apt to produce in us a "feeling of the sublime" (WR I pp.201-2). This occurs when, first of all, the object of
comtemplation stands in a "hostile" (ibid.) relation, when it is "threatening and terrible" (WRI p.204) to the will. In the case of the "dynamically" sublime —

Nature in turbulent and tempestuous motion; semi-darkness through threatening black thunder clouds; overhanging cliffs shutting out the view by their interlacing; rushing, foaming, masses of water; complete desert; the wail of the winds rushing through the ravines (ibid.) —

the terribleness of the object lies in its making us aware of our causal insignificance and dependence in the face of the huge forces at work in the universe. The "mathematically" sublime, on the other hand — the night sky, the dome of St. Paul's (WR I p.206) — is experienced when vast (but bounded) spaces remind us of the "vanishing nothingness" (ibid.) of our tenure in space and time.

The second requirement for a feeling of the sublime is that the subject is aware of the hostility of the object: the feeling exists, says Schopenhauer, only so long as such awareness does (WR I p.202). And the final requirement is that, in spite of this awareness, the subject does not experience any emotional response to the object which is incompatible with the calm willlessness that is characteristic of aesthetic contemplation in general:

were a single real individual\textsuperscript{31} act of will to enter consciousness through real (wirklich) personal affliction and danger from the object, the actually affected individual will would immediately gain the upper hand .... The impression of the sublime would be lost because he had yielded to fear in which the effort of the individual to save himself surplanted every other thought (ibid.).

When all these conditions are met an especially powerful feeling of aesthetic pleasure, a special "exultation" is experienced, and this is the feeling of the sublime.

How is it possible to experience the sublime? Why does the subject have no impulse to take flight?

The crucial phenomenon is simply that disassociation from one's normal bodily identity, the elevation to the eternal standpoint, which occurs in all aesthetic experience. In confronting the sublime, however, this elevation is itself something one is aware of: Schopenhauer explains that what distinguishes the feeling of the sublime from that of the beautiful is the fact that while, with regard to the latter, consciousness is wholly absorbed by the object of contemplation so that there is no awareness of will whatsoever, with regard to the former there is awareness of the will, of the hostile, threatening relation in which the object stands toward that individual with which the subject normally identifies. On this occasion, however, the subject
feels himself separated from that individual, "elevated ... above himself, his person, his willing" (WR I p.201). This feeling of "exaltation beyond the known, hostile relation of the object" (WR I p.202) is the source of an especially profound kind of ecstasy which, to the degree that it is present, makes the experience more or less clearly distinct from the feeling of the beautiful (ibid.).

I shall return to the significance of this special "feeling of the sublime" in § 10. What concerns me at the moment, however, is the explanation of why, in confronting the object which is experienced as fearful, the subject has yet no impulse to take flight. The answer is that although (as I shall argue in a moment) he does have an experience of fear or even terror it is not an emotion he regards as belonging to himself. As, that is, he becomes disassociated from his own body so, although the experience remains, he becomes disassociated from his own fear. This is why he has no impulse to take flight.

Why do I insist that in confronting the sublime, emotion, albeit disassociated, depersonalised emotion, is experienced rather than saying that the subject confronts the sublime in an emotionless state? Though one might, I concede, be tempted to read Schopenhauer in the latter way, a number of points favour the former interpretation.

The first is his talk of the split, "twofold" nature of consciousness of the sublime: in spite of his primary identification with the "unmoved beholder", the subject "simultaneously feels himself as individual", as the "feeble phenomenon" threatened with annihilation (WR I p.205). To feel oneself as the threatened individual must, surely, be to experience fear. Yet it will be disassociated fear since one's primary identification will be elsewhere. 32

The second point lies in Schopenhauer's repetition of the qualification that it is "personal affliction" (WR I p.202) which destroys consciousness of the sublime, "personal participation" (WR II p.373), "individual subjectivity" (WR I p.199) (my emphases) which destroys aesthetic consciousness in general. He does not identify affliction, participation, subjectivity, in short, emotional response as such, as being destructive.

The third point is that Schopenhauer sometimes says that emotions are aroused by the sublime: the "fearful character" of the desert makes "our mood ... tragic", the sublime in general makes us, as individuals, feel "dependent", "threatened", "insignificant", "abandoned to chance" (WR I pp. 204-6).

The final point is that if Schopenhauer is not read in the way I suggest then, while he clearly believes art to have expressive power — music, for example, expresses "affliction, pain, sorrow, horror, gaiety, merriment, peace of mind" (WR I p.261) —, his philosophy of art is conspicuously lacking in any account of how this is so. Read my way, on the other hand, the discussion of the sublime implies a general account of how there can be
emotion in art. On this account, expression is a matter of appropriate emotions being aroused in the audience, the difference between art on the one hand and phenomena such as pornography, on the other, lying in the fact that while personal, action-prompting emotions are roused by the latter, disassociated, impersonal emotions are roused by the former.

Actually, a refinement can be added to this account of expression in art: emotions it arouses are, I think, better described as universal rather than merely depersonalised. Schopenhauer repeatedly speaks this way — it is the "vanishing nothingness of our own body", the "insignificance and dependence of ourselves" as individuals which one experiences in the face of the sublime (WR I p.206: my emphasis) — and one can see why he does. If I disassociate myself from the body and individual emotions of that individual at present experiencing, for example, the sublime object, then that individual becomes a representative of the human body and will in general. Hence, as Schopenhauer says, it is not "individual willing" but "human willing in general" to which the sublime object is threatening (WR I p.202).

In addition to the difference between art and phenomena allied to pornography, the distinction between personal and universal feeling explains a number of other phenomena to do with art. It explains, first of all, why it is we sometimes reject a work as a pathological record of private fantasy or nightmare rather than great art: why Blake is greater than Fuseli, Klee than Dali, Beethoven than Tschaikovsky. The great expressive artist, that is, feels and communicates emotion that is experienced from a universal standpoint, a level of profundity which the artist who is obsessed with his private predicament cannot experience and hence cannot communicate.

And the distinction explains also the often-remarked connection between art and morality; the sense of there being a moral quality to the experience of being moved by great art. The connection lies in the fact that in inducing us to feel from the universal standpoint, to be moved by how the world stands to the human rather than the individual will, art absorbs us into a transcendence of the narrow limits of egoism, into an intimation of the moral point of view.

A final matter I should like to mention before leaving the present topic concerns the problem of sentimentality that was left unresolved at the end of the previous section. The tranquility of aesthetic perception, we saw there, is not to be preserved by evasion of the unpleasant, by sentimentalising experience. That is a willed response whereas the artist is required to preserve an unblinking "objectivity" towards the world. But how then, we wondered, is the peacefulness of aesthetic experience to be preserved? The answer, we now see, is that art confronts the unpleasant, even the terrible, by rendering it sublime. The peace of aesthetic experience is preserved, not by censorship of the disturbing, but by the disassociated character of the responses it evokes.

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§ 6 The Objects of Art

So far, I have discussed issues connected with the subject of aesthetic experience. Now I want to turn to the object, to, in particular, the question of what one is to make of the notion that the object of aesthetic consciousness is not the individual of ordinary perception but rather the Platonic Idea of the species to which it belongs. How strongly are we to understand the allusion to Plato? Are we, first of all, to understand the objects of art to belong to an ontological domain separate from the domains of ordinary perceptual objects (as, for example, Brian Magee (op. cit. p.239) does)?

At first sight it seems that we are. The term "Idea", Schopenhauer insists at its first introduction, he uses not in Kant's but in Plato's sense; for him as for Plato, he says, Ideas are related to individuals as their "eternal forms". And then he quotes Diogenes Laërtius as, in his view, providing the best summary of Platonic doctrine: "Plato teaches that the Ideas exist in nature, so to speak, as patterns or prototypes and that the remainder of things resemble them and exist as their copies" (WR I p.130). This suggests that Schopenhauerian Ideas are, firstly, not concepts (for Kant's "ideas of reason" just are, as we saw (Chapter II § 4), concepts of an especially problematic sort) and that, secondly, the level of extra-conceptual reality they occupy is distinct from that occupied by individuals. But, in fact, this impression does not withstand scrutiny.

In On the Fourfold Root Schopenhauer says that the Ideas may be regarded as "normal intuitions". Normal intuitions, in the primary sense of the term, are the individual items in which mathematics deals; for example, a particular geometrical figure (drawn either on paper or in thought). Hence unlike concepts which are "abstract", undetailed, indeterminate (cf. Chapter II § 4) normal intuitions are "determinate throughout". On the other hand, they resemble concepts in that they "have to do with many things". They are perceptual images (FR p.152) which are used as "representatives of concepts" (FR p.198 fn. (on p.206), cf. WR I p.234).

Schopenhauer's idea of how they perform this representative function — and here he takes himself to be simply repeating Kant's account of geometrical proof as a matter of constructing figures and then performing further constructions upon them — is that although a particular figure (a line, let us say) will possess features not possessed by all lines (a particular length, for example), our constructions nonetheless yield results that are universally valid since in performing them we have not used, not, as it were, noticed, any of the features idiosyncratic to that particular figure.

These reflections begin to suggest that the Ideas might just be ordinary perceptual objects (determinacy, let us remember, is, for Schopenhauer, the criterion of the perceptual) their universality having to do, not with their being non-natural ones resembled by the perceptual many, but rather with
the selectiveness of attention paid to them by the observer. And, in fact, this impression of what the Ideas are is the one that is reinforced when they come to be discussed specifically in the context of art. One finds there, for example, the following kind of remark:

to the brook which rolls downwards over the stones, the eddies, waves, and foam-forms exhibited by it are indifferent and inessential: but that it follows gravity and behaves as an inelastic, perfectly mobile, formless and transparent fluid, this is the essential nature, this if known through perception, is the Idea (WR I p.182).

In § 9 I shall examine the significance of this special emphasis on perception. For the moment the important thing to notice is that perceiving an Idea (water) is a matter of perceiving an ordinary object (the brook) with one's attention focussed on the essential, and away from its inessential aspects. A further textual point to be made here is that Schopenhauer does, sometimes, speak quite explicitly of the ordinary individual thing as the object of aesthetic contemplation. He speaks, for instance, of art as being that which

plucks the object of its contemplation from the stream of the world's course, and holds it isolated before it. The particular thing, which in that stream was an infinitesimal part, becomes for art a representative of the whole, an equivalent of the infinitely many in space and time (WRI p.185).

A final and, as I see it, decisive reason for identifying the Ideas with ordinary objects is that, in terms of Schopenhauer's ontology, there is nothing else they can be. They cannot belong to the world in itself because while, as we saw (Chapter VI § 4), Schopenhauer's holds the thing in itself to be "one", beyond plurality, he clearly believes in a plurality of Ideas. Hence the Ideas must belong to the phenomenal world since, in terms of the Kantian structure of Schopenhauer's metaphysics, there is nowhere else for them to go. Schopenhauer acknowledges this in the very title of Book III, in which the Ideas are said to present the "Second Aspect" of "The World as Representation". So they must be identified with ordinary natural objects for those are the only kinds of objects there are in the phenomenal world.

§ 7 Art and Knowledge

I have been arguing against the reification of Schopenhauer's Ideas. Being conscious of, knowing, an Idea consists, not in acquaintance with some
esoteric object, but in consciousness of an ordinary object with, however, one's attention focused upon the significant rather than the trivial in it.

But if we are, in this way, required to abandon Plato's metaphysics, does not the use of his name and terminology turn out to be no more than a specious attempt to add lustre to Schopenhauerian aesthetics via a claim to august ancestry that is, in fact, entirely spurious? The question can be given an added twist by recalling that in contrast to Schopenhauer's reverence, art, to Plato, is a dangerous sophism; something that seduces us away from the mental toughness to face up to "truth and reality" and into a self-indulgent realm of fantasy and illusion.

But it is precisely here that we find the principal point to the use of Platonic terminology. For Schopenhauer's endeavour is to refute Plato by describing art in just those terms which, for Plato, render an activity respectable and of the highest importance. Plato's hostility to art ("one of the greatest ... errors of that great man" (WR I p.212)) is, Schopenhauer points out, based on the view that the object of art is always the particular, never the universal (the sensible bed rather the Form of the bed). But in fact, he holds, the truth is precisely the reverse, for what is significant in art is never "the particular... as such but the universal in it" (WR I p.231).

Schopenhauer's insistence on the universal in art emerges in many ways. It leads him, for instance, to attack disdain of Dutch genre representations of scenes from everyday life based on the conviction that only events from world or biblical history are significant. This is, he suggests, quite mistaken; a painting that has its significance exhausted by the title "Moses found by an Egyptian Princess" is quite trivial. The real "inner" significance of a work with such an historical event as its ostensible subject matter is never the particular event from world history, but the universal embedded in it, the rescue of a foundling by a great lady through which is expressed a facet of the "many-sided Idea of humanity". But that kind of significance can as easily be possessed by humble as by grand painting since "it is all the same with regard to inner significance whether ministers dispute about countries and nations over a map, or boors in a beer-house choose to wrangle over cards and dice" (WR I pp.230-1 : cf. the discussion of character in Chapter V § 2).

It might be anticipated that portraiture would provide something of a stumbling block for the notion that the "Idea of the species" is the object of art. In fact, however, Schopenhauer's discussion of it reveals, with particular clarity, the point of speaking of art in Platonic terms.

What makes portraiture possible, for Schopenhauer, is that individual humans express, not merely the Idea of the species, but individual Ideas also: unlike, say, daffodils, human beings, in addition to sharing in the character of the species, have individual character (cf. Chapter V § 2). Individual character as expressed partly through permanent physionomy and bodily form, partly through fleeting but characteristic expression and gesture, is the legitimate topic of portraiture. Yet individual character must
never be treated as something "quite peculiar to the man as a single individual" but rather as a "side of the Idea of mankind specially appearing in this particular individual" (WR I p.221). If the artist fails to preserve this eye to the general, if the character of the individual "abolishes" that of the species, then portraiture degenerates into caricature (WR I p.225). (One might add that another way in which the character of the species can be abolished is through the portrait's becoming dominated by such particularities as impedimenta of office or symbols of achievement. Here, too, is a diminution of art.)

§ 8 The Beautiful

It will be clear from the discussion in the previous section that, according to Schopenhauer's conception, art, good art that is, is a cognitively important enterprise. It communicates knowledge to us, knowledge, moreover, of universal import: it tells us not about this or that human being but about humanity as such. In this conception he is surely correct and Plato wrong. For only this view can account for the deep significance art has, and is accepted as having in human life.

A further way in which Schopenhauer's view of art as being cognitively important emerges in his account of the beautiful. Beauty, like aesthetic pleasure (cf. fn. 29 above), exists for Schopenhauer, as both a subjective and objective phenomenon. Subjectively used, so seems to be his view (cf. WR I p.209), the term "beautiful" affirms the presence of —or better, perhaps, expresses (Schopenhauer's account at this point is somewhat underdeveloped) — that pleasurable state which consists in freedom from pressure of the will (cf. p.78 above). In the "objective sense" (WR I p.200) however, beauty is a property of the object; it consists simply in its expressing an Idea (WR I p.210). To be aware of an object as beautiful and to be aware of it as Idea are one and the same thing (WR I p.209).33

A consequence Schopenhauer draws from this is that since everything expresses an Idea, everything is beautiful (WR I p.210).34 Yet objects may be more or less beautiful since, depending on how "definite and distinct" their form is, "the Ideas individualised in them more or less readily speak to us" (WR I pp.200-1). In general, works of art will be more beautiful than natural objects, since the artist "can express clearly what nature only stammers", articulate her only "half-spoken words" (WR I p.222). A second variable upon which the degree of beauty possessed by an object depends is the importance of the Idea it expresses: the higher up the natural order an Idea, the more "significant and suggestive" it is. Thus man is the most beautiful of natural objects (in the objective sense) and the revelation of his nature the highest aim of art (WR I p.210). The reason for this is that the meta-
physical essence of the world, will, is very clearly expressed in the Idea of humanity and only very obscurely expressed in lowly Ideas (gravity or light, for example — the province of architecture.)

What we see in this account of the beautiful is a very tight connection between beauty and truth: things are beautiful to the extent that through the clarity and significance of their form they direct one's attention to the "innermost being" (WR I p.210) of the world. They are the opposite when, through confusion of form, through the proliferation of disorganized, irrelevant, distracting detail, they fail to communicate a coherent vision of the truth. In art, therefore, beauty can be said to reside in (to borrow Iris Murdoch's words35) the artful use of form to illuminate truth.

Shortly, I shall attend to the question of whether or not Schopenhauer over-emphasises the cognitive character of art, but before doing that I want to return to the problem raised at the end of § 2 of whether, as Schopenhauer seems to suppose, the only alternative to the ordinary, will-impregnated, "interested" mode of considering the world is the aesthetic mode. Are there not, we wondered, forms of consciousness which, while genuinely "objective" or "disinterested", are yet distinct from aesthetic consciousness. One thinks here, for example, of bird-watching, of reverie, of day-dreaming, of that sudden, sharp, fixation of attention as one waits, fascinated (but devoid of ulterior motive) to see whether the raindrop rolling down the window-pane will land on the spider at the bottom.

One would like to say that what makes these modes of consciousness non-aesthetic is that the object is not seen as beautiful; the beauty of the heron, or the raindrop, is not, here, to the point. But Schopenhauer cannot say this, for given the "simultaneous and inseparable" (cf. p.77 above) way in which the transformation of the object attends the transformation of the subject of aesthetic contemplation, he must say (since in these examples the subject, undoubtedly, is transformed) that the object, too, is transformed, perceived as Idea, and hence as beautiful.

The solution to this difficulty, however, requires only a minor modification of what Schopenhauer says. Notice, first, the unwarranted haste with which he arrives at the Idea as the object of aesthetic contemplation. Since the object is perceived out of the context of those spatio-temporal relations to other things (and ultimately to ourselves) which constitutes its individuality, it follows, he says, "that what is thus known is no longer the individual thing as such, but the Idea" (WR I p.179). But, in fact, it does not follow: all that follows is that we fail to perceive the object as individual. If now we recall the essential role played by "significant form" in Schopenhauer's account of beauty, we can see a good reason, from within his own scheme of things, for holding that not all cases where one fails to be aware of the individuality of an object are cases where one is aware of it as Idea. For the latter awareness only occurs when one is aware of significant form. Since significant form is not what one focuses on in raindrop- or bird-watching (in
some "disinterested" states of consciousness one is, surely, engrossed in, precisely, the most trivial aspects of things) one can see good, Schopenhauerian, reasons for holding that we do not always confront beauty in non-practical consciousness, do not always perceive things aesthetically.

§ 9 Art and Philosophy

We have managed to distinguish aesthetic consciousness from daydreaming, bird-watching and the like. There remains the problem of distinguishing it from philosophy. This, in fact, is a problem which has been with us for some time. For inevitably, if one seeks to rebut Plato's denigration of art by describing it in the terms which he reserves for philosophy, one must confront the charge of having reduced art to philosophy.

Schopenhauer begins his discussion of the problem by making it worse: by stressing, that is, the common ground between art and philosophy. Both, he says, are non-practical, "objective" modes of contemplation, interested only in "the true nature of things of life, and of existence". And both "work, at bottom, towards the solution of the problem of existence" (WR II p.406). (I shall indicate in § 10 in what way art might be conceived to help solve the "problem of existence".)

Yet the two disciplines are, in fact, different, he says, for while philosophy is essentially conceptual, art must always be perceptual (ibid.); the concept, which belongs at the heart of philosophy, is, in art, "eternally barren and unproductive" (WR I p.235). Where, that is to say, the origin of an art-work is to be found in conceptual thought the result is always stiff, imitative, lifeless and second-rate.

Schopenhauer's contrast between the conceptual and the perceptual finds its elucidation in a number of further contrasts he draws between art and philosophy. First of all, although both are concerned to communicate universal, necessary truth, their methods of communication are different. Philosophy offers propositions of universal form. Art, on the other hand, presents only "a fragment, an example; it holds up an "image of perception and says: "Look here; this is life!" " (WR II p.406). Whereas philosophy presents it's universal truth abstracted and isolated, the universal in art is presented always only in and through the concrete particular (cf. the remarks concerning normal intuitions in § 6 above): the wisdom of art is always implicit, that of philosophy always explicit (WR II p.407). And this means that the audience of art is active in a way in which a philosophical audience is not, for with art the spectator must, within the limits of his own resources, "produce afresh" the vision implicit in the art-work. To allow this free activity of the imagination, the artist is required to leave the work, to a certain degree, indeterminate, which is the reason the
preparatory sketches of the masters are often better than the finished work, and why wax-works, which "leave nothing over for the imagination" (WR II p.408), are not art at all. In this connection, Schopenhauer quotes Voltaire's remark that "the secret of being dull and tedious consists in our saying everything" (ibid.). Art, then, differs from philosophy in its mode of communication. Whereas philosophy, as we might say, tells us what it knows, art "facilitates" (ibid.) the rediscovery of knowledge.

A further contrast between the conceptuality of philosophy and the perceptuality of art lies in the existence of the possibility of paraphrase in the former but not in the latter. Since the objects of art are perceptual and possess therefore an indefinitely large richness of detail and aspect, and since, moreover, the "objective" vision of the artist avoids the etiolation that occurs in ordinary perception (cf. p.75 above), it follows that a great work of art is "inexhaustible" (ibid.), that it, too, possesses an unlimited richness of content. It is this, he says, which accounts for the absurdity of trying to reduce a poem of Shakespeare or Goethe to an "abstract truth" (WR II p.409), and which lies behind the fact that "we are entirely satisfied by the impression of a work of art only when it leaves behind something ... we cannot bring down to the distinctness of a concept" (ibid.).

Schopenhauer does not himself make this point, but his identification of an indefinitely rich object as the content of art allows him to account for that combination of objectivity and undecidability (Kant's "Antinomy of Taste" (CJ § 56)) which characterises art-criticism. We care, that is, about someone's not seeing an art-work the way we do (as we do not care about someone's failing to feel about oysters and brown bread-and-butter the way we do) and to this extent feel our judgements to be objective. Schopenhauer accommodates this phenomenon in the idea that there is a determinate object which is the content of art. Yet, since that object has an inexhaustible richness of aspect, he can also accommodate the fact that one can never claim to have produced the uniquely correct interpretation of, say, Hamlet.

Philosophy, then, failing to be a perceptual activity, is not art. And yet, ultimately, it is a perceptual activity. All genius is: whereas talent is a merely conceptual capacity — the talented are those who think "more quickly and accurately" than others — genius is perceptual: the genius "perceives a world different from [others] ... though only by looking more deeply into a world that lies before them also" (WR II p.376).

But has not genius been identified as the exclusive possession of the artist? Schopenhauer often speaks this way but in the end he (of course) cannot maintain the position: the "perceptual knowledge" of genius is, he says, that "from which all genuine works of the arts, of poetry, and even of philosophy spring" (ibid.).

At the end of the story therefore, there is no uniquely aesthetic view of the world. All there is is the standpoint of genius, a standpoint common to both the artist and the philosopher. Philosophy like art rests, ultimately,
on perception, on a vision of the truth, on a "concealed illuminism" (cf. Chapter III, fn. 15). The difference between them therefore, can only consist in the way that vision is exploited. The artist offers occasions for the re-creation of his vision, while the philosopher sets out on the hopeless task of "saying everything" that is contained in his. (Or else he concedes that, at the deepest level, he too is an artist.)

§ 10 Art and the Solution to the "Problem of Existence"

Art, we saw in § 5, accommodates what is unpleasant in life by rendering it sublime. Great art, that is, assimilates the fearful, the threatening, even the terrible, by representing it in such a way that we, the audience, feel ourselves disassociated from our individual, threatened selves, and elevated to the eternal standpoint.

Let us observe that, for Schopenhauer in particular, the problem of how art can accommodate the unpleasant is an especially pressing one. For he holds, firstly, that pessimism is true. The world considered as a whole is a fearful, terrible place; the pleasant, that which is not to be feared, is the exception, the variation in a major key, while the unpleasant, the hostile, is the rule, the theme in a minor key. Secondly, he holds that art is knowledge of the "innermost" character of the world, knowledge which, in terms of depth and comprehensiveness is in no way inferior to philosophy: it may be observed that music, in particular, Schopenhauer describes (parodying Leibniz's description of it as unconscious arithmetic) as "an unconscious exercise in metaphysics in which the mind does not know it is philosophizing" (WR I p.264). So art, no less than (Schopenhauerian) philosophy, must be fully cognizant of the terrible character of the world. Though it may be allowed excursions into the pleasant, the cheerful, or the funny, the overall character of the vision of a great artist must be tragic.

The artist, then, is aware that "life is serious". Yet "art is gay".36 How can this be possible? Certainly disassociation for the threatened individual may render one unafraid of the world. But gaiety hardly seems an obvious response to an awareness of its terrible character. Yet, as we saw (§ 5 above) the feeling of the sublime is a species of aesthetic pleasure, a feeling of exhilaration, "exaltation". How is it possible that there should be this positive delight rather than the mere relief of having escaped a danger?

The pleasure, as we saw, comes from being consciously aware of occupying the eternal standpoint. But why should that be a source of positive delight? In the final three chapters of this work we will see that occupation of the eternal standpoint is, for Schopenhauer, the 'right' practical stance towards the world, the key to solving the problem, the "riddle" of life. For it is, we will see, that stance which enables us to overcome such 'wrong'
practical attitudes as fear of death, egoism, suicide and pessimism. Adopting it is, in short, the path to "salvation". The reason, then, that art is of crucial importance for Schopenhauer (and that the concept of the sublime lies at the heart of his account of art) is that it represents an introduction, an intimation of the solution to the problem of life: that is how art, like philosophy, "works at bottom towards the solution to the problem, of existence". (cf. p.89 above). It is this thought which Wittgenstein encapsulates in the remark of the Tractatus that "ethics and aesthetics are one and the same" (Tr. 6.421). (It should be born in mind here that Wittgenstein uses "ethics" not as a synonym for "morals" but as meaning something like "the practically correct way of living".37) For in the Notebooks the thought is expanded in an unmistakably Schopenhauerian way: "The work of art is the object seen sub specie aeternitatis: and the good life is the world seen sub specie aeternitatis. This is the connection between art and ethics" (NB. p.83). In other words, what occurs in aesthetic consciousness is the occupation, for a brief moment, of that stance towards the world the permanent maintenance of which represents the solution to the problem of life, the path to "salvation" (cf. WRI p.390, WRII p.369). And it is this which accounts for that special "exaltation" which is the feeling of the sublime: in being self-consciously aware of occupying the eternal standpoint one experiences a brief epiphany, a joyous moment in which the solution to the riddle of life is suddenly clear. The experience of the sublime is, we may say, an intimation of immortality, an experience which, as Kant puts it, makes us "alive to the feeling of the supersensible side of our being" (CJ § 27.2).
PART IV

THE WORLD SEEN

SUB SPECIE AETERNITATIS
Chapter VIII  The Metaphysics of Morals

§ 1  Can Philosophy be Practical?

It is, says Schopenhauer at the beginning of the fourth and final book of the main work, human nature to "refer everything else to action" (WR I p.271): our nature (as we saw in discussing the way in which consciousness is tailored to meet the demands of action at the beginning of the previous chapter) is to give doing priority over knowing. For this reason, he says, the Final Book will be regarded as the most "serious" (ibid.) one, since it is concerned with questions of action, with "practical" issues.

There are, one would think, few philosophers who are more practical than Schopenhauer. The whole of his philosophy, but Book IV in particular, is pregnant with Aktualität ('relevance'). Typically, this quality is the one his famous readers stress. Nietzsche, for example, wrote a whole book entitled *Schopenhauer as Educator* in which he discusses Schopenhauerian "antidotes and consolations" for one's "misery, needs and limitations". 38 Max Horkheimer wrote a famous paper, "Die Aktualität Schopenhauers" devoted to explaining just why "Schopenhauer is the teacher for modern times", why "there are few ideas that the world today needs more than Schopenhauer's". 39 And Thomas Mann, too, develops the theme of Schopenhauer's "teaching", speaking of its capacity "still [to] exert a ripe and humanising influence upon our age". 40 Schopenhauer himself encourages this reading of his philosophy as seeking, above all, to move us to feel and act in certain ways, by speaking of philosophy as being concerned to satisfy (as the title of Chapter XVII of Volume II puts it) "Man's need for Metaphysics": a solution to the "ever-disquietening riddle" posed by suffering, the inevitability of death and the questionableness of immortality, is something which, he observes, we demand of philosophy (WR II ch. XVII *passim*).

It comes, therefore, as a considerable shock when, at the beginning of Book IV, Schopenhauer says that philosophy can never be anything but "theoretical": "to become practical to guide conduct, to transform character are old claims which, with mature insight, it ought finally to abandon" (WR I p.271).

Startling though this claim at first sight is, it turns out to be somewhat less so on closer examination. For what Schopenhauer is concerned to do is simply to reiterate his views on the nature and role of character in human life. Human action, we saw in Chapter V (§ 2, § 3), is a function of two things: character (one's fundamental act of will) and "motives". Given one's character one cannot but respond to motives in the way one does. But the fundamental nature of one's willing is innate and unalterable: "velle non
"discitur ", (willing cannot be taught) (WR I p.369). Hence nothing, and not, in particular, the "dead concepts of philosophy" (WR I p.271), can alter a man's character.

At this juncture one is inclined to protest that it is possible to "guide conduct" without being able to "transform character". For since conduct is a function of both will and belief, philosophy can modify action by changing, not will, but belief. It turns out, however, that Schopenhauer has no serious intention of denying the action-guiding potential of philosophy in this sense: as we will see, he repeatedly allows, indeed emphasises, the radical life-transformations which can be brought about by the acquisition of (metaphysical) knowledge. What he really intends to deny is the possibility of "teaching" virtue (WR I p.368). Though philosophy may modify action it cannot change character. But "moral worth" resides in character rather than in the particular ways in which, under the influence of knowledge, it manifests itself. Hence philosophy cannot make a morally relevant impact on us.

Now I think that this claim is mistaken, and is, moreover, a misrepresentation of Schopenhauer's own philosophy. (I think, in other words, that Nietzsche, Horkheimer and Mann are quite correct in seeing a moral relevance to Schopenhauer's philosophy.) Philosophy can make a profound difference to the metaphysical context in which one takes oneself to act (Schopenhauer's philosophy, says Horkheimer, "removes from the world the treacherous gold foil which the old metaphysics had given it ... thus exposing the motive for solidarity shared by men and all beings: their abandonment. No need is ever compensated in any Beyond".41) and such a difference can be of moral significance. It is a recognition of the power of certain philosophers — of Nietzsche, Heidegger, Schopenhauer and, of course, Socrates — to affect people's moral natures, that they are often charged by their opponents with being dangerous, corrupting influences.

Schopenhauer would reply by saying that while metaphysical knowledge may produce right (or wrong) conduct it can never produce a moral change in character. A man who becomes fully convinced that every good deed will be repaid a hundredfold in a future life may lead an exemplary existence, but his moral worth is improved not at all by his acquisition of theistic belief (WR I p.295).

This, of course, is true. There is nothing morally pleasing about the "born-again" Christian (or the man moved to theism by Pascal's wager) who regards a life of rectitude as "a safe bill of exchange at a very long date" (ibid.). But not all knowledge is so easily divorced from character. Schopenhauer himself speaks, for example (a remark we will return to), of the virtuous altruist as living in a world of "friendly phenomena" while the selfish egoist lives in a world of "strange and hostile phenomena" (WR I p.374). Here, it seems to me, one's will and one's perception of the world are logically inseparable: it would not be possible to imagine the egoist living in
a friendly world or the altruist in a hostile one.

What leads Schopenhauer into the error of denying that philosophy can have a morally relevant impact on character is that in spite of doing so much, at the level of concrete example, to undermine the Humean dichotomy between will and intellect (the suggestion which I have been making here that changes in belief or perception can carry with them changes in will is, after all, only the converse of the points we saw Schopenhauer making at the beginning of Chapter VIII concerning the modification of perception by will) he also continues, some of the time (generally when operating at a theoretical level), to employ it.

This fact lands him in one explicit contradiction. One's moral status is, we have seen him to hold, a state of will, something that is entirely independent of one's cognitive condition. It is for this reason that Plato was mistaken in counting wisdom as one of the virtues since wisdom is a property of the intellect (PP II p.203).^42^ But he also holds, as we will see, that "virtue does indeed result from knowledge" (WR I p.368), knowledge of the truth of his own metaphysics: "to be just, noble, and benevolent is nothing but to translate my metaphysics into action" (WR II p.600). So, in fact, he himself denies the possibility of separating a person's moral will from their metaphysical knowledge. It is true that for certain (as we are about to see, bad) reasons he holds that the knowledge in question cannot be "communicable through words" (WR I p.368), and hence cannot be imparted by philosophy. But even granting this, wisdom turns out to be, not just a virtue, but virtue itself. All that follows is that it is an incommunicable kind of wisdom.

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I have suggested so far that Schopenhauer's argument that philosophy cannot affect moral character is based on an untenable dichotomy between will and intellect. There is, however, a second, quite different, line of thought which he employs to arrive at the same conclusion. It is contained in the following piece of reasoning:

Morality without argumentation and reasoning, that is, mere moralizing, cannot have any effect, because it does not motivate. But a morality that does motivate can do so only by acting on self-love. Now what springs from this has no moral worth. From this it follows that no genuine virtue can be brought about through morality and abstract knowledge in general, but that such virtue must spring from the intuitive knowledge that recognises in another's individuality the same, inner nature as in one's own (WR I pp.367-8).
In essence, what this argument says is the following. (1) A reason for acting is (by definition) a representation of the action as being in self-interest. Hence (2), if someone acts on a reason you have given him, he acts out of self-interest. But (3), action performed out of self-interest is never virtuous (lacks "moral worth"). So (4), If someone acts on account of a reason you (the philosopher) have given him he fails to act virtuously: philosophy cannot be practical.

This argument (I shall come to the reference in the quotation to "intuitive knowledge" shortly) complements Schopenhauer's first line of reasoning in that it purports to show that even if, contrary to that line of reasoning, philosophy could transform character in some respects, these respects could not be morally relevant ones: the transformation, that is, could never constitute a moral improvement of character.

But (though elegant) the argument is in fact questionable in a number of ways. Some philosophers, the ancients in particular, would reject (3): it is perfectly possible to practice virtue, they would hold, as a means to, or part of, the happy life. Other philosophers would be more likely to object to premiss (1), pointing out that what it amounts to is an assertion of the irrationality of altruism. For an altruist is someone who regards, sometimes, the fact that an action is in someone else's interest as a good reason to perform it. But (1) (simply by fiat) says he is mistaken and actually acts without any genuine reason at all.

Undeterred by these possible criticisms, however, Schopenhauer concludes that though "virtue does indeed result from knowledge [it is] ... not abstract knowledge communicable through words" (WR I p.368), but rather, as was said in the previous quotation, "intuitive knowledge". The concept, he adds, is as "unfruitful for virtue ... as it is for art" (ibid.).

How is the appeal to "intuitive knowledge" supposed to show that, in spite of the argument, virtue remains a possibility? The idea seems to be that, so far as their conscious minds are concerned, the virtuous fail to be aware of any reasons for their actions: so far as consciousness is concerned their actions are to be classified together with items of involuntary behaviour as not done for any reason, and so not for any self-interested reason. Of course, says Schopenhauer, the virtuous man sometimes thinks he acts for a known reason — to earn a place in heaven, for example — but really, such reasons provide nothing but a "delusive account by which he tries to satisfy his own faculty of reason about a good deed that flows from quite a different source and which he does not understand how to explain ... properly since he is not a philosopher" (WR I p.369). Schopenhauer says that saints are as rarely philosophers as philosophers are saints. According to the present line of thought, however, this is no mere sad generalisation concerning the failings of philosophers and the silliness of saints, but an expression, rather, of the necessary order of things. For, so it seems, only the "holy fool" can escape the virtue-destroying awareness of a good reason for moral action.
But this line of thought is a poor one that, in fact, offers no solution to the problem at all. For if an action really does fail to be done for a reason, then it fails to be action at all and so cannot be virtuous action. (No one gets moral credit for their involuntary twitches and blinkings.) But if, on the other hand, it is done for a reason, and if (if! it is true that all reasons are self-interested, then it is no exception to that rule regardless of whether the reason is conscious or unconscious. If I act on a selfish motive but fail to be conscious of it, what follows is not that I avoid selfishness, but simply that I avoid knowing about it.

A further point to be made here is that Schopenhauer does not really believe at all that philosophical knowledge destroys the possibility of virtue. For, as we will see, his considered response to the argument is to reject premiss (3). He accepts premiss (1), that is, but believes that virtue, in other words, altruism, remains possible since the altruist acts in the interest of a higher, transcendental self. The difference, that is, between altruism and egoism is a difference not between acting out of self- and other-interest, but between, rather, acting out of the interests of one's higher and lower self (cf. § 4 below). But if what virtue is is acting in the interests of one's transcendental self then it surely cannot make any difference whether one has articulate or merely intuitive knowledge of that self. Schopenhauer cannot seriously believe that a reading of The World as Will and Representation turns the hitherto virtuous into mere (higher) self-seekers.

The second of Schopenhauer's two arguments for the non-practical nature of philosophy is, then, like the first, a failure. One should, therefore, disregard the claim, and allow to philosophy, in particular to Schopenhauer's own philosophy, the capacity to transform life and character in ways which may be of moral relevance.

§ 2 Death and Immortality

The first topic to be discussed in Book IV is death. In some ways Schopenhauer regards this, or more exactly our fear and abhorrence of it, as the central problem of philosophy: to provide an "antidote to the certainty of death" is, he says, the primary end of all philosophical and religious systems" (W II p.463).

Schopenhauer offers two distinct kinds of philosophical consolation for death. The first consists in a number of considerations which are offered as having weight for anyone who believes the material world to be the only world there is, and who therefore considers bodily death to be the entire annihilation of the self. Even from this "entirely empirical viewpoint" (WR II p.464) which believes in no kind of immortality, death is not, suggests Schopenhauer, to be regarded as an evil. The second kind of
consolation adopts the standpoint of transcendental idealism. From this point of view, it is argued, death is not to be regarded as an evil since the real self is not affected by it.

The first set of considerations represents a digression from the main flow of Schopenhauer's thought. For it is the discussion that takes place from the point of view of transcendental idealism which provides the rationale for the appearance of the topic of death at the beginning of Book IV. In Book III, that is, in the discussion of art, we were introduced to the idea of the eternal standpoint; to the notion that by identifying oneself with a world-transcending entity a solution to the problem of life could be discovered. The discussion of death takes up this theme by showing how acknowledging and adopting the eternal standpoint provides us with a form of immortality that represents an antidote to our fear of death. The theme is then passed on to the discussion of morality that follows, where the idea of the transcendental self is developed in such a way as to provide a solution to various problems connected with morality.

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Before turning, however, to look at Schopenhauer's central doctrine concerning death and immortality, I shall examine, briefly, that part of the discussion which takes place from the empirical viewpoint. The general point Schopenhauer wishes to make here is that our abhorrence of death — the fact that however bad the circumstances of life, we still regard death as the supreme evil — is simply the "reverse side of the will-to-live", a "blind", "animal" instinct which, as rational beings we can (WR II p.463) and ought to overcome, since it is "irrational" (WR II p.465). In short, such seems to be Schopenhauer's view, our attitude to death is a part of our animal inheritance which, as rational beings, we ought to be ashamed of.

Why is this? Why is abhorrence of death, even for the materialist, irrational? Schopenhauer's first argument is that every evil, like every good, presupposes existence, indeed consciousness. But that, of course, ceases with life. So abhorrence of death is unreasonable since "to have lost what cannot be missed is obviously no evil" (WR II p.467). "Death", as Wittgenstein puts the Schopenhauerian thought, "is not an event in life" (Tr. 6.4311).

The point being made here is that death is not a state of a person, not, in particular, a state of consciousness. Some people, children in particular, I think, do sometimes terrify themselves by imagining themselves 'as dead'. They imagine the rest of life as going on without them, of their being aware of, but not being objects of awareness to, those they love. To this fear it is appropriate to respond that such imagining is imagining a special kind of "event in life" and so is not really an imagining of death at all. Yet there are
ways of regarding death as an evil which do not consist in thinking of it as a state experienced after one dies. We think of the tragic character of the death of youthful genius, of Shelley or Schubert, for example, not in terms of the person's entering a special state, but rather in terms of lost opportunities. For this reason one can, in fact, rationally regret (although not fear) one's own death by regarding it as the deprivation of future opportunities (for composition, or pleasure, or whatever is valuable to one).

These observations apply to Schopenhauer's second argument (actually Lucretius') that it is irrational to regard our future non-existence as an evil given that we regard the infinity of time that elapsed before our birth with complete indifference. If any non-existence is an evil all of it must be (WR II p.466). But, in fact, I think, one can reasonable take the view that while one's forthcoming non-existence is a deprivation of opportunities, one's prenatal non-existence was not the deprivation of anything, since one must first exist in order to become an object of deprivation.

The third argument Schopenhauer produces is, as one would expect, an argument from pessimism. Given the over-whelmingly miserable character of life, were our attitude to death the product of rational reflection upon it, we would welcome death as a blessing rather than abhorring it as an evil (WR II p.465). One question which might be raised here, of course, is the truth of pessimism. But leaving that aside (until Chapter X) it can still be observed that the argument requires as a premiss the assumption that happiness is our highest goal in life. For if it is not, if we value ends different and superior to happiness, then, even granted the misery of existence, there would be no irrationality in continuing to live. (This, I take it — the acceptance of pessimism but the insistence that heroism or simply living itself has a higher value than happiness — is the response to the Schopenhauerian argument that runs through much existentialist philosophy.)

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I have been discussing Schopenhauer's arguments that death is no evil even given the assumption that it is the annihilation of the self. But that assumption he in fact rejects. There is (a kind of) immortality.

One kind of consideration he produces here — "nature's great doctrine of immortality" (WR II p.477) — is that though individuals in nature die, the species always survives, so that from a cosmic point of view the death of an individual is a trivial, almost unnoticeable affair: "only small, trivial minds fear death as annihilation" (WR II p.475). One might be inclined to protest that this consideration is irrelevant since the question (trivial or not) that interests me is my survival, not that of the species. But this, I think, misunderstands the force of Schopenhauer's observation. For it is intended, in a preliminary manner, to raise in one's mind the possibility of identifying
oneself as something other than a material, destructible individual body.

But why, really, should I thus identify myself? Schopenhauer's arguments are all connected with transcendental idealism. The question of immortality depends, he says, on an "equivocation [which] really lies in the word "I". If I use it to refer to my empirical, bodily self I can say: "death is my entire end". But if I refer to a transcendental self I can say equally well: "I shall always be" (WR II p.491). Schopenhauer's arguments are all directed towards persuading one to use the "I" with transcendental rather than empirical reference.

The first argument is concerned (as is Kant in the Paralogisms of the first Critique) to emphasise the unknowability of the real self. The self, we hold, is the subject of consciousness. When we ask what that subject is, we are tempted to identify it with a material individual, an object given in consciousness. But this identification is really quite unwarranted, for "the I or ego is the dark point in consciousness, just as on the retina the precise point of entry of the optic nerve is blind" (WR II p.491). The self, that is, is experientially mysterious so that, experientially speaking, we do not know what it is that is the subject of consciousness.

This argument suggests that, correctly conceived, the self might not be identifiable with anything in consciousness. But transcendental idealism adds that it cannot be. For as dreams demand a dreamer outside the dream — "the fear that with death everything might be over and finished may be compared to the case of a person who in a dream should think that there were mere dreams without a dreamer" (WR II p.492) — so the ideal character of the objects of consciousness demands a non-ideal status for the subject of consciousness.

In speaking of the immortality that is implicit in the doctrine of transcendental idealism Schopenhauer emphasises, particularly, the ideality of time — "the most complete answer to the question of the individual's continued existence after death" (WR II p.493). Fear of death is, he says, a dread of losing the present. But this is as mistaken as it would be to fear that we can slip down from the top of the globe, or were the sun to lament in the evening: "Woe is me! I am going down into eternal night" (WR I p.280). Really we are not on the revolving sphere of time at all so that fear of death — the fear that, one day, all of one's life will be in the past — is groundless. Rather, we are the fixed point past which the sphere rotates. The transcendental self does not move through time, rather, time moves before it. It inhabits eternity, something which is to be conceived not as as "succession without beginning or end" but rather as a "nunc stans", a "permanent now" (WR I p.280). Transcendental idealism shows, in short, that we really are that "timeless subject of knowledge" (WR I p.179) which, in aesthetic experience, we feel ourselves to be.

Here, then, is Schopenhauer's real philosophical solution to the problem of death. The right way of coming to terms with death is to adopt the
eternal standpoint, to realise that because everything temporal is merely ideal, death is as irrelevant to our real being as is the threatening character of the sublime object.

§ 3 Egoism

The discussion of death introduces into Book IV Schopenhauer's transcendentalism; the idea that the real self lies outside nature, outside the world of space and time. And we begin to see why though, as I argued, transcendentalism is really irrelevant to the construction of the world "as will" in Book II, it nonetheless plays an important role in Schopenhauer's philosophy. For it is transcendentalism which provides the "complete" answer to the question of immortality, the solution to our fear that death represents our annihilation.

There is, however, more to Schopenhauer's transcendentalism than we have yet seen. For not only does he hold one's real self to be a transcendent entity. He holds, in addition, that it is identical with all other real selves: "Tat tvam asi" ("this art thou"), the aphorism from the Upanishads, is a refrain Schopenhauer never tires of repeating. To discover the importance of this doctrine ("transcendental solipsism", I shall call it) we must turn to Schopenhauer's moral philosophy.

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Schopenhauer's moral philosophy bears little resemblance to what goes under that title these days. For he has no philosophical interest in "normative ethics" (like Kant, he regards the problem of knowing what is right and what is wrong as simple) and only a very passing interest in "meta-ethics", in the analysis of moral language. What interests him is really only one question: what kind of metaphysical reality is presupposed if the claims of morality are to be justified? His approach to this question is through the phenomenon of virtue ("moral worth"). This, as we will see, he views as a strange and startling phenomenon, one which demands a metaphysical explanation. The reason for this is that (like art) it represents a transcendence of the stance human beings naturally adopt towards the world, a stance which is natural because it flows from certain fundamental features of the human condition.

The stance in question, a phenomenon we have already touched upon (cf. Chapter VI § 1), is (practical) egoism; that condition in which a man "wants everything for himself, wants to possess, or at least control everything" and "is ready to annihilate the world in order to maintain his own self" (WR I
The reason egoism is "the natural standpoint", the norm of human action and feeling, is that it is rooted in the human epistemological predicament. There are two ways in which Schopenhauer defends this insight. (That he does not properly observe their distinctness accounts for a certain unclarity in his discussion of egoism.)

The first (this is what we touched on in Chapter VI) has to do with will. Everyone finds the will "whole and undivided" (ibid.) in himself: my will is all the will I know about. Hence, whatever intellectual grounds I might have for believing in other wills, according to the way the world is presented to me, my body is unique: it alone is 'inhabited' by a will. It follows that in deciding how to act it is natural to take only my interest into account because only I have interests. From a "practical point of view" it is natural to assume that only I am "real" (BM p.132), a "real person" (WR I p.104), that only I have desires, aims, ambitions that can be promoted or frustrated, only I am capable of enjoyment or suffering. (Even the most perfect utilitarian concern to promote the greatest possible happiness of the greatest number would result in pure self-interestedness, for only I am capable of happiness.)

The second reason Schopenhauer gives for the naturalness of egoism pertains not to will but to cognition. With regard to myself, I know not only that I have conative and affective states, but also that I have cognitive states: I am "bearer of the knowing subject". But this knowing subject is bearer of the world. This is equivalent to saying that the whole of nature outside the knowing subject, and so all remaining individuals, exist only in his representation; that he is conscious of them always only as his representation, and so merely indirectly, as something dependent on his own inner being and existence. With his consciousness the world also necessarily ceases to exist for him (WR I p.332, cf. BM pp.132-3).

On this line of thought, "only I am real" assumes a much more radical meaning than it did on the first. For now the stance we are said to adopt towards others is not that they are mere will-less objects, but rather that they are not objects at all, "mere phantoms" (WR I p.104), creatures that no more exist outside my consciousness than Wendy or Peter Pan exist outside the fictional world of J.M. Barrie.

In one way the difference between the two lines of explanation does not matter. For what the first suggests is the naturalness of according to other (so-called) people no more rights against interference or manipulation than one accords to, say, rocks while the second suggests the naturalness of allowing them no more rights than are possessed by figments of the imagination. In each case the number of rights we would be inclined to confer would be zero, which is the phenomenon Schopenhauer seeks to explain.

But the ways of reaching this account of our natural condition are, of
course, radically different. For while the first simply says we are naturally lonely (there are no other people around) the second makes us naturally alone (there is nothing else around).

To suppose that this second kind of solipsism is a natural part of the human condition is surely untenable. There are several points to be made here. The first is that Schopenhauer's actual argument seems to rest on the fallacious inference (cf. also BM p.132) that since we are conscious of objects only "indirectly", only "as representations", we take them to have no existence outside our representations. (One might as well argue that because I am only acquainted with the Queen as a figure on television I believe that I can extinguish her by switching the set off.) The second point consists simply in observing that the claim is, phenomenologically speaking, terribly implausible. For some of us, one of the early stirrings of philosophical excitement is being able to think oneself into a frame of mind where the whole perceptual world is thought of as having no existence outside one's consciousness. But managing this is accompanied by a sense of achievement and that is something Schopenhauer cannot accommodate. For if he were right, then the achievement would be to think, rather, of the perceptual world as having an esse that was not one's percipi. In fact, Schopenhauer recognises that naturally we are realists about perceptual objects, for he speaks of one's assimilation of Kant's idealism as an "intellectual rebirth" in which "the inborn realism which arises from the original disposition of the intellect is removed" (WR I p.xxiii).

It is true that Schopenhauer does not represent (radical) solipsism as the whole of consciousness holding it to be divided between a subjective view from which "I alone am all in all", and an objective view from which "the individual is nothing" a vanishing speck in the vastness of nature (WR II pp.599-600, BM pp.132-3). The fact is, however, that this subjective view cannot be the frame of mind that is expressed in practical egoism. For let us review again its active manipulative character: the egoist "wants to possess, or at least control, everything and would like to destroy whatever opposes him". The essence of egoism is action (that after all is just a consequence of the fundamental Schopenhauerian theme we noted at the very beginning of this chapter that the essence of human nature is action), a mode of behaviour in which others are disposed of as mere means in the pursuit of one's own ends. This demands we should have an "inborn realism" about objects, for one cannot set out to manipulate a world of "mere phantoms".

We should, then, regard the second attempt to root egoism in our epistemological condition as an aberration. The first, the epistemological naturalness of treating others as mere objects (but not "phantoms") is the line of thought to be attended to.

It is, I think, relatively easy to see how the two lines of thought become entangled. For, as Schopenhauer observes, from the point of view of his own metaphysical account of the world as will, the question of "whether objects..."
known to the individual only as representations are yet, like his own body, phenomena of a will is ... the proper meaning of the question of the reality of the external world. To deny this [is to regard] as phantoms all phenomena outside [one's] own will" (WR I p.104). Since, that is, something which we represent as a material body is, metaphysically speaking, a centre of force, i.e. will, it follows that, for Schopenhauer, nothing has metaphysical being unless it objectifies will. Hence, were one, as a believing Schopenhauerian, to deny that any bodies other than one's own are "phenomena of a will" one would indeed deny the reality of the external world. But, of course, the ordinary egoist-in-the-street is, typically, not a Schopenhauerian, so that his practical denial of will in others does not entail that he regards them as "phantoms".

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Like Kant, Schopenhauer holds that the demands of morality can be captured in a single fundamental principle. It is: "Injure no-one; on the contrary, help everyone as much as you can" (BM p.69). Everyone really knows this so that even if there might be difficulties in working out what to do in particular situations, the general line of conduct required by morality is clear and unproblematic. Schopenhauer regards egoism as the sole source of failures to act morally, the source of all wrong-doing: of, that is, all infliction of suffering on others, all "denial" of their wills. (WR I p.334). It might be objected to this claim that Schopenhauer regards malice (Schadenfreude) as an independent source of immorality. Hamlyn (op. cit. p.136-7) thinks that he does and thinks that since its existence cannot therefore be explained in the way egoism is explained, and since, moreover, no independent explanation is provided, malice represents a "lacuna" in Schopenhauer's moral psychology.

In On the Basis of Morality, it is true, Schopenhauer does appear to regard malice — that condition in which the suffering of others is pursued as an "end in itself" rather than being, as with egoism, a mere side-effect of self-interested action (BM pp.135-6) — as something other than a form of egoism. All possible motives can, he says, be classified under three basic headings: egoism (desire for one's own welfare), malice (desire for another's woe) and compassion (desire for another's welfare) (BM p.145). (Later on, in reflecting upon the phenomenon of self-mortifying asceticism, he adds a fourth category: desire for one's own woe (WR II p.607).) And in the main work, too, Schopenhauer speaks of the phenomenon in which the suffering of another is an end in itself rather than being merely incidental to the pursuit of self-interest. But then he adds a "more detailed explanation". Our sufferings are, he says, aggravated by the sight of the well-being of others. So we envy them. On the other hand the knowledge that others share our own
suffering makes it easier to bear. Hence a very wicked person sometimes seeks to mitigate his own suffering by producing the sight of it in others (WR I pp.363-4). On this understanding malice is, after all, not disinterested but rather a form of egoism.

This analysis of Schadenfreude seems to me a plausible one. But it creates a certain problem. For obviously, if one is to mitigate one's own suffering by producing it in others one must be aware of the suffering of others. Yet on Schopenhauer's analysis, the egoist is someone who is completely desensitized to the suffering of others.

What this shows is that sadism will not turn out to be a very successful strategy for the wicked egoist to adopt; only the person with sympathetic awareness of the feelings of others will in fact be able to derive genuine comfort for his own sorrows from knowledge of the communality of suffering. This, I think, is something Schopenhauer would accept. For he pictures malice as springing, especially, from the desensitized condition of those (great tyrants, for example) who, by having satisfied, nauseated, all their desires have lost the habit of feeling anything at all (ibid.). From this point of view malice — 'thrill'-killings, 'snuff'-movies — appears as a desperate attempt to smash through the barrier of desensitization, to do something, anything, that will cause sensation. But a habit is a habit and unlikely to be broken.

§ 4 Sympathy

Egoism, we have seen is the norm of human behaviour. Not all self-interested action is wrong — fear of punishment whether temporal or divine, for example, may lead to a consistent observation of the requirements of morality (WR I p.369) — but it is always devoid of "moral worth": for what springs from self-love is always prudence never virtue. What then is virtue? Since all action is directed towards someone's interest and since self-interest is excluded, it follows that virtuous action is simply action which has as its "ultimate motive" the promotion of the welfare of someone else (BM p.143). Virtue is identical with altruism.

But does genuine altruism ever occur? Is not all action motivated, more or less obscurely, by self-interest? Schopenhauer is quite clear that psychological egoism is false. Though it does indeed describe the norm of human behaviour, there are undoubted exceptions to it. There are, for example, cases where property is restored to its owner when there is no possibility of the finder being discovered in keeping it (BM p.126), and cases where a man sacrifices his life for his fellows where, it is clear, there is no possibility of selfish motivation (BM p.139).

Schopenhauer's discussion of psychological egoism is surprisingly brief,
the more so since he is perfectly aware that its protagonist can, for any example at all, fabricate a possible motive of self-interest: the truth of the matter cannot, he says, be settled

altogether empirically, because in experience, it is always the deed which is given, whereas the motives or incentives are not apparent; hence there is always left the possibility that an egoistic motive has influenced the doer of a just or a good deed (BM p.138).

With this in mind he terminates the discussion by saying that it is a waste of time arguing with the psychological egoist and that he is only interested in continuing the conversation with those who reject the doctrine (BM p.139).

This, on the face of it, is not good enough. But I think that Schopenhauer's response to psychological egoism is, actually, more subtle than it first appears. The reason he does not consider prolonged argument with the proponent of the theory productive is that, in a certain way, he believes him to be right. That is, Schopenhauer believes (as we saw in Chapter II § 2) that it belongs to the concept of practical rationality that the rational agent acts so as to maximise his own welfare. To act for a reason is to act out of self-interest. But every action is performed for a reason: if there is no reason, if there is nothing which makes it intelligible why it was done, then we have something less than intentional action. So every action is motivated by self-interest. Schopenhauer believes that this chain of reasoning is impeccable — or rather, as I remarked in § 1, that the only way of escaping the truth of psychological egoism (as the doctrine is normally understood) is to point to the "equivocation" (cf. p.101 above) in the concept of the self, to the possibility of acting for the sake of a transcendent and trans-individual self. What then, such is Schopenhauer's view, the psychological egoist really needs is not a set of examples of putative self-sacrifice, but a new metaphysics that, given the unintelligibility of action that is not in self-interest, will yet allow for the possibility of altruism. And that, as we will now see, Schopenhauer sets out to provide.

Let us suppose that there are, albeit rarely, cases of genuine altruism. How could this be made intelligible? How can the welfare of another become "the ultimate object of my will in the same way as I myself otherwise am" (BM p.143)? A beginning of explanation is to be found in the notion of sympathy (Mitlied). The welfare of another can move me to act only by being as important to me as my own usually is. But that requires that I "feel" the suffering of another "directly with him" just as I ordinarily feel my own, and that means that I must be "in some way identified with him" (ibid.)

But how is this identification to be explained?45 Schopenhauer's answer is given in terms of transcendental solipsism. With varying degrees of vividness, the virtuous penetrate the "veil of maya" to realise, in an
intuitive, inarticulate way, that the space-time world, and with it (since space and time are *principium individuationis* (cf. Chapter VI § 4) plurality and individuality, is illusory, that really there is no distinction between ego and non-ego since we are all the one, indivisible thing in itself. "*Tat tvam asi."

Transcendental solipsism is, then, the "metaphysical explanation" (BM p.199) of moral action. But it explains, too, other phenomena in the moral life.

It explains, firstly, how it is that justice is to be found in the world. Since the time of Socrates, says Schopenhauer, "the problem of philosophy" has been "to demonstrate a moral world-order as the basis of the physical" (WR II p.590). This problem he claims is solved for the first time in his doctrine of "eternal justice."

Is the world ultimately just? Does morality pay? If it does, one requirement is that it should be possible to provide a non-consequentialist account of ethical reward and punishment. Ordinary punishment, that which is inflicted by the state, for example — "temporal justice" Schopenhauer calls it (WR I p.350) — is consequentialist: punishment always succeeds crime in time and hence there is always the possibility that the clever or the powerful may escape it. But it must be quite different with ethical punishment. "Eternal justice must be independent of human institutions, not subject to chance or deception, wavering or erring, but infallible, firm and certain" (*ibid.*). It cannot therefore require time for its operation: "punishment must be so linked with the offence that the two are one" (*ibid.*). And they are so linked if transcendental solipsism is true, for then criminal and victim, the bearer of guilt and the bearer of suffering, are the same: "tormentor and tormented are one" (WR I p.354). Hence, given transcendental solipsism, the cosmos is an ultimately just place: "the world is the tribunal of the world. If we could lay all the misery of the world in the one pan of the scales and all the guilt in the other, the pointer would certainly show them to be in equilibrium" (WR I p.352).

Closely related to Schopenhauer's explanation of eternal justice is his account of bad conscience. The wicked suffer various punishments. One is that the life of wickedness, being a life that denies the will of others, is a life that affirms, intensely, the wicked person's own. But (as we will see in the next chapter) the more intensely one wills the more one suffers. Moreover the wicked are not immune to the obscure sense that somehow the life of willing is an error; in being aware of this, but in being aware also of how thoroughly they are bound to it, they experience the suffering of knowing their distance from the path to "salvation" (WR I p.366). This knowledge (the attempt to keep it at bay, to avoid being reminded of the illusoriness of the metaphysical assumptions implicit in egoism, is the reason the wicked are especially terrified (and hence dismissive) of para-normal phenomena (WR I p.353)) is, says Schopenhauer, the source of "that obscurely felt but inconsol-
able misery called the pangs of conscience" (WR I p.366).

What of the rewards of the good conscience? Here we come to a somewhat difficult passage in Schopenhauer's thought. For, in a paradoxical way, as we will see at the beginning of the next chapter, the virtuous suffer (or are, at least, acquainted with suffering) even more than the vicious. Yet there are rewards for the virtuous. Firstly, of course, the knowledge that in not increasing the suffering of others they are not increasing their own. Secondly, a sense of solidarity, community with the rest of the world; of inhabiting (in terms of Tonnies' distinction) a Gemeinschaft (community) rather than a Gesellschaft (society). The satisfaction of a good conscience consists, says Schopenhauer, in the fact that while egoism "contracts" the heart, while it concentrates our interest on the particular phenomenon of our own individuality, and knowledge always presents us with the innumerable perils that continually threaten this phenomenon, whereby anxiety and care become the keynote of our disposition,

the virtuous disposition

extends our interest in all that lives and in this way the heart is enlarged. Thus through reduced interest in our own self, the anxious care for that self is attacked and restricted at its root.

Whereas, that is to say, "the egoist feels himself surrounded by strange and hostile phenomena", the good person "lives in a world of friendly phenomena" (WR I pp.373-4).

§ 5 Transcendental Solipsism as a Practical Postulate

How are we to take this discussion of the relation between transcendental solipsism and morality? Schopenhauer, as we saw, describes the former as the "metaphysical explanation" of the latter; the explanation of virtue and of the ultimate justice of the world. This suggests that transcendental solipsism stands to virtue and justice in somewhat the way in which a scientific theory stands to the phenomena it seeks to explain. Virtue and justice, on this view, are (somewhat puzzling) facts about the world, and transcendental solipsism is to be accepted because it (and, presumably, it alone) is an adequate explanation of their existence.

But no sooner is the matter put this way than an objection presents itself. In the first place, the objection runs, we know of no such phenomenon as justice; for all we know the world may be fundamentally unjust. So we cannot simply
assume justice to be a datum. And in the second place, it is not true that transcendental solipsism is the only explanation of virtue since (possibly false) belief in the doctrine will do just as well: all that is in fact required to explain virtue in the Schopenhauerian style is the idea that, intuitively, the virtuous feel the doctrine to be true, a feeling that could be completely deluded.

Schopenhauer confronts this objection towards the end of *On the Basis of Morality*. The clash between egoism and altruism is he says a clash between rival metaphysics. "Empirically speaking", egoism is "justified". If, that is, the everyday account of the world as a plurality of discrete individuals represents the world as it is in itself, then "the difference between my own person and another's appear to be absolute" and nothing can ground the practice of virtue. But in fact, this atomistic metaphysics is incorrect. For we know that space and time are ideal and also that they are the conditions of plurality, the "principium individuationis": only by reference to the spatial and (or) temporal features of things is it possible to tell one from another. Hence it follows that "the thing in itself ... can be only one thing"; in other words, that transcendental solipsism is true (BM pp.205-7, cf. WR I pp.112-113, p.128).

It is time now to fulfill the promise made towards the end of Chapter VI to subject this argument to serious scrutiny. The first, preliminary, feature to observe is its brevity, even triteness. So momentous a conclusion one feels (even granted the truth of Kant's idealism) should not be so easily established. Moreover, Schopenhauer never expands on the argument to any significant degree; there is never any serious discussion of possible objections that might be raised against it. And of these there are several. The first is that, for Platonists at least, it is completely false that only spatio-temporal entities can be individuated and distinguished. For them, it is perfectly possible to individuate abstract entities — numbers, sets, universals and so on. Even if we set this objection aside there remains the fact that Schopenhauer's argument is invalid. For even if we suppose plurality to be confined to the phenomenal world what follows is, not that the in itself is one, but simply that it is non-plural. Schopenhauer shows some awareness of this difficulty in saying that the things in itself is not one "as an object [or "individual"] (WR I p.128) is one, for the unity of an object is known only in contrast to possible plurality" (WR I p.113). It is one, rather, as something "to which the condition of the possibility of plurality is foreign" (WR I p.128). But even apart from the difficulty that the idea that being non-plural is a way of being one appears to confuse contraries with contradictories, the argument remains invalid. For it is, remember, transcendental solipsism, the oneness of my transcendental self with all other selves that the argument is supposed to establish, and that, surely, attributes to the world in itself numerical unity, the oneness of an "object" or "individual".

This last objection reveals, I think, the most serious error in the
argument. For what Schopenhauer really holds in his considered moments, as we saw in Chapter III, is, with Kant, that the world in itself is unknowable: there may be things we can say about it, but whatever their status they cannot be understood as knowledge-claims: "I am myself a Kantian [since I agree with him that] we cannot know (wissen) anything beyond experience and its possibility" (PP I p.42). From the point of view of this fundamental position we can see just how illegitimate is the move from the non-plurality of the in itself to its oneness. For (accepting for the moment both the ideality of space and time and the thesis that they constitute the conditions of plurality) we can see the claim that the in itself is non-plural as, in Kantian terminology, a quite proper "negative" claim. (In the last chapter of the Analytic of the first Critique Kant distinguishes between a legitimate "negative" and an illegitimate "positive" use of "noumenon", his point being that knowledge-claims about the in itself are legitimate if their force is to claim that some attribute has a merely phenomenal status, but illegitimate if they attempt, positively, to characterise the in itself.) On the other hand, the attempt to characterise the in itself as "one" — particularly in a sense which is supposed to sustain the notion that it is unitary personality — is quite clearly a "positive" claim. And that, in terms of Schopenhauer's Kantianism, is a thoroughly illegitimate thing to try to do.

The above argument is, then to be rejected as an aberration. There is no possibility of a proof of transcendental solipsism. What then are we left with? From a theoretical point of view all we can say is that since the manifest world is ideal, since the world in itself is terra incognita, transcendental solipsism is a possible truth. But no theoretical reason can be given for holding it to be an actual truth. Why then should we accept this?

In my view, Schopenhauer's transcendentalism in general, and his answer to this question, in particular, are best understood in practical rather than theoretical terms. Among the problems which constitute that "riddle" of existence to which man (as we saw at the beginning of this chapter) "needs" a solution, is fear of death. Here, as we saw in § 2, transcendentalism presents itself as the only really adequate solution. Turning to the ethical life, here too we find a problem to which man needs a metaphysical solution. For, as morally aware beings, we cannot but experience the pressure of morality (even the very wicked suffer the miserable sense that somehow their life is a mistake) and hence we need to be shown how, in the face of the apparent, egoism-validating character of the world this can be anything other than a delusion or neurosis. We need to be shown, that is, how there can be a point or justification to the moral life and this Schopenhauer's transcendentalism achieves by acquiring a new, solipsistic dimension. Not only
am I a transcendent entity, I am also (with everyone else) the only such entity there is. Hence morality is a sublime form of selfishness, the latter being the paradigm of practical rationality.

My proposal, then, is that Schopenhauer's transcendentalism, the very idea of a world beyond space and time, should be seen to recommend itself, not as something knowable or capable of proof, but in terms, rather, of its power to provide a satisfying solution to certain existential questions.

To some degree, of course, this is a reconstruction of Schopenhauer's transcendentalism. But it is no arbitrary reconstruction. It is, I believe, clearly implicit in much of what he actually says (the attempted proof of transcendental solipsism being an ill-considered attempt to have the doctrine recommend itself from a theoretical as well as practical point of view.) It is implicit in a particularly clear way, I think, in the discussion of eternal justice. Here, what is striking is the absence of any attempt whatsoever to confront the sceptic about the ultimate justice of the world. It is just assumed that there must somehow be a just order to the world. The reason for this (reading Schopenhauer in the way I suggest) is that, being unavoidably sensitive to the force of moral demands, we have no choice but to assume that however much the apparent nature of the world might suggest otherwise, these demands are, somehow, justified. Philosophy therefore, philosophy performing its task of addressing the practical riddle of existence (the theoretical riddle having been confronted in Book II of the main work) is no more called upon to justify the claim that there is a just order to the world than natural science is called upon to justify the claim that water expands when frozen. Rather, as with natural science, the task for philosophy is purely one of explanation, of explaining a phenomenon which, from the practical point of view, really is a datum.

Another place in which the conception of philosophy as the explicator of our practical commitments seems to me implicit is in Schopenhauer's refusal to distinguish between the ground of morality (moral action) and the ground of morals (moral knowledge) (BM pp.6-7). In spite of being the only entry, On the Basis of Morality was not awarded the prize offered by the Royal Danish Society for Scientific Studies for which, in 1840, it was written. Leaving aside the question of Schopenhauer's abuse of Hegel (imprudent in an essay to be judged by a society packed with Hegelians), it seems, from the somewhat confused "Judgement" of the Society (appended by Schopenhauer to subsequent publications of the essay (BM pp. 215-6)), that what the judges expected was an account, in metaphysical terms, of why we are justified in carrying out the demands of morality. But what they got, so they protested, was, in the main, an essay in moral psychology, an account of the motivation of the virtuous. But Schopenhauer insists that in providing the second he provides at the same time the first, an insistence which seems incomprehensible unless he is read in the way I suggest. Read that way, however, it becomes quite sensible. We assume at the outset that moral action
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has, somehow, a metaphysical justification, that the problem is not to answer the question of whether, but rather of how this is so. And we assume, further, that virtuous action embodies an (at least) inarticulate awareness of this justification, that the virtuous are, inarticulately, wise rather than deluded. It will then follow that the study of moral psychology does indeed, at its fundamental level, become one and the same thing as a metaphysical justification of morality, that the grounds of morality are identical with the grounds of morals.

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Before leaving the topic of Schopenhauer's moral philosophy I should like to emphasise, as a final point, that read as I suggest, Schopenhauer's claims to Kantian orthodoxy are thoroughly vindicated. For, on the reading, transcendental solipsism becomes, in effect, a "postulate of practical reason", a metaphysical commitment which is not an item of theoretical knowledge but rather something presupposed in our practical lives. It is true that Kant's postulates (God, immortality, and freedom) are presented as things which are necessary to the justification of morality, whereas Schopenhauer presents transcendental solipsism more as a sufficient ground, something which "explains" its justification. But it is clear, in fact, that Schopenhauer thinks of the metaphysics of transcendental solipsism as not merely a justifying ground for morality but the only possible one. For he holds that not only can we proceed according to the "synthetical method" of assuming transcendental solipsm and then exhibiting moral action as its justified consequence, but we can also regress according to the "analytical method" from moral action — taken as justified — to transcendental solipsism as its necessarily presupposed metaphysical ground (BM pp.202-3). Transcendental solipsism is, then, not merely a sufficient but also a necessary ground for morality: the ancient problem of exhibiting a moral world-order as the basis of the physical is, Schopenhauer holds, solved "for the first time" (WR II p.591) by his own practical metaphysics.
§ 1 The Transition from Affirmation to Denial

In the latter part of the previous chapter we looked at a Schopenhauerian justification of morality: according to the doctrine of transcendental solipsism we all, really, share in each other's sufferings so that to suppose one could live a happy life at the expense of the misery of others is but "a beggar's dream in which he is king but from which he must awake" (WR I p.353).

This, then, is a justification of the moral life. But really, according to Schopenhauer, there is another quite different kind of reason for living morally which is actually of far greater significance. This consists in the fact that to live the moral life is to take a "step" along the path towards man's "ultimate end", "salvation" (WR II p.609). Salvation, Schopenhauer holds, can only be achieved via a transition from "affirmation" to "denial of the will". The real significance of the moral life is that it is, or can be, a way of achieving this transition.

Affirmation of the will is simply willing, that is (WR I p.100), acting. Denial is "not-willing", the cessation of action (PP II p.312). Since to act is to accept a part in the drama of life (and hence to commit oneself to there being a value to the drama) it follows that an affirmation of the will is, at the same time, an affirmation of (the value of) life. From this it follows that a realisation of the worthlessness of life will find expression in denial of the will. This is why Schopenhauer speaks indifferently of a transition from affirmation to denial of the will and of a transition from affirmation to denial of life.

Why should the life of virtue bring about a transition from life-affirming action to life-denying non-action? Let us return for a moment to the Gemeinschaft, the world of "friendly phenomena" inhabited by the altruist. Although living in such a world brings him, says Schopenhauer, a certain uniformity, even serenity of disposition, it remains the case that "his knowledge of the lot of man generally does not make his disposition a cheerful one" (WR I p.374). Why should this be?

The man of virtue identifies, we know, with the transcendental self. Initially this identification expresses itself in sympathetic and active entry into the lives of others. He shares with them their joys, and enters into, feels, and tries to alleviate their sorrows. But the more fully he does this the more he comes to realise that there are few joys and many sorrows. He comes, that is, to a pessimism which, though inarticulate, has the universality characteristic of philosophical pessimism (cf. WR I p.323). He realises that
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suffering dominates not just his life, or his life at certain times, but that suffering is the inescapable nature of all lives, of life as such.

The egoist, deeply enveloped in the metaphysics of separateness has, at least, only his own misery to occupy him. But the virtuous, to varying degrees, take to themselves the sufferings of others until at the highest level of supra-personal indentification we find the holy person (the figure of the suffering Christ comes to mind here) taking as his own the sufferings of the whole world. If, says Schopenhauer,

we compare life to a circular\(^{47}\) path of red-hot coals having a few cool places, a path we have to run over incessantly, then the man entangled in delusion is comforted by the cool place on which he just now stands or which he sees near him and sets out to run over the path (WR I p.380).

The saint, by contrast,

sees himself in all places simultaneously and withdraws ... it is no longer enough for him to love others like himself, and to do as much for them as for himself ... [Rather] he ceases to will anything (ibid.).

At a certain pitch of intensity, therefore, the moral life produces a transcendance of itself. The virtuous person comes to a realisation of the futility of moral action, of the fact that "the ceaseless efforts to banish suffering achieve nothing more than a change in its form" (WR I p.315). And with this insight comes a transformation of the way in which one's identification with the transcendental self expresses itself. Previously it expressed itself in the triumph over egoism, in one's coming to identify with all living creatures, with the whole of life. Now, however, one "shudders at", "renounces" life (WR I p.379), realising it to be irremedably worthless, a gigantic error; one's identification with the eternal self now expresses itself in one's identification with no living creature. When this happens, when one ceases to identify with anything in the mundane world, one's gaze turns (here we can only speak metaphorically) and one becomes mystically aware of, absorbed into, a different reality beyond this one, "beyond the will" (WR II p.642), an absorption which, when bodily death finally completes the process, constitutes "salvation".

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Schopenhauer says that this moment of insight, the denial of mundane in favour of an affirmation of a transcendent reality, brings about a change in life-form; a "transition from virtue to asceticism" (WR I p.380), he calls it. Of the ascetic form of life he offers two, divergent, accounts, one in the first
volume of the main work, the other in the second.

In the first volume asceticism is conceived in distinctly ghoulish terms. It consists in such things as "the deliberate search for the repulsive and unpleasant, self-torture, fasting, the hairy garment [and] mortification of the flesh" (WR II p.607). One might wonder how, conceived in this manner, asceticism could possibly accompany a denial of the will, a realisation that "not-willing" is the proper state to be in. One might, that is, sense here a logical difficulty, for far from expressing denial of the will, a life of self-mortification seems a positive and powerful affirmation of it. It is, that is, a life of action. All that is unusual about it is the goal of the action; self-tortment.

The reason Schopenhauer sees self-mortification as connected with denial of the will has to do with the problem of backsliding. The ascetic does not, typically, Schopenhauer is aware, have a conversion-experience and remain in an effortless state of mystical beatitude ever after. Rather, he has (perhaps) a conversion-experience and then has the problem of preserving his retreat from the will and the world. This is what self-mortification is aimed at: one mortifies the body so that "the satisfaction of desire, the sweets of life, may not again stir the will", and one resorts to "self-torture" in order "the more and more [to] break down and kill the will" (WR I p.382). There is in fact no logical difficulty: though willing one's own torment obviously cannot express a state of will-lessness, it is perfectly possible to adopt a policy of action the point of which is to bring about, eventually, a state of complete and permanent inaction.

There is, however, a psychological problem. For, as monastic reformers have long recognised, the project of killing the appetites by abusing them tends simply to create new ones. Anchorites can come to relish, to gloat lovingly over the repulsiveness of their food while nuns, as St. Teresa of Avila was aware, are capable of deriving exotic forms of sexual delight from mutual flagellation.

It is doubtless with this phenomenon in mind that in the second volume (one of the rare occasions where his later thought represents a clear change of mind from the earlier) Schopenhauer rejects the self-mortifying strain in "strict" asceticism as "excessive" (WR II p.607). And it is, he says, "superfluous" since, properly performed, the moral life is itself a "hairy garment" calling for poverty and constant fasting (ibid.). (One of the points made — usually as an objection, the "code-fit-only-for-saints" objection — about (act-) utilitarianism is that were we really to act to maximise human happiness, the result would be to reduce our standard of living to approximately that of a third-world peasant). On this more moderate version, the ascetic will lead a life that exemplifies the virtues of poverty, chastity, humility, and obedience, but self-mortification will be excluded. Moreover the "transition from virtue to asceticism" will be a less dramatic affair than it is for the "strict" ascetic. There will be no over-night renunciation of the world, no
dramatic retreat to the monastery and the whip. Rather the saint will likely remain in the world, a friar rather than a monk. His transition to asceticism will be, like the de-acceleration of a gramaphone-record deprived of its source of power, a matter of the works of love becoming less and less vigorous, a gradual drift into a state of "quietism" (WR II p.613), inaction.

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Officially, as we have seen, Schopenhauer holds that philosophy can never be prescriptive. In line with this, the discussion of the transition from affirmation to denial of the will is represented as a purely descriptive affair, a mere elucidation of what happens in the lives of certain people — saints. But this is disingenuous. For to represent something as the saintly life, as the life of a practical pilgrim or moral hero, is to represent it as an ideal of human action, something we ought to do what we can to live up to. So Schopenhauer advocates denial of the will, recommends it as "the road to salvation" (WR II p.634).

Concerning this advocation there are, it seems to me, four interconnected questions that need to be asked. Firstly, if life is as terrible as Schopenhauer says it is, why should we bother with asceticism when suicide presents itself as a more decisive alternative? Secondly, does not Schopenhauer's anti-life philosophy reduce to mere nihilism? Thirdly, is life really as terrible as Schopenhauer suggests? Is, that is, his pessimistic account of the human condition really true? And fourthly, even if it is, might there not yet be solutions to it which can be regarded as life-affirming and which, therefore, render denial of the will superfluous. The first two of these questions, both of which are raised as prima facie objections to the doctrine of denial by Schopenhauer himself, I shall discuss in the present chapter, the last two in chapter X.

§ 2 Suicide

If life is as terrible as Schopenhauer supposes it to be, ought he not endorse suicide as a justified response? Indeed, since he does endorse asceticism, and since, as he recognises (WR I p.391), asceticism is often conceived as a metaphorical dying to the world, should he not endorse suicide as a quicker, literal version of the same phenomenon? But Schopenhauer condemns suicide, and regards it as incumbent on any philosophy to provide grounds for rejecting it (WR I p.91).

Before examining the grounds Schopenhauer offers, I must enter two qualifications to the assertion that he condemns it. The first is that he does
not consider it to be immoral, and as for making it a crime (as it was in England until 1961) this he finds simply absurd: "for what punishment can frighten the man who seeks death? If we punish the attempt to commit suicide we are simply punishing the want of skill whereby it failed" (PP II p.307). (The morally intolerable answer to Schopenhauer's rhetorical question is, I suppose, "confiscation of legacies" which he mentions as obtaining in "vulgar and bigoted" England (PP II p.306).) So when Schopenhauer condemns suicide it is not as either a sin or a crime. The best word is "mistake": suicide, we will see, is the expression of cognitive error.

The second qualification is that though Schopenhauer sometimes speaks as if suicide as such is to be condemned, it is, in fact, only certain forms that are: voluntary self-starvation as the final expression of the willlessness of asceticism is explicitly exempted from condemnation (WR I pp.400-1), as is suicide as a religious sacrifice (PP II p.308). What Schopenhauer condemns, principally, is suicide as the expression of personal, private "despair". He speaks of a continuum with this form at one end and will-less self-starvation at the other (WR I p.402). The degree of error, and of Schopenhauer's condemnation of a particular act, will depend on its location on this continuum.

What then is the error embodied in the suicide of despair? What is the contrast between suicide and asceticism which enables Schopenhauer to condemn the one while advocating the other? The difference is, he claims, that while the ascetic denies life, the suicide (paradoxical as it may seem) affirms it (WR I pp.398-9). As Schopenhauer develops it there are two aspects to the life-affirming character of suicide.

The first is that whereas, in rejecting the life of action and desire, the ascetic rejects life's pleasures, the satisfaction of desire, the suicide rejects only life's sorrows. Whereas the ascetic wills, wants nothing, the suicide wants a better life, a better world for himself. Whereas the ascetic has attained to the knowledge that life as such is suffering, the suicide mistakenly thinks that just his life is the problem. Hence his despair is entirely personal: the suicide is like Scrooge, standing in the dark, his nose pressed to the frosty window-pane, watching with envious despair the brilliantly lit family Christmas celebrations within. (The incidence of suicide climaxes, in European societies at least, in the spring. Alfred Alvarez suggests, in his study of suicide, a contrast between the internal and the external as the explanation: the richer, softer and more delectable nature becomes, the deeper becomes the internal winter, the more intolerable the abyss which separates the inner world from the outer. Perhaps, he adds, this is why, for the depressed, Christmas is so hard to bear: for those on the outside, it accentuates, like spring, the disjunction between public celebration and private desolation.)

Schopenhauer speaks of extreme personal suffering as a "second way" by which denial of the will may be achieved (WR I p.392). Indeed, since most of us lack the sympathetic gifts to attain to an awareness of the universality
of suffering through identification with others, it is the only way: the extreme of suffering that brings someone to the verge of suicide, has the capacity to "colour" the whole of one's world, to become not an incident in but rather a 'form' of all experience and thereby to bring about a dramatic transformation of one's assessment of life and the world in general. But unfortunately the suicide ignores this potentially redemptive value of suffering. His tragedy is, then, not merely that he has a mistaken view of life, but that he acts in circumstances ripe for the realisation of his error. He is like "the sick man who after the beginning of a painful operation that could completely cure him will not allow it to be completed but prefers to retain his illness" (WR I p.399).

This is the first aspect to the life-affirming character of suicide. The second is that the suicide does not merely affirm life; he affirms it "vehemently" (WR I p.399). The degree of our suffering is proportionate to the strength of our desires: "the more intense the will, the more glaring the phenomenon of its conflict, and hence the greater the suffering" (WR I p.395). In Schopenhauer's hands, the suicide emerges as an exceptional, almost heroic figure. In most of us our passions are too watery to bring us the intensity of suffering that leads to suicide. (One might think here of Ibsen's Hedda Gabler. It is because Hedda demands so powerfully to wear vine-leaves, to live freely, beautifully, creatively, that her suffocation in a Victorian suburb in which she is afraid to show her ankles even, is intense enough to bring her to suicide. Had her passions been, like Thea's, more moderate, her life would have been less intolerable.)

This phenomenology of suicide is, it seems to me, illuminating and persuasive. And it leads to the pleasing paradox that pessimism itself is the antidote to suicidal despair. Were the suicide to abandon his facile optimism and recognise that there is nothing isolated or unique about his suffering, it would lose that special quality which urges him to self-destruction; evils which, like bad weather, are known to be shared by everyone are, Schopenhauer points out, the easier to bear (WR I p.315).

But, it may be objected, all this last observation amounts to is the merely psychological point that, as a matter of fact, people find the isolation of suffering, the sense of personal failure that accompanies it, to be its worst aspect. It suggests that people perhaps will not commit suicide if they take suffering to be universal, but does nothing to show that they should not. And as a matter of fact Schopenhauerian pessimism provides a conclusive reason for saying that one should. For if all life is suffering then, in particular, my life is suffering and that is a problem I can solve and (as a seeker after happiness) ought to solve by self-destruction. So, the objection concludes, far from being able, legitimately, to condemn suicide, Schopenhauer is, in fact, committed to recommending it.

One kind of reply Schopenhauer makes to this objection is that even though pessimism is true of this world there is the possibility of salvation in
another world and that makes suicide a mistake: the suicide fails to go through with the "operation" that will cure him.

In a curious way, however, he has a reply to the objection that is independent of the possibility of salvation. For if we look at what it is to be a pessimist in Schopenhauer's fashion, it turns out not merely that pessimists do not in fact commit suicide, but that it would be irrational for them to do so. The reason for this is that, on Schopenhauer's account, to really be a (philosophical) pessimist, to have internalized as opposed to merely giving intellectual assent to the universality of suffering is (whether through sympathetic identification with others or through the transformation of consciousness that is Schopenhauer's "second way") to have come to see the problem of suffering not as a personal but as a cosmic one. And to the problem of cosmic suffering, suicide, the destruction of one individual is an absurdly irrelevant, as Schopenhauer puts it, "futile" (WR I p.399), non-solution, analogous to attempting to cure a cancer affecting the whole body by excising, only a minute patch of the affected tissue. Suicide, then, cannot, rationally, be performed out of a state of internalized philosophical pessimism. The only partial exception to this claim is that extraordinarily disturbing kind of case (Schopenhauer mentions it at WR I p.400) where a father first kills his children of whom he is very fond, and then himself. Here one might well see the rationale of the action (if we take it that for him his children and himself constitute 'his world') as consisting in an attempt to solve a problem of cosmic suffering. To argue the mistakenness of this kind of, as we might call it, cosmic suicide, Schopenhauer does, I think need to appeal to his doctrine of salvation.

§ 3 Nihilism and Mysticism

The second objection which Schopenhauer himself brings against the advocatioon of denial of the will is the accusation of nihilism. Is it not the case, the objection asks, that all Schopenhauer has to offer as the result of denial of the will, as "the final goal which hovers behind all virtue and holiness", is an "empty nothingness" (WR I p.411)?

Some readers have supposed that this indeed is all Schopenhauer has or intends to offer. They have supposed, that is, that he is not merely a pessimist about this world but a pessimist about all possible worlds, an absolute pessimist. Bertrand Russell, for example, says that although at the end of the main work Schopenhauer hints at an alternative to the misery of this world, the gesture cannot be regarded as more than a "merely rhetorical" flourish. L. Narvia represents Schopenhauer as holding that the only alternative to this world is a plunge into "the abyss of nothingness and extinction" and, more surprisingly, Hamlyn (op.cit. p.155) takes the Schopen-
hauerian promise to be indeed a promise of nothingness ameliorated only by the accompanying comment that "by comparison with the misery of our lot that provides the only clear contrast and only real release".

These readings of Schopenhauer as an absolute pessimist are, in my view, insensitive to the intense theological preoccupation that permeates, particularly, Book IV. True Christianity is, he argues, pessimistic, ascetic and life-denying: Its essence, in fact, is in total agreement with Schopenhauerian philosophy. Yet, as Schopenhauer also emphasises (WR II p.161), the heart of any religion is a doctrine of immortality, and the point of that, of course, is to make it possible for us to attain salvation. How then could he possibly claim harmony with the essence of Christianity were his philosophy not to contain its own doctrine of salvation?

Schopenhauer is not then, I suggest, an absolute pessimist. When he says that the saintly ascetic achieves, ultimately, salvation (Erlösung), there is some positive state or condition which he believes the term to designate. But what is it?

One thing the ascetic achieves is a certain state of mind. Someone, says Schopenhauer, in whom the will is "extinguished" achieves a state in which nothing can distress or alarm him any more; nothing can any longer move him; for he has cut all the thousand threads of willing which hold us bound to this world, and which, as craving, fear, envy, and anger drag us here and there in constant pain. (WR I p.390).

Elsewhere, Schopenhauer uses epithets such as "ocean-like calmness of the spirit", "deep tranquility" and "unshakeable confidence and serenity" (WR I p.411), to characterise ascetic beatitude. Is it then this state of mind, total security or immunity to fear, ataraxia as the ancients called it, that Schopenhauer understands to constitute salvation?

The answer is that it is not. To see this it is sufficient to note that while Schopenhauer describes ataraxia as the goal of stoicism, that philosophy he not only distinguishes from his own, but actually condemns, as leading away from, not towards, salvation (PP II p.320).

All varieties of stoicism, as Schopenhauer describes ataraxia as the goal of stoicism, that philosophy he not only distinguishes from his own, but actually condemns, as leading away from, not towards, salvation (PP II p.320).

All varieties of stoicism, as Schopenhauer describes it, have in common the aim of reducing suffering. And they all share the analysis of suffering as consisting in a disjunction between the way one wants the world to be and the way it is. Their solution to the problem consists in the recommendation that (in varying ways and to varying degrees) we should abandon wanting things, attachment to objects, unless we can be entirely confident that the world will provide them (WR I pp. 89-90).

In various ways, this makes the stoic sage resemble the ascetic. Or, at least, it makes it look as though the ascetic stands at one end of a continuum along which are arranged also the various severities of stoicism. But this is not Schopenhauer's intention. The resemblance between stoicism and asceticism is quite superficial: they differ not in degree but in kind. For, though states of comparative or absolute will-lessness belong to both, stoicism is,
THE DENIAL OF THE WILL

says Schopenhauer, entirely lacking in the "metaphysical tendency and transcendent end" of asceticism, substituting for it "an end that is wholly immanent and [according to stoicism] attainable in this life" (WR II p.159). In other words, though stoicism advocates a retreat from willing it remains a *life-affirming* not life-denying doctrine, believing that a "blessed life" (a self-contradiction, according to Schopenhauer (WR I p.90)), a solution to the problem of suffering, is attainable in this world. Asceticism, on the other hand, holds that only an other-worldly solution is possible.

Salvation, then, is, for Schopenhauer, an other-worldly concept. But why should we believe anything answers to the concept? Why should we believe in a level of ultimate being in which we do or can achieve the blissful condition the stoics mistakenly believe to be attainable in this life?

The question of the nature of ultimate reality is, says Schopenhauer (as we saw in chapter III § 5) a "transcendent" one, beyond the bounds of conceptual thought. In trying to say what the world is "beyond the will" (WR II p.642), the conceptual intellect runs up against its limits "as against the walls of our prison" (WR II p.641). But philosophy is essentially a rational, conceptual activity; the limits of the conceptual mind are its limits. Hence, says Schopenhauer, his philosophy assumes, at its "highest point", a "negative character". It can speak only of what, in denial of the will, is abandoned, never of what is "laid hold of" (WR II p.612).

However, the fact that the philosopher must remain silent about the nature of ultimate reality does not mean that everyone has to. For at "precisely" the point where philosophy stops, "the mystic proceeds positively" (WR II p.612). Mystics, that is, claim to have experiential encounters with a level of reality that is both ultimate and blissful. And although, as Schopenhauer repeatedly emphasises, mysticism has no role in philosophy, the evaluation of the status of mystical experience is a perfectly proper task for philosophy to undertake. And — such is Schopenhauer's argument for believing that there really is an other-worldly salvation — mystical experience is to be evaluated in a positive fashion.

Schopenhauer's validation of the claims of mysticism consists in two points. The first may be called the "relativity of nothingness" argument. Mystics claim to be in experiential communion with a level of reality relative to which our world is illusory; in the final stages of asceticism, our world, as Schopenhauer puts it, fades away "as a light morning dream to one half awake, through which reality already shines and which can no longer deceive" (WR I pp. 390-1). From our point of view, however, it is the mystic's world that is illusory. Hence we have a situation where, as the closing sentences of the main work puts it,

What remains after the complete abolition of the will is, for all who are full of the will, assuredly nothing. But also conversely, to those in whom the will has turned and denied itself, this very real world of ours with
all its suns and galaxies is — nothing (WR I p.412).

The suggestion here is that we are required to accept at least a 'draw' between our claims and those of the mystic. For what we have is a clash of ultimate reality-principles between which there is no way of adjudicating. One might wish to object that it is not only mystics but other types of people too — psychotics, hysterics, peyote-users — who claim to experience alternative, ultimate realities, and that we are familiar with the category in which to place them: (temporary or permanent) derangement. Schopenhauer's response is that the (over time) great number of mystics all reporting exactly the same experience — an experience of "the inner identity of one's own inner being with that of all things, or with the kernel of the world" (WR II p.613) — not to mention the fact that the world's most numerous religion (Buddhism) endorses the claims of mysticism (WR II p.615), prohibits the stigmatization of mystics as madmen. The second observation Schopenhauer makes in defence of mysticism is to point to the fact that in spite of the "inner agreement" of their experiential reports, these reports come from members of widely diverse cultures and religions. We cannot, therefore, explain their unanimity by dismissing mystics as a "sect that adheres to, defends and propagates a dogma theoretically popular and once adopted; on the contrary, they generally do not know one another" (WR II p.613). There are, then, large numbers of people all witnessing the same thing. And they are, moreover, independent witnesses between whom there is no collusion. Rationally speaking, therefore, we have no alternative but to accept the "authenticity" (Wirklichkeit) (WR II p.614) of mystical experiences as veridical encounters with transcendent reality.

Schopenhauer provides an impressive catalogue of mystical literature both east and west in support of his thesis of unanimity of mysticism. Nonetheless, modern scholarship shows that, in fact, he considerably exaggerates the scope of this agreement. For though it is agreed that a sense of oneness or unity is indeed a theme that runs throughout mystical literature it is a theme which actually contains considerable diversity within itself.

In the first place, there is W.T. Stace's distinction (cf. Elwood op.cit. p.14) between extroverted and introverted mysticism to be attended to. In the former, in, for example, "nature mysticism", while the subject is aware of the objects of nature as a numinous unity, as the "workings of one mind, the features/Of the same face, blossoms upon one tree" (Wordsworth, The Prelude, Book 6), he does not have a sense of himself as part of that unity. Only in introverted mysticism does the subject report feelings of merging into, or being identical with, the One. So Schopenhauer's claim that whereas "theism" places the primary source of existence outside us, "All mysticism ... draws this source gradually back into ourselves as the subject and the adept at last recognises with wonder and delight that he himself is it" (WR II p.612) seems to be true, in fact, only of introverted mysticism.
Even within the category of introverted mysticism there seem important distinctions to be drawn. Elwood (op.cit. p.53) distinguishes, for example, between "wisdom" and "devotional" mysticism. The former (characteristic of Neoplatonism, Sufism and Zen) adopts the "negative way" to identification with the One, the removal from the mind of everything that is not God. The latter (more characteristic of Catholic Christianity) believes in the use of visual and conceptual aids to experience of God. One such aid is the transference of the ideal of sexual love from a human to a divine object. From this point of view unity with God is conceived, not as identity but as quasi-sexual union.

So there is, in fact, a considerable scholarly botanization of mystical experience (I have, here, only touched the tip of that iceberg) which suggests that Schopenhauer considerably exaggerates the unanimity among mystics. And this in turn suggests that we are not impelled to view mysticism as providing numerous, independent 'sightings' of one and the same thing and are not compelled, therefore, to regard ourselves as having been presented with powerful evidence of the reality of a transcendent plane of being.

So much for Schopenhauer's explicit attempt to authenticate the claims of mysticism. Before leaving the topic, however, it should be noticed that there is, too, an implicit argument which, if sound, would succeed in validating that kind of mysticism which claims to be aware of "the inner identity of one's own being with that of all things, or with the kernel of the world" (cf. p.123 above). This, of course, is the attempted proof of transcendental solipsism (cf. chapter VIII § 5). For if that argument is sound, then the mystic is right in believing that the ultimate reality is "one". And he is right, too, in believing that it offers genuine salvation. The reason for this is that since willing, the cause of all suffering, requires a distinction between the subject and object of willing it requires plurality. Hence, at the level of ultimate reality, there can be no willing — another nail in the coffin of the view that Schopenhauer claims to show the world in itself to be will — and hence no suffering.

But this argument, I have suggested, is open to serious criticism.
Chapter X  Pessimism

§ 1 Introduction

I suggested at the end of the previous chapter that Schopenhauer fails to establish rational grounds for believing in the doctrine of Erlösung; the prospect of an other-worldly salvation from the misery and sadness of this one belongs only to the domain of faith or hope. But, it is appropriate now to ask, do we really need Erlösung? There are two aspects to this question. The first is the question of whether life and the world really are as bad as Schopenhauer says they are — is, in short, pessimism true? — and the second is the question of whether even if, in some sense, it is there might not yet be a this-worldly solution to it, a life-affirming Lösung, that would render a life-denying Erlösung unnecessary. An affirmative answer to this second question is what I shall argue for in this chapter. Although, I shall suggest, Schopenhauer does demonstrate that suffering is a non-accidental feature of the human condition, there is nonetheless a solution to the problem which, while involving, in some ways, a retreat from the will, nonetheless affirms human life as something of value. Strangely enough, I shall further suggest, the materials for this solution are provided by Schopenhauer himself.

§ 2 What Pessimism is Not

What, firstly, is Schopenhauer's pessimism — his pessimism, that is, about, specifically, the human condition? First some remarks about what it is not.

Despite the penchant of many commentators to regard Schopenhauer's pessimism as inseparable from personal neurosis, philosophical pessimism need not, in fact, be the articulation of depression or despair. It may, on the contrary, be the antidote to such pathological conditions. As we saw Schopenhauer pointing out in the discussion of suicide (Chapter IX § 2), it may be precisely the realisation that our sufferings are not unique but are rather shared by everyone that makes them bearable.

A second misconception about pessimism is that it is nothing but the articulation of misanthropy. Again, there is no necessary connexion. On the contrary, as Schopenhauer points out, misanthropy in practice, is more likely to be connected with optimistic theories of human nature; someone who views man as "the work, even the incarnation of a god" is liable to savage intolerance of failings encountered in a real individual. By contrast, a pessimistic view of sadness and sin as written into human nature is more
likely to lead to compassion towards the individual (PP II pp.304 - 5).

A third misconception is that Schopenhauer's pessimism views human life as a condition of unalleviated misery. Although his language sometimes suggests this absurd, empirically falsifiable position ("All life is suffering" (WR I p.310), "All so-called happiness is negative" (WR I p.319)), the blanket denial of the existence of pleasure or of happiness is not, as will soon become clear, Schopenhauer's position. Rather, what he holds is that human life is overall a "tragic state" (WR I p.323), that on balance it contains more evil than good (WR II, p.576-7).

But if this is the nature of Schopenhauerian pessimism, it might be said, then surely the issue between it and optimism is not a decidable, indeed not a philosophical one. It is, rather, no more than a matter of projecting alternative Gestalten onto the world, of picking out different patterns, selecting different facts for special attention, a matter rooted ultimately, in nothing more than individual temperament. This is the criticism most commonly raised argument Schopenhauer's pessimism, one which fits naturally, of course, with the treatment of his pessimism as of interest only as the manifestation of a diseased personality. Magee (op. cit. p.14) voices it in suggesting that, properly understood, there is no more of an issue between optimism and pessimism than there is between one who sees the beer-glass as half-full and one who sees it as half-empty.

In fact, however, Schopenhauer goes to some lengths to anticipate this objection. Though he does believe that any mature, sensitive person who confronts his life-experience with honest eyes will come to the conclusion that its sufferings outweigh its joys (WR I p.324, WR II p.576), he holds, nonetheless, that appeals to empirical data can only confirm, never constitute, the philosophical case for pessimism: to proceed a posteriori from particular examples would, he says, "lack the standpoint of universality which is essential to philosophy" and "might easily be regarded as a mere declamation on human misery ... and as such charged with one-sidedness" (WR I p.323).

To this charge of, in effect, making poor inductions from a biased selection of examples his pessimism is, claims Schopenhauer, immune since, in demonstrating that suffering is the inevitable consequence of "the first, elementary features of human life", it "starts from the universal and is conducted a priori" (WR I p.324).

It is important to understand clearly what Schopenhauer means by calling his case for pessimism an a priori connecting of suffering to elemental features of the human condition. It would be easy to perform a survey of, say, the century since Schopenhauer's death — to point to nationalism, racism, terrorism, torture, the arms race, two world-wars, pollution, the general threat of technology to engulf itself — and construct a case for pessimism after the style of Voltaire. Alternatively, one might, in a Platonic spirit, point to some golden age in the past from which the modern world is receding
at ever-increasing speed. The Schopenhauerian case for pessimism must be
distinguished from both these kinds of inductive argument. Moreover, were
someone to construct a non-inductive proof of a Cartesian demon who created
us for his sadistic sport, the Schopenhauerian argument would need to be
distinguished from that too. On Schopenhauer's approach, suffering is to be
connected, non-inductively, with the human condition as such.

It is important, on the other hand, not to exaggerate the force of
Schopenhauer's use of the term "a priori". He does not wish to argue that
suffering is a necessary feature of our experience. If it were, salvation would
be impossible. What he means, rather, is that suffering is inescapable save
for the transformation of a human nature into a supra-human one: this is
what he means in referring to the transition from affirmation to denial of the
will as a kind of "contradiction" (WR I p.380, p.402), or "new birth" (WR I
p.403).

§ 3 Negativity, Boredom, Time, and Egoism

We are, then, to look for an argument which shows suffering to be
inescapably connected with elemental features of the human predicament.
First of all we need to decide which elemental features he has in mind.

As we have seen, for Schopenhauer, the fundamental fact about human
beings is that we are doers: "the will is what is real and essential in man
whereas the intellect is only secondary" (WR II p.215). In opposition to the
Cartesian view which sees us primarily and essentially as thinking, knowing
beings and only secondarily and accidentally as embodied agents,
Schopenhauer insists that the fundamental and essential fact about us is that
we are embodied agents set in a physical environment which, in line with
what we need and want from it, we manipulate, change, and seek to control.
Only secondarily are we knowers: that we have consciousness at all, what
the nature of it is, is dependent on our role as agents, as will.

With one exception, all Schopenhauer's arguments for pessimism being
at this (surely unexceptionable) starting point. All of them, that is, argue for
the a priority of suffering by suggesting it to be inseparable from wanting and
acting. It is, I think, possible to distinguish three such arguments. I propose
now to look at each of these in turn before turning to a final argument that has
a rather different starting-point.

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The first of these arguments may be called the "negativity of happiness"
argument. At a first approximation it runs like this. All willing, acting,
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springs from want, privation, that is, pain. This is what is "positive". Satisfaction, enjoyment, or happiness are merely "negative": they consist in nothing but the elimination of a state of suffering. Hence human life is, on balance a state of suffering, since there is nothing in it save pain and (brief) respite from it. Since pleasure (so-called) is nothing but an absence, there is no possibility of life's pleasures compensating for its pains (BM p.146, cf. WR I p.319, WR II pp.575-6).

The inspiration of this argument is not, of course, original: as Schopenhauer acknowledges, it stems from Book IX of the Republic. He even borrows some of Plato's examples: health (as well as youth and freedom) we never notice, he reminds us, until they are gone (WR II p.575). But he produces his own instances of the thesis tool. Characteristically he points to literature, to the fact that an author presents always "only a strife, an effort, and struggle for happiness, never enduring and complete happiness itself... [The work] conducts its heroes to their goal through a thousand difficulties and dangers; but as soon as the goal is reached it quickly lets the curtain fall" (WR I p.320). One thinks here of the eternal structure of the fairy-tale, or of Jane Austen's pre-marital manoeuvres.

The point of these examples is to confirm the idea of pleasures as mere absences, that being the reason we are not constantly aware of pleasures of health, youth, and freedom and the reason for the poverty of descriptive, utopian literature. But it is obvious that this thesis cannot be generally maintained. For some pleasures quite obviously do more than eliminate a previous want (as, in Modesty Blaize, is realised by the elegant Dirk Bogarde, staked out to die under the Saharan sun and croaking "champagne, champagne"), while others, the unexpected scent of jasmine on the evening air, perhaps, do not presuppose antecedent wants at all.

But Schopenhauer knows this, for he mentions (without any hint of dissent) Plato's exemption of the pleasures of smell and intellect from the negativity thesis (BM p.146), and acknowledges the idyll as a case where literature is concerned with the portrayal of happiness. (He argues that the representation of happiness reduces, as in the pastoral poem, to the expression of aesthetic delight in natural beauty — a topic I shall return to in § 4 below — (WR I pp.320-1)). So we must look for a more considered formulation of Schopenhauer's argument. The following passage seems to provide it:

All satisfaction, or what is commonly called happiness, is really and essentially always negative only and never positive. It is not a gratification which comes to us originally and of itself (von selbst auf uns) but it must always be the satisfaction of a want (WR I p.319: my emphasis).

This passage suggests three points. Firstly the idea of distinction between those pleasures which consist in the achievement, through struggle
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and effort, of some desired goal ("satisfactions" we might call them) and those with respect to which the experiencer is in some way passive (the question of what way I will return to in § 4), the pleasures that come "of themselves" (von selbst), the "pure" (WR I p.314) pleasures. Secondly, we are presented with the idea that the negativity thesis is confined to the former kind of pleasure, but, thirdly, with the claim that, typically, human beings conceive of their happiness in those terms. The argument will now suggest that since humans do this — a fact which is a priori since it flows from the primacy of the will in human nature — it follows that the happiness achieved in most lives is merely negative and cannot compensate for the suffering they contain.

This conclusion is, I believe, capable of empirical confirmation. Most people do conceive of happiness as the product of struggle and effort (we pursue happiness, regard it as something to be won) and as consisting in acquisition or consumption of, largely, material goods. So we do, usually, conceive of happiness in terms of satisfactions: necessities first, luxuries (big house, car, spa-pool etc.) second. Now although, as I mentioned, the negativity thesis cannot be maintained as universally true of individual satisfactions — many provide hedonic credit, rather than simply eliminating a debit — it can, I think, be maintained in a holistic way of happiness conceived as a sum of satisfactions. For, as Schopenhauer points out, it is typically true of satisfactions that they are more delightful in anticipation (and sometimes recollection) than achievement. Typically, that is, possession transposes the novel and charming into the merely routine (WR I p.314). Even if there is a short 'honeymoon' with the new acquisition, the moment of positive pleasure soon passes: "that to which we are accustomed is no longer felt as a pleasure" (WR II p.575). If, then, a life conceives of its happiness as a sum of satisfactions it is (and here Schopenhauer is really only echoing the folk-wisdom of centuries) doomed to disillusionment. Hence, as Schopenhauer remarks, disappointment is often the characteristic expression of old faces (WR II p.634).

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The second of Schopenhauer's arguments concern what he calls "boredom". Willing, it runs, presupposes "need, lack, and hence pain". But to be deprived of "objects of willing" is to be in a state of boredom, itself an intense, perhaps the most intense, form of suffering. Hence, since one must either have or lack objects of willing, life swings like a "pendulum" between the suffering of non-satisfaction and the suffering of satiation (WR I pp. 312-3), the two "poles" of human existence (PP II p.295).

Although, for ease of discussion, I have called this a "second" argument, it could, in fact, be regarded as a continuation of the same sad story as the
first. For, like the first, it starts from the assumption that the state of willing is a state of suffering and then directs its attention to the alternative state. The first argument suggests that nothing positive succeeds the termination of a state of willing, the second adds that unless "the wish, the need, appears again on the scene under a new form ... weariness, emptiness, and boredom follow" (WR I p.314). Notice that this claim presupposes the conclusion of its first argument, for to the extent that willing might terminate in a state of positive pleasure, the subject is in a state which (logically) excludes boredom.

What are we to make of this argument? The first thing to do is to take note of an obvious objection to the starting-point (which it shares with the first argument), the objection that not every state of wanting or willing something is a state in which suffering is predominant. Certainly, it might be said, wanting presupposes, always, a disjunction between how the world is and how we would like it to be, and any such disjunction involves, perhaps, at some level of consciousness, a degree of disquiet or unease. But in many cases, surely, the disjunction is the precondition or the cause of a pleasure which vastly outweighs the disquiet. Thus there is the pleasure of anticipating arrival at a desired goal (Schopenhauer himself acknowledges it in his observation that possession of a desired object typically removes it charm) and the (different) pleasures of being in the process of moving towards a desired goal: one can, for example, enjoy not only winning an election, but also the anticipation of winning an election and the excitement of the election campaign.

It cannot be denied that there is truth in this objection. Wanting, willing, is not always a state in which suffering predominates. But often it is, the clearest cases being where the want in question represents what we would regard as a physical or emotional need: no one would want to describe starvation, terror, loneliness, or lack of esteem as conditions in which the pleasant dominates the painful. This suggests that if there is any plausibility to Schopenhauer's argument, we ought to be able to reformulate it in terms, specifically, of need rather than the more general notion of wanting. Is there, then, any plausibility in suggesting that human life oscillates between need and boredom, that to the extent the one kind of suffering is diminished, the other is increased (cf. PP I pp.328-9)?

Schopenhauer often formulates his argument in social rather than individual terms: "Need and Want", he says, are the "scourge of the people", but it is boredom that afflicts the "world of fashion" (WR I p.313). This suggests that we could reformulate the argument by taking social classes rather than phases in individual biography as exemplifying the two "poles" of suffering.54

Who are Schopenhauer's "people"? Although he sometimes refers to the American slaves, he has in mind, primarily, the early nineteenth-century industrial proletariat. (It is to be remembered that he lived through the 1848
Revolution, his opposition to which should become somewhat more intelligible in light of the current discussion). It is clear that with reference to the Dickensian condition of that people, there is no hyperbole in describing it as a condition of need and suffering. Within modern developed societies this is no longer true: with some exceptions, the basic needs of the modern proletariat — food, housing, social security — can be said to have been met. But although this is true, we have now a new "people" whose condition is even more distressed than that of Schopenhauer's: I refer, of course, to the Third World. For us, it is the Ethiopian peasant who represents the "pole" of the suffering of unsatisfied need. This suggests that it is we, the developed West, who constitute the other pole. If, therefore, Schopenhauer's argument is to carry any conviction, we ought to be able to discover "boredom" as an affliction of ours, a "disease of affluence".

Before asking whether it is, it should first be observed that the comparatively trivial word "boredom" (Langweile) is not really adequate to the complex existential malaise Schopenhauer wishes to describe. In his rich phenomenology of the condition it is possible, I think, to distinguish three components, one perceptual, one conative, and one metaphysical.

The perceptual condition consists in the world of the sufferer becoming "colourless". As we have seen (Chapter VII § 2), it is a central Schopenhauerian theme that the will, our practical "interest" in the world, lends it "colour". When events and objects in the world are favourable to the will ("the old woman with a hump who carries a love-letter, the Jew with the Louis d'or") they assume, he says, "a bright colour and smiling aspect" (WR I p.373). It is true that when objects are hostile to the will they assume a "hideous physiognomy": the scaffold, the surgeon's case of instruments even numbers, letters and seals, it will be remembered, "can grin at us horribly and affect us like fearful monsters". But even when the world is coloured in these black and sombre tones it remains interesting, even fascinating. But if the will is denied an object in the world, if it becomes disengaged, the perceptual world becomes stale, flat, "dreary" (WR I p.314), "dead" (WR I p.164).

A further consequence of the will's finding no object to engage it is a feeling of, eventually, acute frustration. One experiences the "pressure of the will", but since it has no "motive" on which to express itself a terrible "inner torment" results (WR I p.364), the pain of a "longing without any definite object" (WR I p.164).

The third component of the malaise is a sense of what later philosophers were to call the "absurd". Deprived, that is, of objects of willing, expelled, as it were from the "game" (ibid.) of willing, satisfaction and more willing, one is liable, from this external vantage-point, to think of the game as just that: a series of moves the goals of which are arbitrary, pointless, lacking in intrinsic value (PP II p.287).

Such is the inner phenomenology of boredom. But Schopenhauer also identifies two external symptoms of the condition both of which, I shall
suggest, are characteristics of the affluent society.

The first is the existence of a "problem of leisure", the problem of how to "spend" as opposed to "use" (PP I p.331), how to "kill" time (WR I p.313). Those with this problem are characterised by the triviality of their leisure-activity. We adopt "small motives" — Schopenhauer mentions card-games and cigar-smoking — in general we "rattle and drum" with anything we can get hold of in the attempt (ultimately a futile one since these motives are arbitrarily selected rather than being objects of genuine desires) to disguise the existence of boredom (PP I p.331).

Now there is no question that there exists in the West a "problem of leisure" (social commentators discuss it at length), and to my mind also there is no question that the growth of the huge, electronic (so-called) entertainment industry represents just the trivialisation of life that Schopenhauer talks about. The other kind of strategy for numbing the pain of boredom he mentions is work: in middle-class life, he says, fear of boredom is fear of the Sunday (WR I p.313). One can, I think, see this strategy, too, at work in modern society: even though most work is repetitive, unsatisfying and de-humanising, and even though the welfare state ensures substantial unemployment benefits, unemployment remains universally recognised as a great social evil. The Schopenhauerian explanation is clear: a structure of demands on one's time, no matter how unpleasant, is better than the boredom of there being no demands at all.

The second symptom of boredom Schopenhauer identifies is the appearance of apparently pointless violence. When the pressure of the un-expressed will, when inner frustration reaches a high degree, he suggests, the sufferer may seek to mitigate his own pain by the sight of someone else in an even worse condition. Thus, Schopenhauer suggests, as we saw (Chapter VIII § 3), that the apparently aimless cruelty of Nero, the Domitians or Robespierre actually have the hidden motive of alleviating the pain of boredom (WR I p.364). There is, I think, little dispute that mindless violence (whether it be the pseudo-ideological violence of urban terorism or the overtly mindless violence associated with Punk culture) is an affliction of the affluent society.

I should like to mention two further phenomena which support the idea that boredom is indeed endemic in Western society. Firstly it should be noted that there is a close similarity between Schopenhauerian boredom and that vague, hard-to-diagnose or treat, often object-less and apparently cause-less condition that passes under the name of "depression". The depressed person will always, I believe, experience the perceptual component of boredom and often the other two components as well. There is, I think, considerable agreement that depression particularly afflicts developed societies. Though different reasons for this may be proposed, and though a developed psychiatry may come to distinguish different species of the condition each with different causes, the Schopenhauerian etiology must surely be regarded
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as a compelling diagnosis of at least many cases of the malady.

A final, admittedly somewhat anecdotal, phenomenon I should like to mention by way of confirming the idea that Western society does indeed represent the "pole" of boredom, is the widespread nostalgia for the Second World War on the part of those who lived through it, nostalgia for a time in which societies were subject to extraordinary stress by the condition of total war. Again, the phenomenon is no doubt a complex one with different etiologies explaining different facets of it. But certainly, it seems to me, the heightened stress and intensity of wartime life and consequent banishment of boredom is a plausible explanation of at least some of those facets. It is often mentioned by survivors as a favourable feature of the times. An article in the Guardian Weekly (Vol 132 No. 19 May 12th, 1985) commemorating the fortieth anniversary of the liberation of Holland from German occupation, having described at length the physical, social, and psychological horrors of the occupation, draws to a close as follows:

I had survived. I was nearly 20. This may have sounded a sad, pitiful tale of woe. A teenage period spent under too much stress and strain, full of sorrow and frustration .... However, in spite of it all, I sometimes believe that in a perverse sort of way, perhaps we had some advantages over the teenager of today. During those cruel long years of occupation in Amsterdam, at least we had a definite purpose in our lives: the fight for freedom. We had hope. We obstinately believed in a better future. Here was a legitimate outlet for violence and aggression — indeed it [sic.] was applauded as acts of heroism! We were never bored — real life was all too dangerously exciting as it was.

I have been suggesting, over the last few pages that there is substantial empirical evidence that confirms Schopenhauer's thesis of the existence in human nature of a tragic polarity, a "dissonance" (PP I p.301) or contradiction: we have in us, it seems, a need both to escape from need and stress and a need to experience it. What follows from this is that suffering of one kind or another is written into the human condition, and, as Schopenhauer says, "The ceaseless efforts to banish suffering achieve nothing more than a change in its form" (WR I p.315).

If this is true, it may be mentioned, then we are supplied with a corrective to an ambitious assumption shared by the Marxist and quasi-Marxist left; the assumption that human suffering is, in principle, eliminable by economic, or, more broadly, structural changes to society. If Schopenhauer is right, this is an illusion and a much more modest conception of the role and importance of the state than that favoured by the political left must be adopted.55 We will need to adopt, in fact, something approximating to Schopenhauer's own conception whereby the state really has no function save to prevent its citizens from harming each other (cf. WR I p.62).
The third Schopenhauerian argument I want to consider concerns time. We live, Schopenhauer observes, in a world of time and ceaseless change. But midst such "restlessness" such "becoming and never being" happiness is impossible (PP II p.284). One might think that this Platonic Weltschmerz represents a level of feeling too ultimate to be capable of discussion. It turns out, however, that what really concerns Schopenhauer is metaphorical not literal time. Human beings, he argues, live "in time", in particular "in the future". This is so because we live constantly

In the expectation of better things ... On the other hand the present is accepted only for the time being, is set at naught, and looked upon merely as the path to the goal. Thus when at the end of their lives most men look back, they will find that they have lived throughout ad interim; they will be surprised to see that the very thing they allowed to slip by unappreciated and unenjoyed was just their life, precisely that in the expectation of which they lived (PP II pp.285-6).

Like its predecessors, this argument roots the human incapacity for happiness in our willing nature. Or rather in the fact that our will is informed by a conceptual intellect. It is this which gives us the concept of the future and hence the capacity to fix our attention on it. Animals, we noted in Chapter II (§ I), having purely perceptual consciousness cannot really conceive of the future. Hence they live "in the present" alone and thereby achieve a, to us, "enviable tranquility and placidity" (PP II p.294 cf. also: WR I p.84 p.518, WR II p.84). We, however, with our attention fixed on the future miss out, once again, on happiness. Moreover we experience anxiety and fear of which the animals are incapable (though they may be subject to momentary pain and terror) (PP II p.294).

There is a peculiarity about this argument. For what it at least strongly hints at is the idea that if only, per impossible, we were able to abandon our anxious hopes and fears for the future and attend instead to the present, we would find there some kind of happiness. But that fits most uncomfortably with the previous arguments which suggest that all the present contains is the briefest flicker of pleasure rapidly engulfed in the abyss of boredom. Better surely, they would suggest, to keep on living in the future, for, as Schopenhauer himself puts it at one point, as soon as the "motion" of life "comes to a standstill, the utter barrenness and emptiness of existence becomes apparent" (PP II p.287). I shall return to this point in § 5.
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The last argument I want to mention is somewhat different from those we have considered so far. Life, Schopenhauer suggests, is a perilous business:

dangers of the most varied kind threaten [a man] from all sides and to escape them calls for constant vigilance. With cautious step and anxious glance he pursues his path for a thousand accidents and a thousand enemies lie in wait for him (WR I p.312).

Above all these enemies are other human beings: "the chief source of the most serious evils attending man is man himself: homo homini lupus" (WR II p.577).

Why should this be the case? And why should it be an a priori rather than an empirical aspect of our lives?
The reason that we are, typically, enemies to each other lies in human egoism. This, we have seen it argued (Chapter VIII § 3), represents the norm of human behaviour; it is normal for a human being to "want everything for himself, want to possess, or at least control everything, and destroy whatever opposes him" (WR I p.332). And the reason that makes this an a priori rather than merely empirically observed norm lies, as we saw, in the human epistemological predicament. Only my body is presented to me as will; yours is presented as mere inanimate thing. Hence it is natural for me to dispose of you as suits my ends, as a mere object that has no capacity to feel either pleasure or pain.

§ 4 A Schopenhauerian Solution to Pessimism

I have now presented what I take to be the major planks in Schopenhauer's case for pessimism. Starting from an extremely minimal set of assumptions about human nature — the assumptions that we are embodied, willing beings that our will is informed by a conceptual intellect and that the wills of others are not presented to us in the way our own is — he has argued that written into the human condition is, first, a commitment to the pursuit of goals whose negative nature means they cannot compensate for the displeasure of wanting but not having them, second, a fatal polarity between the suffering of need and the suffering of boredom, third (we noted this claim to sit uncomfortably with its predecessors) that being incapable of living in the present we are incapable of experiencing the happiness it has to offer, and finally, that by natural disposition we stand to each other in relation of enemies.

There can be no doubt that all this adds up to a tragic view of the human condition. To my mind, there can be no doubting either that the Schopenhauerian case for the view is extremely formidable. One looks in vain for a
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comparably sustained case for optimism.

In this connection, I might briefly digress to mention one inductive argument Schopenhauer does, implicitly, present: the argument that nearly all (indisputably) great minds have had a pessimistic view of life so, probably (such is the implicit conclusion), pessimism is true (WR II p.585). Now of course not all great minds have ever considered the question: some devote themselves to nature rather than human nature, some do not operate on the level of generality at which the question of the overall character of life presents itself. So the claim must really be: most great minds which have considered the question have been pessimists. Now people who are interested in the character of the human condition as such are, most typically, artists. It is thus no surprise that most of the figures Schopenhauer quotes in support of his claim are indeed artists.

In fact, though, the claim can be better supported by looking at (in contrast with his minimal impact on philosophers) Schopenhauer's own tremendously powerful influence on artists. (Magee suggests, in fact, that his influence on the very greatest of artists possibly surpasses that of any philosopher since the Greeks (op.cit. p.389).) What is significant, however, is that if one examines the nature of that influence on these major figures — Wagner, Turgenev, Tolstoy, Zola, Maupassant, Proust, Hardy, Conrad, Mann to name but some — it is, without exception, one aspect or another of his pessimism that they find compelling. More than one explanation could be offered, of course, of the connexion between art and pessimism. Freudians (and Platonists) for example, are disposed to see the artist as a wounded figure inadequate to face the realities of life, and would see both art and pessimism as expressions of a diseased psyche. But if the discussion of Chapter VII was correct this position cannot be maintained: art is not an escape from life but a deep knowledge of its realities. If this is so then one cannot but be deeply impressed by the nature and scope of the Schopenhauerian influence.

To return now from this digression, we have before us a formidable and "a priori" case for pessimism. But it is not, as I have said, an argument for the necessity of suffering. For Schopenhauer has, I have argued, a sincere belief in the possibility of an other-worldly Erlösung from the tragedy of the human condition. I, however, want to propose a this-worldly solution to pessimism. But I shall call it a "Schopenhauerian" solution since, as I suggested at the beginning of this chapter, its main ingredients are to be found in Schopenhauer himself.

What I have in mind here is the fact that with regard to each of the arguments we have looked at, Schopenhauer not only propounds the argument, but also, albeit unemphatically, mitigates its apparent inexorability by hinting at methods of escape. We have noticed something of this already. Thus, with regard to the thesis of the negativity of pleasure, we saw that Plato's pleasures of intellect and odour were exempt, as were, apparently, a whole class of pleasures, the pleasures which come "of
themselves". Another thing we noticed was that while the negativity and boredom arguments both suggested that we should continue willing as hard as possible to avoid confronting the emptiness of merely being, the time argument seemed to imply that if only we could stop willing, some kind of happiness would await us "in the present". Moreover, the fact that animals were said actually to achieve life in the present suggested that it might not be entirely beyond our grasp to do so also.

So much for what we have seen in this chapter. But if we review aspects of Schopenhauer's philosophy discussed in earlier chapters, further avenues of escape suggest themselves. Thus, according to his philosophy of art, that loss of "interest" in the world which was argued above to result, inevitably, in boredom, is in fact the precondition for the "finest part of life" (WR 1 p.314), aesthetic joy. And a further avenue of escape is provided in Schopenhauer's ethical philosophy. For, as we saw, even though egoism is our natural state, the possibility exists of transcending it through sympathy through, that is, identification with others. Sympathy is important in two ways. First, contrary to the import of the egoism argument, the existence of the phenomenon means that others do not always, in fact, stand in hostile relations to one. Secondly, to the extent that one adopts, oneself, the life-form of the sympathetic altruist, one is provided with a way of coping with the fact that often, nonetheless, they do. Thus, as we saw, while egoism "contracts" one's world into a hostile Gesellschaft in which one is obsessed with active and possible threats to one's well-being, altruism "expands" it into a friendly Gemeinschaft. Sympathy, then, is an antidote to the failure to recognise genuine friendship when it presents itself, to, in general, the egoist's paranoid exaggerations of the embattled character of his predicament. And, while not needing to blind one to threats to one's individual well-being which actually exist, it diminishes their importance, prevents one becoming obsessed by them.

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What kind of solution to pessimism do these various forms of escape add up to? What kind of life-form do they collectively constitute?

Clearly, to evade the alienated misery of egoism, altruism, sympathetic identification with others, will be one component of this life. And it would seem also, that to find a way between the Scylla of need and the Charybdis of boredom, a strong aesthetic component should be included also; communion either with nature or with art.

We need to observe here, however, that in Schopenhauer's more considered discussions, boredom turns out to be a malady which afflicts only those with purely pragmatic intelligences, those for whom "the intellect is nothing but the medium of motive" (PP I p.331). People with the surplus
intelligence to be able to live the life of ideas can always escape it (PP I pp.329-331). So it seems that the intellectual life presents itself also as a way of avoiding boredom — a fact which was already implicit in Schopenhauer's agreement with Plato's exemption of intellectual pleasures from the class of negative pleasures.

But it would be a mistake to suppose from this that Schopenhauer is offering the intellectual life as an alternative to the aesthetic escape from boredom. For ultimately, as we saw (Chapter VII § 9), he sees no distinction between aesthetic and intellectual contemplation; at a deep level, conceptual merges into aesthetic consciousness since it, too, becomes perceptual.

It is on account of this thesis that Schopenhauer wants to classify intellectual along with aesthetic pleasures as pleasures which come "of themselves". He cannot, of course, exclude the will from either the aesthetic or the intellectual life. But neither can the will be excluded from sense-perception: we can do all sorts of things which influence what we see. Yet ultimately we are passive: the content of sense-perception is not something we choose or control. In a similar way, though the will is essentially involved in a technical and preparatory way in the intellectual, as in the aesthetic life, ultimately, "knowledge and insight as such are independent of free choice ... [are] not to be forcibly arrived at by intention or design but come suddenly, as if flying in from without ... [as it were] effects of grace". (WR I p.404).

It seems, then, that rather than describing the alternative to boredom narrowly, as the aesthetic life, we would do better to describe it more broadly as the life of knowing (as opposed to willing): that life-form which (rather than seeking actively to mould, to imprint the will onto the world) makes room for, and finds its highest pleasure in passive moments of perceptual insight.

It might here be objected, however, that this view, with its implication that the avoidance of boredom is the perogative of a cultivated intelligensia, embodies an elitism which is both obnoxious and implausible. For surely, it might be said, while the "problem of leisure" spoken of earlier may exist as a sociological phenomenon, there are nonetheless many individuals for whom no such problem exists, not because they are devoted to art or philosophy, but because, rather, they are absorbed in one of the myriad of quite humble activities which become for many people inexhaustible passions — gardening, pigeon-racing, handicrafts of all sorts, cooking, carpentry, tramping, sport, or whatever.

What I wish to say, however, about all these activities is that, to the extent that they really do engage one and are not simply Schopenhauer's "small motives" for deadening the pain of boredom, they are appropriately classified as modes of the life of knowing and as lying outside the life of willing. The important point here is that what it is we find satisfying about these activities is that they are (though we may sometimes reject the word
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for its elitist connotations) creative; to the extent that cooking or carpentry is absorbing it must be something other than cooking or carpentry "by numbers". Now although, at first glance, the idea of creativity is the idea of one's doing, originating, something oneself, on a deeper understanding one sees that creativity always involves, at critical moments, inspiration; in Schopenhauer's metaphor, an "effect of grace". Even the most humble activities involve one's suddenly seeing something — just how a particular turn of the pot, flower-bed, chair-leg, salad-arrangement or ice-skate must go. It is these moments of justifying and illuminating insight, moments which come, pleasurably, "of themselves", that link the activities which embody them to aesthetic or intellectual activity as further modes of the life of knowing. And it is they which show how all creative activity stands outside the life of willing. For what they reveal is that the model of goal-plan-execution which forms the repetitive pattern of the life of willing is inapplicable to creative activity since (except as described in the most general terms) neither the goal nor the plan exists prior to execution.

* * * * * *

What, finally, of "living in the present"? How would we incorporate that in the life-form that is our solution to pessimism? One way, of course, would be to adopt the will-abandoning life of Schopenhauer's ascetic. But that is incompatible with our aim of discovering a life-affirming solution to pessimism. Another way would be to ape the life of animals: one might live in the (specious) present by abandoning all long-term projects, living solely for the pleasures of the moment. We could call this the "encounter-group" solution. But apart from the fact that this solution is self-contradictory (for human beings the pleasures of the moment can include taking pleasure in one's long-term projects), there is, I think, a better way of living in the present. This is a form of stoicism which, as Schopenhauer describes it, is non-ascetic in that it allows us the "amenities of life" (and hence the undertaking of projects aimed at their acquisition), but requires the cultivation of a state of detached self-sufficiency in which one is always able to regard those amenities as "dispensible and as held in the hand of chance" (WR II p.155).

This life-form was advocated by Wittgenstein. In his long meditation of Schopenhauer's philosophy, it represents, I believe his point of divergence from the Schopenhauerian doctrine of asceticism and denial. For Wittgenstein, a happy life must be lived "in the present" (Tr. 6.43 - 6.4312, NB p.76). Does this mean, he wonders, that "only he is happy who does not will?" (NB p.77). Not so: it depends on "how one wants" (NB p.78). That is, one must be able to "want and yet not be unhappy if the want does not attain fulfilment" (NB p.77). In other words, it must be that one "can renounce the amenities of the world", regard them as "graces of fate" (NB p.81) (which,
the *Tractatus* tells us, is just what they are since one has, in this world, no assurance that anything one wills to happen will happen (6.373, 6.374).

§ 5 The Rejection of Perfectionism

Reflection on Schopenhauerian escapes from pessimism point, I have been suggesting, to a life-form which contains altruism, some mode or modes of the life of knowing, and a kind of stoicism as essential elements, a life-form which constitutes what I have called a "Schopenhauerian" solution to pessimism. In calling it a "solution" what I mean is that it represents a life worth living, a life which could not be described as vain or worthless. The life-form I have described is, however, not a recipe for permanent *ecstasy*. The reason for this is that its essential components are in competition with each other: one cannot, for example, fully satisfy the commitments of altruism and at the same time fully achieve the detachment demanded by stoicism. As Wittgenstein observes: "To love one's neighbour" means to will!" (NB p.77). So our life-form essentially involves compromises between competing demands and so a certain degree of suffering. It is a prescription for a good, not a perfect life.

Now Schopenhauer would not, I think, be in any way be in any way surprised that a solution such as the one described, is implicit in his philosophy, for he speaks of his writing as containing two viewpoints; "the higher ethical metaphysical standpoint to which my real philosophy leads" and the empirical standpoint from which we can pursue "eudaemonology" or *Lebensweisheit*, (wisdom or knowledge of life). This activity, he says, presupposes that "a happy existence" in this world is possible. But that, according to the higher viewpoint, is false (PP I p.313). So what he would say is that our life-form is ultimately uninteresting (along, presumably, with his own *Aphorismen zur Lebensweisheit*) since it is a house built on quicksand.

But why is a happy existence in this world impossible? Why would someone whose life was a reasonable approximation to the life-form I have described fail to be living one?

Schopenhauer, as we have observed, is extremely hostile to stoicism. Part of that hostility is based on a recognition of its very effectiveness: "it is true" he admits, that stoicism is "a good armour against the sufferings of life" (PP II p.320). But for this very reason it "stands in the way of true salvation for it hardens the heart ... [for] how can this be improved by sufferings [i.e. come through them to recognise that this world is something to be rejected] if it is surrounded by stone and does not feel them?" (ibid.)

But why should we bother looking for Erlösung if we live at least reasonably happy lives? Schopenhauer's answer is to be found in the following
revealing passage. In the long run, he says, in deciding "whether life is desirable or merits our gratitude" it is

superfluous to dispute whether there is more good or evil in the world; for the mere existence of evil decides the matter, since evil can never be wiped off and consequently can never be balanced by the good which exists along with or after it (WR II p.576).

Although this looks like an expression of the strange view that any evil has infinite negative value, the intended point is, in fact, different: "If the world and life were ends in themselves", he explains on the next page, "there would have to be no suffering at all .... Only then would life pay for itself." What is being claimed here is that since a heaven-on-earth, since the perfectibility of man is impossible (the a priori character of Schopenhauer's pessimism ensures that), one ought, with Schopenhauer and his holy ascetic, to turn all one's aspirations away from this world and toward another. We could call the impatience embodied in this kind of inference (the inference: this can never be perfect, so it is worthless) the perfectionist impulse.

But it is clear, I think, that the perfectionist impulse is idiosyncratic. Many of us do not have it and for those who do not the possibility of a good life in this world may be enough. Certainly the impulse is no part of rationality, so it cannot be mandatory that we reject a mundane Lösung in the hopes of a transcendent Erlösung.
Notes

Chapter I Idealism

1 I shall frequently refer to The World as Will and Representation as "the main work".

2 In my 'Schopenhauer's Critique of Kantian Ethics' (§ VII) I argue that while this is a fair assessment of the "moral proof" of the existence of God in the first Critique, it is unfair with regard to that in the third.

3 Wittgenstein writes in the Tractatus: "no part of our experience is at the same time a priori. Whatever we see could be other than it is. There is no a priori order of things" (Tr. 5.634). In my "Wittgenstein, Kant, Schopenhauer and Critical Philosophy", an essay which explores, in general, the wide and deep influence Schopenhauer exerted over Wittgenstein, I argue that this remark is intended specifically as an objection to Kantian metaphysics (cf. § III). Wittgenstein's name will appear frequently in the present study not, however, out of an interest in the history of ideas, but rather because of all Schopenhauer's readers, Wittgenstein is, as one would expect, the best at "hitting the nail on the head" (cf. Tr. pp. 3-4) with regard to both what is good and what is bad in Schopenhauer's philosophy.

4 As will be discussed in Chapter II (§ 3) Schopenhauer seriously overestimates what this theory is a theory of. This fact, however, should not be allowed to obscure its considerable virtues. In two ways, at least — his emphasis on the innateness of many perceptual abilities (FR. p.104) and his use of the idea of unconscious causal inference from sensory cue to external cause as a model for the activities by which the brain generates perception — Schopenhauer anticipates both the doctrine and methodology of modern psychology of perception. Previous commentators have misunderstood the theory. Both P. Gardiner, who calls it "bizarre" (Schopenhauer p.109) and D. Hamlyn, who calls it "disastrous" (Schopenhauer p.27) go particularly awry in feeling called upon to remind Schopenhauer that seeing is not the product of "hypothetical skills and knowledge" (Gardiner p.107) nor the result of an "epistemic move" from sensation to perception (Hamlyn p.56). Of course not! But Schopenhauer does not need to be told that the brain does not really infer, or possess causal knowledge. His use of the notion of causal inference is nothing but a model, an unproblematically analogical way of talking about brain-processes.
Chapter II Reason

5 It is symptomatic of the contrasting attitudes of Schopenhauer and Kant that while the latter, too, notices that reason makes us less happy than the animals, he immediately concludes that since we have reason, happiness is not the real end of man (Gr. 395-6).

6 I have discussed the details of the rejection in § III-V of 'Schopenhauer's Critique of Kantian Ethics'.

7 In "Schopenhauer's Critique of Kantian Ethics"(§ II) I have defended the Schopenhauer-Hume view by arguing that (attractive though it is) Kant's argument that rationality demands of us the moral life appears to rest on a logical fallacy.

8 Following F.L. Dretske's Seeing and Knowing there has been much talk in recent years of a distinction between epistemic and non-epistemic senses of "see". Dretske suggests (ch. 1) that there is a kind of seeing which is independent of concept-possession and does not entail the having of any beliefs about the world. I am not myself convinced that there is any such seeing. But even if there is, this is clearly not what Schopenhauer has in mind. For the seeing which he attributes to animals and claims to be concept-independent is thoroughly epistemic: for him, all seeing is knowing, indeed knowing par excellence (WR II pp. 72-3).

9 I have in mind here two Schopenhauerian themes. The first is his insistence on the phenomenon of inarticulate knowledge. Via numerous examples, he makes the point (in § 12 of the main work but in many other places too — e.g. WR I p.45, WR II p.75, FR p.149) that, for example, the infant speaker of his native language, the youthful pianist, the ordinary reasoner, the typical billiard player clearly know, respectively, rules of grammar, harmony, and logic, and laws of ballistics, though they have no capacity to articulate what they know. (The similarities between Schopenhauer's examples and those used by Gilbert Ryle in his attack on the "intellectualist legend" in Chapter 2 of the Concept of Mind seem to me to make it highly unlikely that Ryle was unacquainted with Schopenhauer's writings.) To acknowledge intuitive knowledge of the kind represented in these examples is not, of course, to acknowledge non-conceptual knowledge. Though Schopenhauer thinks otherwise, all the examples in fact require us to concede is that there is no necessary correlation between conceptual and linguistic ability. However, the second context in which Schopenhauer's talk of "knowledge of perception" contains, to my mind, important insight is that of his philosophy of art. Here (I shall be arguing in Chapter VII) he is quite right to speak of art as containing and communicating knowledge which, in principle, can never be captured in conceptual judgement.

10 The dialectic of the situation is complicated by the terminological point
that while Kant uses "understanding" to refer to the conceptual faculty, Schopenhauer uses it to refer to the sub-conceptual faculty responsible for these inferences. So "perception is the work of the understanding" ("is intellectual") is something Schopenhauer denies if "understanding" is used in Kant's sense, but affirms if it is used in his own.

12 Kant's language for describing (aspirant) concepts which fail the test of concept-empiricism — "empty", "entirely without meaning" (CPR B724), "mere play of the understanding" (CPR B298) — often sounds like that of the logical positivists, which inclines one to suppose that he views discourse employing such concepts as literally unintelligible nonsense. But this cannot possibly be so. Discourse employing the "ideas of reason" (concepts such as God, contra-causal freedom, the soul, immortality, the whole of time, all of space) which, by definition, fail the test, must be regarded as something we can at least understand (a) because his theory of metaphysical illusion requires it — if metaphysical propositions were literally unintelligible we could not have even the "illusion" of knowledge of God, the soul, and so on — (b) because his moral philosophy requires it in holding God, freedom and immortality to be, though not objects of knowledge, objects of rational faith and (c) because he holds the ideas of reason to be what are expressed by literature which he certainly does not regard as nonsense. So Kant's claim is on that a certain kind of meaning is defined by the test of concept-empiricism, the meaning, he explains, required of an utterance if it is to count as a "cognitive judgement" (cf. CJ § 36.1, § 57.12). Concept-empiricism, therefore, distinguished not between sense and nonsense, but between cognitive (scientific) and other kinds of meaning.

Chapter III Metaphysics

13 Conjectures and Refutations p.194.
15 Schopenhauer adds, however, that though philosophy must be rationalism, great philosophy may be underlied by a "concealed illuminism...to which the philosopher looks as to a hidden compass." The great philosophers however, are entirely reticent about illuminism. In contrast to the "noisy appeal to intellectual intuition" of Fichte et al., they do not seek to communicate it. This idea of a perceptual foundation to great philosophy will reappear in Chapter VII when we come to compare philosophy with art.
Chapter IV The Limits of Natural Science

16 R. Harré and E.H. Madden *Causal Powers*; see, especially, ch.9. I have interpreted their argument in a fairly liberal fashion to suit it to the present context.

17 *Beyond Good and Evil*. It may be inferred from the current discussion that Nietzsche's rejection of the 'chunky' version of atomism in favour of a dynamical alternative is part of a long tradition going back to Kant and beyond, and is by no means the dramatic departure from the views of his philosophical predecessors his language, at least, sometimes suggest it to be. For the views of Priestley and Boscovich see the appropriate entries in *The Encyclopedia of Philosophy*.

Chapter V The Individual Will

18 Letting 'S' stand for the set of motive-volition patterns, 'S_2' for the set of stimulus-response patterns, 'C' for a person's character and 'F' for the constellation of forces mentioned in (2), the argument can be formally represented as follows:

\[ C = (\exists x) (x \text{ ground } S_1) \]

\[ F = (\exists x) (x \text{ grounds } S_2) \]

\[ S_1 = S_2 \]

So \[ C = F \]

19 These representations will never be just representations of the immediate environment, for what collaborates with will to produce action always includes a set of relevant background beliefs. To take a simple case: the two duck-shooters may both take the duck to be a duck but one fires and the other not for the reason that the former believes the duck to be within range while the latter does not.

20 It might be objected that at WR I p.100 Schopenhauer insists that there must be no time gap between volition and action: "Resolutions of the will relating to the future are mere deliberations of reason about what will be willed at some time, not real acts of the will". But what really concerns him here is alterability, not temporality, for he continues: "Only the carrying out stamps the resolve; till then it is always a mere intention that can be altered; it exists only in reason, in the abstract". My identification of volitions with the neurological initiators of bodily action satisfies the unalterability condition: once it occurs the "carrying out" is inevitable.
Chapter VI The World as Will

21 Insight and Illusion p.71.
22 'Wittgenstein, Schopenhauer and Ethics' in Royal Institute of Philosophy Lectures vol VII p.100.
23 Notice the expanded use of "motive". In the last chapter it denoted the information-content relevant to explaining an action. But here it denotes a particular desire. Presumably in this expanded usage the motive for an action is everything relevant to its explanation i.e. both desire and belief.
24 Maurice Mandelbaum suggests that Schopenhauer's affinity is, in fact, mainly with Lemark who, like Schopenhauer, sees an organism as primarily a system of inner needs of which anatomical structure is the outward manifestation. See 'The Physiological Orientation of Schopenhauer's Epistemology' in Schopenhauer: His Philosophical Achievement pp.50-68.
25 In 'Actions, Reasons and Causes'.

Chapter VII Art

26 This is actually Wittgenstein's phrase (NB p.83). As I argue in 'Wittgenstein, Kant, Schopenhauer and Critical Philosophy' § VI, Schopenhauer's account of art made a particularly deep impression on Wittgenstein. I shall refer to the latter several times during the course of this chapter.
27 Wittgenstein, in describing this same phenomenon, speaks of the object of perception becoming "my world" (N.B. p.83). I owe to Andrea Dye the observation that becoming "my world" is the effect of the vast scale of American "colour-field" painting: at optimum viewing-distance the canvas extends right to the periphery of the visual field.

It should be noted here that, strictly speaking, the filling of consciousness with a "single image of perception" represents only Schopenhauer's account of the experience of the beautiful. As we will see in § 5, there is another mode of aesthetic consciousness — the experience of the sublime in which, in a certain way, awareness of the self is retained.
28 Schopenhauer's insistence on the inseparability of the transformation of subject and object (WR I p.197) is a claim I shall want to examine in some detail and eventually reject (cf. § 8). It is a claim made here in virtue of the fact that both transformations are mentioned within the scope of "at one stroke". Payne badly mistranslates the passage as "... the particular thing at one stroke becomes the Idea ... and the perceiving individual becomes ...". The German is quite unambiguous.
29 Actually the "subjective" form of such delight. There is also an objective
form which is the pleasure of acquiring knowledge of the Platonic Ideas (WR I pp.212-3). The two forms of pleasure correspond to two "senses" of "beautiful", an "objective" and "subjective" one (cf. § 8 below).

Schopenhauer has in mind here a species of 17th-century, Dutch still-life painting. I am told, however, that his art history is deficient. For, in fact, such "vanitas" paintings were intended and understood as deploying the painter's illusionist skills to remind the spectator of the illusory, worthless nature of all things of the flesh. In their proper context, therefore, they do not stimulate the taste buds. Rather, they actually promote a thoroughly Schopenhauerian mood of pessimism and ascetic self-denial.

30 einzeln. Payne fails to translate this, as will appear, crucial adjective. The next phrase, "act of will", Schopenhauer uses in his broad sense (WR II p.202, cf. Chapter V § 2) in which it means, roughly, "emotion".

31 Schopenhauer's account of the sublime is, in general, quite close to that of Kant, which he admired (WR I p.532). At this point, however, it is, I believe, superior to Kant's. To Kant, experiencing the sublime is, like the just man's 'fear' of God, a matter of knowing what awful things would happen to one were one not actually in a position of complete security. There is no actual experience of fear (CJ § 28). The trouble with this counterfactual story is that it does not accommodate easily even all of Kant's own examples of the (dynamically) sublime: overhanging rocks, thunder clouds (ibid.), or (Schopenhauer's example) the wailing wind do not obviously threaten to do anything terrible to one in any circumstances.

32 Kant, too, makes a distinction between a subjective and objective notion of beauty, between "free" and "dependent" beauty. Though free beauty bears little similarity to Schopenhauer's subjective notion, dependent beauty is substantially the same as Schopenhauer's objective notion (cf. CJ § 16).

33 This is somewhat misleading since (WR I p.225) some things express their Ideas so badly as to be positively ugly. The point Schopenhauer really wants to make is twofold: first, that beauty and its opposite form a continuum second that since no natural kind is too lowly to be associated with an Idea none is excluded from the sphere of the beautiful or from the domain of art (cf. the remarks on Dutch genre painting, p. 86 above).

34 The Fire and the Sun p.84.

35 This epigram of Schiller's is quoted by Wittgenstein in the course of a Schopenhauer-influenced meditation on the relation between art and the world (NB p.86).

36 Cf. 'Wittgenstein, Kant, Schopenhauer and Critical Philosophy', § V, § VI.
Chapter VIII The Metaphysics of Morals

39 Schopenhauer: His Philosophical Achievement pp.32-3.  
40 'Presenting Schopenhauer' in Schopenhauer: His Philosophical Achievement p.19.  
42 There is a certain misunderstanding of Plato's notion virtue (areté) here — the Greek notion has no specifically moral connotations — but it is not to the point to examine this here.  
44 Schopenhauer lands himself in some confusion by trying, sometimes, to confine the concept of wrong-doing, dereliction of duty, to acts of commission. Omissions (except failures to keep previously undertaken obligations (BM pp. 156-7)) are not wrong (indeed they are "right" since that merely means "not wrong" (WR I p.339): the refusal to help others in distress while "cruel and diabolical" is not wrong (ibid.). But this attempt to make the morally wrong co-extensive with what the state (which is concerned only with deeds) can legislate against (cf. WR I p.344) is highly implausible. And it conflicts with Schopenhauer's account of the "principle" of morality. For according to that, clearly, there are duties of benevolence, duties to help others in need.  
45 It is interesting to compare Schopenhauer's assumption that there must be an explanation with the following remark of Hume (for whom, too, sympathy ("humanity", "fellow-feeling") is the basis of virtue): "It is needless to push our researches so far as to ask, why we have humanity or fellow-feeling with others. It is sufficient that this is experienced to be a principle in human nature. We must stop somewhere in our examination of causes." Enquiries pp. 219-20.  
46 Notice that, as is implicit in the conception of wrong-doing as consisting in "denial" of the will of another (cf. p.105 above), there cannot be "victim-less" crimes for Schopenhauer. If a man is so rich and careless of his money that I can steal a sum from him without his knowledge or his being caused any degree of suffering, then since no suffering accrues to him or, therefore, to my transcendental self, it follows that I am not punished and have (given the doctrine of eternal justice) done nothing wrong. The normative ethic implicit in Schopenhauer's discussion of morality is, it seems to me, act-utilitarianism.

Chapter IX The Denial of the Will

47 It is perhaps worth observing Schopenhauer's predilection for repres-
enting life in terms of circular or spherical metaphors (cf. the representation of time as a revolving sphere on p.101 above). There is more than a hint of the Nietzschean theme of "eternal recurrence" in Schopenhauer. The predilection is a not surprising one, for the metaphor of a circle is the natural expression of the lack of an ultimate point to, or progress in life.

48 It might be objected that while the saintly ascetic could perhaps be regarded as a practical hero, he cannot be regarded as a moral one since the moral life is something he has abandoned. Indeed, it might be said, from the moral point of view he is actually to be condemned since in choosing to pursue personal salvation while abandoning the rest of us to our sufferings, he has ceased to take into account the interests of others, acting purely for the sake of his own. But, of course, this is not how the saint or Schopenhauer sees it. For, from the standpoint of transcendental solipsism, the distinction between one's own interests and those of others disappears. From that standpoint, if altruistic action really is impotent to alleviate suffering then, from our as well as my point of view, pursuing my own salvation is the best thing I can do. The saint may transcend the life of virtuous action but he does not, in the Schopenhauerian scheme of things, become immoral.

49 The Savage God p.72.

50 History of Western Philosophy p.785.

51 'Reflections on Schopenhauer's Pessimism' in Schopenhauer: His Philosophical Achievement.

52 Cf. "the tendency of all men who ever tried to write or talk Ethics or Religion was to run against the boundaries of language ... against the walls of our cage ...". Wittgenstein's "Lecture on Ethics" p.12.

53 My access to such scholarship is through R.S. Elwood's Mysticism and Religious Experience and the articles on mysticism in the Encyclopedia of Philosophy, vol 5 by N. Smart and R.W. Hepburn.

Chapter X Pessimism

54 The general lines of this reformulation were suggested to me by Gottfried Gabriel's 'Conservatismus aus Pessimismus. Schopenhauer, die soziale Frage und das Glück'.

55 No doubt this is why Marxists like to dismiss Schopenhauer as decadent and corrupt; for example, Georg Lukács in the abusively titled 'The Bourgeois Irrationalism of Schopenhauer's Metaphysics' in Schopenhauer: His Philosophical Achievement.
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