Schopenhauer on Empirical and Aesthetic Perception and Cognition

Bart Vandenabeele

In Schopenhauer's view, the whole organic and inorganic world is ultimately governed by an insatiable, blind will. Life as a whole is purposeless: there is no ultimate goal or meaning, for the metaphysical will is only interested in manifesting itself in (or *as*) a myriad of phenomena which we call the "world" or "life". Human life too is nothing but an insignificant product or "objectivation" of the blind, unsconsious will and because our life is determined by willing (i.e. by needs, affects, urges and desires), and since willing is characterised by lack, our life is essentially full of misery and suffering. We are constantly searching for objects that can satisfy our needs and desires and once we have finally found a way to satisfy one desire, another one crops up and we become restless willing subjects once again, and so on in an endless whirlpool of willing, suffering, momentary satisfaction, boredom, willing again, etc. Life is not a good thing. The only way, Schopenhauer argues, to escape from these torments of willing is by "seeing the world aright", as Wittgenstein would have it, i.e. by acknowledging the pointlessness and insignificance of our own willing existence, and ultimately by giving up willing as such – which in fact really means abandoning our own individuality, our own willing selves – which is momentarily possible in aesthetic experiences of beauty and sublimity, and permanently achievable only in the exceptional ethical practices of detachment, mysticism and asceticism, in which the will to life is eventually denied and sheer nothingness is embraced – either through harsh suffering or through sainthood.

Yet here I set out to examine a perhaps somewhat lesser known part of his philosophy: his theory of perception and cognition. Acknowledgement of this strand of his thought moves Schopenhauer away from the German idealism of Schelling, Hegel, and other contemporaries and takes him back to the company where he (or so I contend) more properly belongs: the

British empiricists, such as Locke, Reid, Berkeley and Hume, and of course Kant, whom he revered with immense adoration. I first expound Schopenhauer's theories of the "intellectual" character of intuitive perception and the hierarchy of the senses, and argue that his analysis of the role of the understanding in perception may be closer to Kant's than he conceded, but supplements Kant's transcendental conception of perception and understanding with a more scientifically plausible account of sensory perception and empirical cognition. I then contrast this with his account of *aesthetic* perception and cognition (*ästhetische Anschauung und Erkenntnis*), in which the brain operates detached from our will and offers pure, will-less pleasure. I shall argue that Schopenhauer surpasses Kant's aesthetic theory of disinterested pleasure by (rightly) holding that the value of aesthetic cognition and art cannot be reduced to the value of the pleasure they yield.

1. Perception and Understanding

The gist of Schopenhauer's account of perception is that all intuitive perception (*Anschauung*) is intellectual, i.e. only through the understanding's application of the concepts of time, space and causality can the world "stand out as perception extended in space, varying in respect of form, persisting through all time as regards matter" (*WWR* I, 12; see also *WWR* II, 19).[1] The senses alone do not suffice to offer perception, since they "furnish nothing but the raw material, and this the understanding first of all works up into the objective grasp and apprehension of a corporeal world governed by laws, and does so by means of the simple forms … space, time, and causality. Accordingly, our daily *empirical intuitive perception is intellectual*." (*FR*, 78) He emphasises, however, that "This operation of the understanding … is not discursive or reflective, nor does it take place *in abstracto* by means of concepts or

words; on the contrary, it is intuitive and quite immediate" (*ibid.*)

Schopenhauer uses this view of the 'intellectual' nature of perception to argue for the ideality of the perceived world. Schopenhauer proclaims himself to be a true follower of Kant's transcendental idealism from the first sentence of his magnum opus, *The World as Will and Representation*: "The world is my representation." Many people have taken this to mean: "something does not exist unless it is mental." However, this is not what Schopenhauer intends.[2] Schopenhauer's basic idea is that there is "no object without a subject, and no subject without an object." In the first paragraph of *The World as Will and Representation*, he writes that there is no truth more certain than the truth which states that the whole world is merely an object in relation to a subject.[3] The subject is clearly the "supporter of the world, the universal condition of all that appears, of all objects, and it is always presupposed; for whatever exists, exists only for the subject." (*WWR* I, 5) The subject does not belong to the world, but is, as Wittgenstein says, the *limit* of the world, and can never become an object of consciousness. Like Hume, Schopenhauer suggests that the subject can never be encountered *in* the world, and praises Descartes, Berkeley, and especially Kant, as the first thinkers to acknowledge the crucial importance of the subject. He distinguishes his position from scepticism, realism (which he calls 'dogmatic'), and idealism.

Fichte held that the "non-ego" must be derived from the "ego", "as the web from the spider." (*WWR* I, 33) Whereas Fichte's idealism "makes the object the effect of the subject" (*WWR* I, 13), Schopenhauer argues that subject and object necessarily presuppose one another. Subject and object are not related to each other as cause and effect. The law of causality applies only *within* the world of representations and objects, and cannot be applied to explain the relation between an object and a subject. Fichte's idealism unjustly turns the object into the effect (*Wirkung*) of the subject. This is unacceptable for Schopenhauer, because they both imply one other *a priori*: object and subject precede all cognition, and

therefore also the causal knowledge based on the understanding's principle of sufficient reason:

> the perceived world in space and time, proclaiming itself as nothing but causality, is perfectly real, and is absolutely what it appears to be; it appears wholly and without reserve as representation, hanging together according to the law of causality. This is its empirical reality. On the other hand, all causality is only in the understanding and for the understanding. The entire actual, i.e., active, world is therefore always conditioned as such by the understanding, and without this is nothing. … The whole world of objects is and remains representation, and is for this reason and for ever conditioned by the subject; in other words, it has transcendental ideality. But it is not on that account falsehood or illusion; it presents itself as what it is, as representation, and indeed as a series of representations, whose common bond is the principle of sufficient reason. (*WWR* I, 14-15)

Unfortunately, instead of providing arguments, he seems to take this (basically Kantian) position for granted, and confines himself to arguing, against the sceptic, that objects of perception causally interact on us, and that this causal action exhausts their (empirical) "being". As Schopenhauer puts it in the passage just quoted from *WWR* I, § 5: "the perceived world in space and time, proclaiming itself as nothing but causality, is perfectly real, and is absolutely what it appears to be; it appears wholly and without reserve as representation, hanging together according to the law of causality." Schopenhauer maintains that complete causal knowledge of objects (of perception) is possible, and that this is all there is to be known about such objects: there is no essence, substrate or whatever 'underlying' them – at

least not in the world as representation. The phenomenal world is ultimately nothing less than a series of perceptual objects, insofar as they causally act upon us. Thus because the idea of causal agency and the concept of causality is furnished by the understanding, perception is always the *product* of the understanding, although it is obviously triggered by sensations.

Even more worrisome is that he does not merely fail to supply a convincing argument for his transcendental idealism but also regularly identifies the world as representation with a dream, which seems to lead him to precisely the kind of (Fichtean) idealism he absolutely wanted to avoid. In these passages, Schopenhauer is especially inspired by Plato, Calderon de la Barca, and Shakespeare: waking and dreaming are as pages from the same book.[4] Although Schopenhauer tends to describe life as "a long dream", by no means does he deny the existence or authenticity of empirical reality.[5] Rather than maintaining that the whole of existence is a dream, Schopenhauer points out that there is no sufficient criterion which enables us to absolutely distinguish dream from reality, except for the empirical fact of waking up.[6] His Kantian-inspired *transcendental* idealism, which assumes that the epistemic capacities of the subject determine the structure of the phenomenal world, is compatible with empirical realism. Just as in Kant, transcendental ideality is combined with the epistemic authenticity of empirical reality. As Schopenhauer puts it in the second volume of *The World as Will and Representation*: "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; but empirically, my head is in space." (*WWR* II, 19)

Schopenhauer agrees with Kant that experience is dependent on the nature of the cognitive faculties and that the world of all actual and potential experience is dependent on the knowing subject, such that the world cannot exist by itself independently of the cognizing subject. Schopenhauer calls the theory of realism, which claims that our experience is a

perfect copy of the world in itself, an "empty castle in the air," in which serious philosophers cannot have any faith.[7] That the objective world, the world of objects, would exist independently even if there were no subjects, seems perhaps *prima facie* acceptable; however, it is only thinkable *in abstracto.* As soon as one tries to imagine such a world, one ends up in the paradoxical view that what one is *imagining* is precisely the opposite of what one intends, i.e. a world free from an imagining subject.[8] Schopenhauer's arguments are not really very convincing, though: he is right to hold that the representation of a world free from a subject presupposes a subject – for it presupposes my own imagining mind – but not that the *existence* of a world independent of a subject also does. Schopenhauer unjustly relies on the (Berkeleyan) thought that what we can experience can exist only in relation to our experiencing of it.

Schopenhauer does not, however, simply endorse Kant's famous statement that "intuitions without concepts are blind." Although he praises Kant's *Transcendental Aesthetic*[9], he is quite critical of the way in which Kant deals with intuitive perception. This becomes quite clear from the following crucial excerpt:

> 'Our knowledge,' he [Kant] says, 'has two sources, receptivity of impressions and spontaneity of concepts: the former is the capacity of receiving representations; the latter is the capacity for knowing an object [*Gegenstand*] through these representations. Through the first an object is given to us, through the second it is thought.' This is false, for according to this the *impression*, for which alone we have mere receptivity, which therefore comes from without and alone is really '*given*,' would be already a *representation*, in fact even an *object*. But it is nothing more than a mere sensation in the sense-organ, and only by the application of the understanding (i.e. of the law of causality), and of the forms of perception, of

> space and time, does our *intellect* convert this mere *sensation* into a *representation.* (*WWR* I, 438)

Schopenhauer aims to show that Kant starts with an empirical intuition that is *given* to us without telling us how this is done, and without clarifying how exactly the thought that a certain intuition is *given* can be united with Kant's *Transcendental Logic*, which treats the understanding as the unifying factor of our intuitive perceptions (see *WWR* I, 437-451). Schopenhauer also takes offence at Kant's rather confused usage of terms such as *Anschauung*, *Perzeption*, and *Wahrnehmung*. He is definitely right to criticise Kant's vague and occasionally even ambiguous use of terms like this (see e.g. the use of "Perzeption" in *Critique of Pure Reason*, A 320/B 376-7). Nevertheless, Schopenhauer himself frequently uses the concepts 'perception' and 'intuition' interchangeably (see e.g. *FR*, § 21), and also obviously underestimates Kant's explicit recognition of the role of the understanding in transforming sensation into perception. Kant further divides objective perception into intuition, which is always immediate, and concept, which is always mediate. Yet, from this, Schopenhauer wrongly concludes that, on Kant's account, this must imply that the understanding (with its categories) has no crucial role to play in the constitution of perceptual objects.

Schopenhauer characterises the understanding's activity as phenomenologically "immediate" instead of inferential (or "discursive", as he usually calls it). (*FR*, 78; *WWR* I, 12). The understanding connects subjective sensations (*Empfindungen*) with an external cause. His essay *On the Fourfold Root of the Principle of Sufficient Reason* offers a subtle and detailed account of the distinct functions of the understanding. In the case of visual perception, for instance, the understanding sees to it that the visual image, which is basically an affection of the retina, is first reversed; then it is converted to only one perception, further

broadened to three dimensions, and, finally, correctly situated in time and space. The most important task of the understanding is to ensure that the subjectively and successively experienced perceptions are held to be the effect of an external cause. This occurs on the basis of the sole category that Schopenhauer retains from Kant's complex system of the twelve a-priori categories, namely causality:

> According to Kant's own and correct discovery, the law of causality is known to us *a priori*, and is consequently a function of our intellect, and is therefore of *subjective* origin. (…) Therefore the whole of empirical intuition thoroughly remains on a *subjective* ground and basis as a mere happening in us, and nothing from it that is completely different and independent can be brought in as a thing-in-itself, or demonstrated to be a necessary presupposition. (*WWR* I, 436)

On the basis of the *a priori* category of space, this affect or sensation in the organism is ascribed to a cause that lies outside the organism. Thus a world of objects is created by the activity of the understanding through the application of the *a priori* categories of time, space, and causality. The understanding *creates* a world of objects with the aid of the raw materials that the senses provide. Thus, thanks to this – phenomenologically immediate – activity of the understanding, a world of objects, situated in space-time emerges:

> This operation of the understanding ... is not discursive or reflective ... on the contrary, it is intuitive and quite immediate. For only by this operation and consequently in the understanding and for the understanding does the real, objective, corporeal world, filling space in three dimensions, present itself [*stellt sich ... dar*]; and then it proceeds, according to the same law of causality, to

> change in time and move in space. Accordingly, the understanding itself has first to create the objective world, for this cannot just step into our heads from without, already cut and dried, through the senses and openings of their organs. (*FR,* 78)

However complex this process may be, it none the less evolves *unconsciously*. The understanding does not have a merely synthetic function that brings together various sense impressions in an image or a bundle of sensations. Intuitive perception is a process, whereby the understanding makes sure that affects or sensations are connected with their respective external causes, so that we become conscious of a world of objects. Phenomenologically, we perceive the objects "immediately," i.e. without being conscious of the complex activity of the understanding's supplying the category of causality. After all, many empirical experiments point out that, for instance, what we see is a reversal of the image that the rays of light deliver to the retina. For example, were *seeing* merely the subjective sensation of the rays of light on the retina, then we would have the impression that objects are turned upside down.

Although Schopenhauer's account of perception and the role of the understanding is quite illuminating, the following critical remarks are in place. First, Schopenhauer unjustly identifies the (subjective) sensations with the physiological elements that he offers to explain their origin and nature. This move is far from evident and ultimately circular. Although the physiological aspects of his theory are interesting, Schopenhauer never actually makes clear how it is possible, for instance, that the manifold of the light's affections upon the retina can provide anything like an "image". To conclude on the basis of the inadequacy of the sensory image that the activity of the understanding – which Schopenhauer identifies physiologically with the brain – is necessary, offers no solid argument against epistemological theories that do not appeal to the constitutive role of the understanding, but only a *methodological* detour with

respect to Kant's transcendental approach. As Paul Guyer has persuasively argued, Kant's transcendental method has now been refined and supplemented by a phenomenological method.[10] Schopenhauer's thought that sense impressions, considered physiologically, do not correspond with the objective intuition of a world of physical objects, is not an argument for the *a priori* activity of the understanding, but may as well reveal the deficiencies of such a physiological approach. For that matter, it is important to note that Schopenhauer presupposes that the images in the retina would be those that the physiological subject receives. This cannot be the case, since these "double images" (*Doppelbilder*), which, moreover, are "turned upside-down", are available only to the scientists carrying out the research on visual perception but not to ordinarily perceiving subjects.

Furthermore, the physiological and optical theories that set out to explain what happens when rays of light pass through the eye's lens do not imply that one perceives upside down images in one manner or another that one must consequently invert. The physiological issue "how can we see" cannot as easily be identified with the epistemological issue concerning the nature of specific abilities and achievements important for the execution of a specific activity, viz. seeing, as Schopenhauer seems to suppose.

Finally, how can perceptual objects both be a construct of the subject *and* provide the causal ground for this subject-related activity? There is a whiff of paradox here again, which can perhaps only be weakened if: (1) the naturalising tendency of this epistemology is abandoned, though Schopenhauer is clearly not inclined to do this; or (2) one accepts that the physical objects that provide the "raw" material for objective intuitions are fundamentally different from the intuitions constructed on the basis of sensory perception; or (3) one is prepared to carry through a complete naturalisation of the power of cognition and dispense with *a priori* structures altogether.

Schopenhauer would probably answer rather bluntly that the assumption of an

empirical reality external to the subject is clearly "an empty castle in the air", which serious philosophers cannot rely on (cf. supra). Through its physiological facets Schopenhauer's theory is a meritorious supplement to Kant's epistemology, but the strength of his naturalistic arguments is undermined by persistently defending the transcendental *ideality* of the world as representation.[11]

2. The senses

Since he believes that Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason* gives too much attention to *pure* intuition and *abstract* judgement and reasoning, Schopenhauer wants to offer a more detailed account of intuitive perception and the role that the senses play in this activity. It is to Schopenhauer's credit that he develops several interesting physiological hypotheses in connection with sense perception. Although Schopenhauer thinks that he thus mainly provides a critique of Kant's theory of perception, he primarily offers a phenomenological supplement to it, instead of a preparing a real departure from Kant's theory.[12] Without fully admitting it, Schopenhauer's account is clearly inspired by Kant's *Anthropology from a Pragmatic Point of View*, and attempts to integrate these more psychological and physiological ideas into his own philosophy of the will. Before broaching his fascinating account of *aesthetic* perception, we shall first examine his hierarchy of the senses, which is remarkably close to the one Kant expounds in the *Anthropology*. Here, we shall focus on the senses which Schopenhauer considers to be the "most noble" of all: hearing and sight.

The sense of hearing

Schopenhauer was extremely sensitive to noise, and contends that the less noise one can stand, the more intellectually gifted one is. The amount of noise we can bear is inversely proportionate with intelligence. Schopenhauer says that, "therefore, when I hear dogs barking unchecked for hours in the courtyard of a house, I know what to think of the mental powers of the inhabitants." (*WWR* II, 30)

The relation between intellectual talent and the inability to bear noise – which he perceives in Goethe, Jean Paul,[13] and Kant – is not merely anecdotally interesting. In the first place, this is evident in the pains Schopenhauer takes to corroborate this view with scientific arguments:

> [T]he sensation of hearing does not originate in the labyrinth or in the cochlea, but only deep down in the brain where the two auditory nerves meet, through which the impression becomes single. But this is where the *pons Varolii* encloses the *medulla oblongata*, and thus at the absolutely lethal spot, by injury to which any animal is instantly killed, and from which the auditory nerve has only a short course to the labyrinth, the seat of the acoustic perception. It is just because its source is here, in this dangerous place, from which all movement of limbs also arises, that we start with a sudden bang. This does not occur at all with a sudden illumination, e.g. a flash of lightning. (...) From this origin of the auditory nerve is also explained the great disturbance that the power of thought suffers through sounds. Because of this disturbance, thinking minds, and people of great intellect generally, are without exception absolutely incapable of enduring any noise. (*WWR* II, 29)

Schopenhauer spares no effort to corroborate his philosophical ideas through scientific

insights. Much less effort does he take to inform the reader about the rather peculiar position that hearing occupies in his account. On the one hand, hearing is, along with sight, the noblest sense; on the other, unlike sight and touch, hearing is not capable of creating an objective intuition with the aid of the understanding. Moreover, hearing is the sense of language and of reason, the faculty of abstract reasoning, *and* it distracts great minds very easily from their noble art of thinking.[14] This is rather puzzling, and the confusion is only enhanced by Schopenhauer's assertion that "tones can excite pain immediately, and can also be directly agreeable sensuously without reference to harmony or melody." (*WWR* I, 200) Yet being immediately pleasant or unpleasant is the criterion by which smell and taste are branded as merely *subjective* senses. Why would this "sense of reason" still be called objective and even "noble", if it immediately brings an affective response along with it?

The sense of sight

Together with Goethe, Schopenhauer carried out important scientific experiments on visual perception and colour, and he even wrote an intriguing but little read work on that theme: *On Vision and Colours*. In his theory of knowledge, but also in his aesthetics and his ethics, sight and intuition play an incredibly important part. Schopenhauer is without doubt a philosopher of the eye: not only the eye in the biological sense, but also of the mind's eye. Moreover, visual metaphors abound in his discourse. Metaphors and other figures of speech connected with the eye, with mirrors and mirroring, with images and imaging, with intuition and (in)sight, are a true obsession.

Schopenhauer does not, however, offer a consistent and unproblematic account of the nature of visual perception. Seeing is sharply distinguished from the rest of the senses, because the eye, in contrast to the other organs, is not directly connected with the will. In this

sense, sight is the *aesthetic* organ par excellence, because it can be affected without this affection being experienced immediately as pleasant or unpleasant, as is the case in the 'pure' pleasure experienced by the sight of beautiful colours:

> The wholly immediate, unreflective, yet also inexpressible, pleasure that is excited in us by the impression of colours (...) as for example in stained glass windows, and even more by means of clouds and the reflection at sunset – this pleasure, I say, ultimately rests on the fact that in the easiest manner, in a manner that is almost physically necessary, the whole of our interest is here won for knowledge without any excitement of our will. We thus enter into the state of pure knowing, although in the main this consists in this case in a mere sensation of the retina's affection. But as this sensation is in itself wholly free from pain or pleasure, it is without any direct excitement of the will, and thus belongs to pure knowledge. (*WWR* II, 375)

Schopenhauer holds that visual perception is the easiest way to be able to experience purely aesthetic pleasure, which is – as we shall see – of a peculiar kind, since it is experienced without the will being stirred, i.e. without *affect*. Unlike the other senses, and by its specific direct sensory activity alone, sight is incapable of calling up a pleasurable or non-pleasurable sensation in the organ; it has no direct connection with the will.[15] Neither hearing nor touch, nor smell or taste, taken in themselves, seem capable of such a neutral affection, for they are too intimately connected with the will to be able to be affected without producing an *affect*, i.e. a sensation of pleasure or displeasure. Apart from the disturbing paradoxes involved in this view, phenomenologically speaking, Schopenhauer also suddenly seems unaware of the common experience of the especially painful and unpleasant feeling caused by, for example,

driving out of a dark tunnel directly into blazing sunlight. However, to Schopenhauer's defence, one might argue that what Schopenhauer here describes as a neutral affection of the eye, is a possible but *not* a necessary result of the activity of our eyes. Seeing something may be neutral, in the sense that it is not pleasurable or painful, but that is not necessarily so. On the other hand, one might wonder whether, at least, the sense of hearing might not also be capable of producing the pure aesthetic pleasure that Schopenhauer describes, for instance, when listening to beautiful music.

The philosophically more serious predicament is how to distinguish sight in this manner from the other senses. The privileged position that he clearly ascribes to seeing is contradicted by a remark concerning touch in comparison with hearing:

> In the case of hearing, this is different: tones can excite pain immediately, and can also be directly agreeable sensuously without reference to harmony or melody. Touch, as being one with the feeling of the whole body, is still more subject to this direct influence on the will; and *yet there is a touch devoid of pain and pleasure*. (*WWR* I, 199-200; emphasis added)

In light of the above efforts to sharply distinguish the qualities of sight from the other senses, this is, to say the least, surprising. Here the sense of touch, which is so closely related to the feeling of one's own body, seems as equally able to produce the kind of affectively neutral perception, which seemed at first sight to be the privilege of the sense of sight. Schopenhauer considers sight and touch as the only truly objective senses, because they are the only senses that are alleged to be able to create an *objective* intuition of the external world with the help of the understanding. This is not only confusing, as it threatens to disturb his hierarchy of the senses and especially seems to underestimate the sense of hearing discussed above, but also

because an unprecedented privilege is attached to the transcendental form of space. Moreover, it is hardly clear why and how the activity of touching something, which is intimately connected to the experience of one's whole body, can be genuinely neutral, and (phenomenologically speaking) it is even untenable in the case of the sense of sight (cf. the example of the harsh sunlight).[16] Thus there is a striking ambiguity in Schopenhauer's use of the term "objective": now he uses it in the sense of "being capable of realising an objective intuition, i.e. perception of an external object" and then it can also mean something altogether different, namely "not immediately connected to an affective stirring of the will". To be able to properly ground his distinction between the *value* and the *function* of the sense, Schopenhauer would need to provide arguments for the idea that both senses of the term "objective" imply one other, which he does not.

Two final worries must be addressed. First, in *Fourfold Root* we read that "perceptions of sight ultimately refer to touch, and sight can be regarded as an imperfect touch extending to a distance and making use of the rays of light as long feelers (*Taststangen*)." (*FR*, 81) Schopenhauer does not shy away from disturbing his own hierarchy of the senses. The activity of seeing is considered as a kind of touching, which uses the rays of light as *feelers*. If this is so, one might wonder how the sense of sight can still maintain its privileged position of being the only (or at least the ideal) sense capable of producing pure, will-less, aesthetic perception.

Moreover, Schopenhauer maintains that visual perception occurs unconsciously and is thereby inevitably accompanied by two systematic forms of 'deceit' (*Täuschungen*). These are most strongly present in seeing. The first is the illusion of immediacy (time), and the second is the illusion of proximity (space). The first is arguably grounded in the fact that visual perception hardly needs time to take place or that there seems no time lapse between the stimulation of the eye and the experience of the perceived object. According to

Schopenhauer this applies exclusively to seeing, because in the dark, for instance, one must touch an object for a long time before one perceives what kind of object one has before oneself. Seeing occurs "directly" or "immediately", Schopenhauer says, since

> the unconsciousness with which the transition from the sensation to its cause is brought about really occurs only with perception in the narrowest sense, with *vision* or *sight*. On the other hand, with every other perception or apprehension of the senses the transition occurs with more or less clear consciousness; thus in the case of apprehension through the four coarser senses, the reality of the transition can be directly experienced as a fact. (*WWR* II, 23)

Is Schopenhauer's claim that only sight falls prey to this illusion of immediacy correct? When one feels a pain in the index finger of one's left hand from the sting of an insect, then one localises this pain immediately in the index finger of one's left hand, although here too quite a considerable physiological route will have been followed, for the pain cannot be localised without the intervention of the nervous and cerebral system. Although the place where one feels the pain is certainly the index finger on one's left hand, still, one would not feel pain if the nerves of the finger were blocked, even though the insect had definitely stung the finger.[17] There are also people that feel pain in limbs they no longer have. We can also still see objects that are no longer there, such as stars that were extinguished long before we were even born, but that we are nevertheless still able to perceive. Although the star that one perceives seems directly present, and although one has the feeling that one has direct contact with it, this perception remains the same whether or not this same star is actually still 'there'.[18] This occurs in every (visual) perception, even that of the lamp on my desk: the lamp itself seems to be 'out there' – just as the stars that I see when I am now looking out of my window, but the

perceived lamp can only occur through the activity of the eyes and the understanding (the brain). Even the "starry heaven above me" is ultimately nothing but a brain phenomenon.[19]

For Schopenhauer, this "illusion … that the sensation itself gives us the objects directly" thus originates from the "perfection" of the eye and the "exclusively rectilinear action of the light".[20] Schopenhauer justly emphasises the immediacy of visual perception, but one might again object that this is not the exclusive privilege of the sense of sight. Thus, for instance, the same can be said about the sense of touch, although it does seem harder in the case of olfactory perception. The pleasant stimulation caused by the perfume of someone passing by can make someone realise immediately that it is Acqua di Giò she smells, just as one could see on the basis of the shape of a bottle lacking a label that it is a bottle of Acqua di Giò. Yet that is not the kind of immediacy Schopenhauer refers to. What he wants to make clear is that there is no conscious inferential step made from the sensation (*Empfindung*) of the bottle through my eye to the objective intuition (*Anschauung*) of the specific bottle, whereas this does occur in the case of someone's stimulated nasal organ, even if only through the activity of sniffing: someone's olfactory system is stimulated by a certain odour, which one finds pleasant or unpleasant, and to which one consciously attaches the property "perfume, specifically, Acqua di Giò by Armani." In a certain sense, the illusion of immediacy, which is strongest in visual perception, is also the most deceitful.

Schopenhauer's position does not escape a certain circularity here: the epistemic importance of the understanding is derived from the complexity of the most significant type of sense, namely vision, which is itself only explained on the basis of the operation of the understanding. Yet Schopenhauer's theory undoubtedly has the merit of supplementing Kant's theory of knowledge with a gripping account of how perception occurs and what the specific roles of the senses are. It is, therefore, surprising that this rich conception of empirical cognition and perception plays such a dispensable part in his discussion of *aesthetic*

consciousness, to which we now turn.

3. Aesthetic Perception and Cognition

Schopenhauer holds that the intellect, which he identifies physiologically with the brain, is an instrument or tool of the will. The will has created brains to help organisms survive. As I have argued above, empirical cognition of the world is always within the forms of space, time, and causality imposed by the subject. Following Hume instead of Kant this time, Schopenhauer holds that the subject's intellectual imposition of space, time, and causality on experience is driven by human needs, interests, and affects. The intellect is governed by the will: it is merely the will's tool.[21]

Again following Hume, Schopenhauer thus contends that one's intellect can be and often is disturbed by the will, i.e. by affects, urges, needs, inclinations and passions:

> In our enemies we see nothing but shortcomings, in our favourites nothing but merits and good points, and even their defects seem amiable to us. (...) What is opposed to our party, our plan, our wish, or our hope often cannot possibly be grasped and comprehended by us, whereas it is clear to the eyes of everyone else; on the other hand, what is favourable to these leaps to our eyes from afar. What opposes the heart is not admitted by the head. (…) Thus is our intellect daily befooled and corrupted by the deceptions of inclination and liking. (*WWR* II, 217-218)

The will affects our judgments and clouds our thoughts, and our intellect always functions in

the service of the will. Everything that takes place without the intellect – an organism's procreation, development and preservation, the healing of wounds, the critical stage that brings about salvation during an illness, the instinctive skills of animals, etc. – turns out infinitely better than what happens with the help of the intellect.[22] Thus Schopenhauer distances himself completely from the "ancient and universal error" of the Western tradition, which reveres intellect and reason as the most perfect hallmark of humanity.[23] For Schopenhauer, however, the intellect is "at bottom tertiary, since it presupposes the organism, and the organism presupposes the will." (*WWR* II, 278)

Still, Schopenhauer believes that cognition which is not in the service of the will remains possible. Schopenhauer calls this kind of cognition *aesthetic*, for it occurs when we are touched by the beauty (or sublimity) of an object: a landscape, a sunset, a painting, a poem, and so on. Aesthetic perception entails that one becomes conscious of oneself as a *pure, will-less, timeless subject of knowledge*.[24] In aesthetic consciousness, the "real self" – i.e. the self as willing – appears to have vanished and has been replaced, as it were, by a "better" or "higher" consciousness. This "consists in knowledge turning away entirely from our own will, and thus leaving entirely out of sight the precious pledge entrusted to it, and considering all things as though they could never in any way concern the will. For only thus does knowledge become the pure mirror of the objective inner nature of things." (*WWR* II, 367) I lose myself entirely in the perceived object and the ordinary rules about experience and knowledge need no longer apply.[25] "Everything is beautiful only so long as it does not concern us" (WWR II, 374), i.e. it does not concern our "real self," for in aesthetic contemplation our willing self has been discarded. The ordinary operations of our perceptual and cognitive faculties are suspended and we reach a superior state of mind.

We usually discern the objects around us by means of (empirical) concepts: this is how we ordinarily perceive external objects and become empirically aware of the world.

Aesthetic consciousness or awareness is superior, for we enter a state of unusual tranquillity, in which individual striving, suffering, desiring, and worrying no longer occur. The sight of the aesthetically pleasing object makes us "objective", Schopenhauer says, "that is to say, in contemplating it we are no longer conscious of ourselves as individuals, but as pure, will-less subjects of knowing" (*WWR* I, 209; see also *WWR* I, 195 and *passim*). This heightened, "objective" state of consciousness discards the embodied, willing self and frees us from the pressures and torments of willing and from, what Plato calls, the "desires and fears and all sorts of fancies and a great deal of nonsense" caused by the fact that we are *embodied* creatures (*Phaedo* 66 a-b).[26]

Nevertheless, though Schopenhauer's idea of the "better consciousness" is obviously reminiscent of Plato's pure knowledge of the soul, there are striking differences in their analyses of the nature of beauty and aesthetic experience. For Plato, an experience of beauty is a festive celebration of Being: it is to *feel alive*.[27] Plato holds that beauty ultimately satisfies *eros*, whereas Schopenhauer provides a quite different account of the aesthetic experience. Instead of soothing the will by satisfying it, aesthetic perception is purified of all willing, i.e. of our interests, passions, affects, and needs. Aesthetic experience cannot occur without an awareness of the disappearance of the willing self, and "with it its suffering and sorrow" (*WWR* II, 371). Thus a will-less, aesthetic experience is by definition pleasurable, for it only occurs when the sufferings, caused by the will, disappear from consciousness. Aesthetic perception offers no fulfilment of our personal desires, but is *detached from* our desires, and therefore offers freedom from the thraldom of our endless willing, striving and, by implication, our suffering. Hence, the aesthetic state of mind cheers and comforts, as our will is momentarily stilled[28]:

> The storm of passions, the pressure of desire and fear, and all the miseries of

> willing are then at once calmed and appeased in a marvellous way. For at the moment when, torn from the will, we have given ourselves up to pure, will-less knowing, we have stepped into another world, so to speak, where everything that moves the will, and thus violently agitates us, no longer exists. (*WWR* I, 197)

Schopenhauer does not, however, consider aesthetic perception merely as a heightened state of awareness, but also as a superior kind of *cognition*: "we have given ourselves up to pure, will-less *knowing* (emphasis added)", and "the colour and form of things stand out in their true and full significance" (*WWR* II, 373). Aesthetic experience has no mere therapeutic value, but also a high cognitive value. Since ordinary empirical cognition is always guided and even determined by personal needs, affects and interests – in short, by our will – it is, Schopenhauer holds, necessarily inferior to cognition that occurs independent of them. Ordinary people are usually confined to the inferior, distorted kind of knowledge. By contrast, it is a sign of "the *gift of genius*" to be able to attain (and maintain) the superior state of dispassionate, "pure perception" and cognition:

> the capacity to remain in a state of pure perception, to lose oneself in perception, to remove from the service of the will the knowledge that originally existed only for this service … the ability to leave entirely out of sight our own interest, our willing, and our aims, and consequently to discard entirely our own personality for a time, in order to remain *pure knowing subject*, the clear eye of the world. (*WWR* I, 185-186)

This kind of superior cognition, freed from the will's urges, automatically implies that we "relinquish the ordinary way of considering things … and let our whole consciousness be

filled by the calm contemplation" of the object, and "continue to exist only as pure subject, as clear mirror of the object" (*WWR* I, 178). Yet it also yields knowledge of *what* the object truly is: aesthetic consciousness is not merely an escape from the torments of willing and, hence, suffering, but also (and perhaps more importantly) an insight into *what* things really are. As Schopenhauer puts it, "we no longer consider the where, the when, the why, and the whither in things, but simply and solely the *what*." (*WWR* I, 178) Aesthetic, will-less perception – which Schopenhauer identifies with Spinoza's notion of knowledge 'sub aeternitatis specie', i.e. from the standpoint of eternity – offers insight into the timeless kernel of things, i.e. the universal essences of the perceived objects, beyond mere appearance. Schopenhauer calls these eternal essences the (Platonic) Ideas, the "eternal forms" behind the mere appearances of common empirical cognition. Although Schopenhauer here clearly moves beyond Kant's analysis of aesthetic disinterestedness, and adopts the more Platonic vision of knowledge of eternal forms or Ideas, identifying Schopenhauer's conception of the Ideas with the Platonic original may be too hasty.

Two considerations seem to stand in the way of identifying Schopenhauer's Ideas with their Platonic counterparts. First, whereas Plato held that knowledge of the eternal forms of things involves conceptual thought and ratiocination, Schopenhauer maintains that reason is an instrument of the will that helps us survive as living organisms in the natural world. For Schopenhauer, the timeless Ideas are not known through abstract reasoning, but *in* and *through* perception (*Anschauung*) of natural objects or works of art, combined with an idealising act of our imagination. Whereas "the common, ordinary man … can direct his attention to things only in so far as they have some relation to his will", and "always demands only knowledge of the relations, the abstract concept of the thing is sufficient"; in aesthetic cognition, however, one "strives to grasp the Idea of each thing, not its relation to other things." (*WWR* I, 187-188) Thus the Ideas – i.e. the alleged objects of aesthetic cognition –

are known by a peculiar type of *imaginative perception*, which does not involve any concepts at all. This statement clearly echoes Kant's opinion that a pure aesthetic judgment cannot be based on (determinate) concepts, but also radically departs from Kant, for Schopenhauer claims that an aesthetic experience is first and foremost a kind of *objective insight*, whereas Kant argues that it is based on a reflecting judgement, which is grounded in a disinterested feeling of pleasure or displeasure, and does not contribute to cognition at all.[29] Although the gap between Kant's and Schopenhauer's aesthetics may not be as big as some commentators suggest[30], Schopenhauer's discussion of the will-less, timeless state of consciousness – which is purportedly the essence of the aesthetic attitude – is definitely more Platonic than Kantian. Still, as noted above, Schopenhauer's so-called '(Platonic) Ideas' appear less Platonic than Schopenhauer is prepared to admit.

A further worry about a hasty identification of Plato's and Schopenhauer's theories of Ideas is that, for Plato, the Ideas are not merely the eternal universals behind the mere empirical appearances of things, but also the ontological foundation of the whole world, whereas in Schopenhauer's view, the Ideas are situated metaphysically 'between' the thing-in-itself (the will) and the empirical appearances. The Ideas are not the fundamental components of reality, but the most adequate objectivations or manifestations of the one ultimate essence of the world, namely will. Schopenhauer argues that, since the categories of space and time, and the understanding or intellect (operating according to the principle of sufficient reason), ground and even "construct" the world as representation, this world is divided into numerous distinct objects, and is therefore characterised by plurality. Those categories do not apply to the thing in itself, which belongs to the noumenal world, hence (Schopenhauer argues) the thing-in-itself cannot be characterised by plurality. Schopenhauer reasons as follows:

(1) the categories of space, time and the categories of the understanding – the

principle of sufficient reason – create the objective world (the world as representation);

(2) the world as representation therefore consists of multiple representations or different objects;

(3) the principle of sufficient reason is limited to the world as representation;

(4) the principle of sufficient reason does not apply to the thing-in-itself (the noumenon);

(5) the thing-in-itself beyond all phenomena cannot be characterised by multiplicity;

(6) the Ideas are characterised by multiplicity;

(7) the Ideas cannot be the noumenal thing-in-itself.

These claims face a number of problems, not least because they are further enmeshed in Schopenhauer's basic metaphysical view that the thing-in-itself is the will, which automatically implies that the will ought to remain unknowable, and Schopenhauer does not (always) recognise this.[31] Moreover, his analysis of empirical perception is combined with and, I would add, unnecessarily clouded by his semi-Platonic account of the Ideas, which he argues to be the adequate objectivations (or manifestations) of the metaphysical will. Schopenhauer seems rather confused when he contends that the Platonic Ideas reveal the antagonistic nature of the metaphysical will, which they express by struggling to conquer their spot in the universe and by fighting the other Ideas to be able to manifest themselves as clearly as possible in the empirical world.

For the purposes of his aesthetics, however, it is quite unnecessary to think that the Platonic Ideas are the "adequate objectivations" of the thing-in-itself, i.e. the will. Instead, what might ground aesthetic cognition is the idea that, though we are confronted with

empirical objects, it is possible to view those empirical objects in a way that transcends their merely empirical characteristics. The thought would then be that aesthetic cognition requires an impersonal "universal standpoint" through which not only the perceived object but also the self or "I" is viewed, as it were, from nowhere. The individual object does not vanish, but is – as Robert Wicks aptly puts it – "perceived in light of its universal significance."[32] How this universal point of view is to be attained by creatures whose nature is essentially *willing*, which inclines them to perceive, think, and judge from their own egocentric (and even egoistic) viewpoint, remains nonetheless puzzling.[33] The doctrine about the Platonic Ideas is rather extravagant and may even be superfluous, but to dismiss it does not automatically dispense with an aesthetics founded upon will-less contemplation and "objective" cognition.

4. Concluding Remarks

Even without thorough scrutiny of Schopenhauer's metaphysics of the will, his accounts of (ordinary and aesthetic) perception offer a critical supplement to empiricist and Kantian theories of cognition and perception. His analysis of the role of the understanding in perception may be closer to Kant's than he conceded, yet his subtle analysis of the role of the senses, expounded above, none the less adds a more scientifically plausible and physiologically corroborated account to Kant's transcendental conception of perception and understanding.

Schopenhauer also makes a radically un-Kantian move, when he suggests that the intellect is driven by human willing, i.e. needs, urges, affects, desires. The understanding is no mere transcendental faculty, but a so-called natural phenomenon: the cerebral system helps the organism survive, and express (and fulfil) its desires, needs and wishes. The brain helps

the will appear in the phenomenal world. In aesthetic perception, however, the cerebral system gives up, as it were, this subservient role and now operates *detached from* the will. This will-less, aesthetic cognition is pleasurable, not merely because it offers relief from the sufferings that inescapably trouble the "willing self", but also because it procures a heightened state of awareness that transcends ordinary cognition of the phenomenal world and, moreover, generates a deeper insight into the timeless universals behind the mere appearances of things. Thus Schopenhauer not only moves beyond Kant's transcendental epistemology, supplementing it with an illuminating account of ordinary perception and cognition, but also overcomes Kant's aesthetics by showing that the value of a genuine aesthetic experience cannot be reduced to the value of the (disinterested) pleasure it affords.

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[1] I use the following abbreviations to refer to Schopenhauer's writings: *FR*: *On the Fourfold Root of the Principle of Sufficient Reason* [*Ueber die vierfache Wurzel des Satzes vom zureichenden Grunde*, 1813; second edition, 1847]; *WWR*: *The World as Will and Representation* [*Die Welt als Wille und Vorstellung*, 1819; second extended edition in two volumes, 1844]. All references give page numbers from the translations listed in the bibliography; page numbers are preceded, where appropriate, by a volume number.

[2] Nevertheless, this misconception has had serious consequences for the reception of Schopenhauer's thinking, especially in Anglo-American philosophy in the early years of the twentieth century, which was particularly squared off against the idealism studied in British universities up until the end of the nineteenth century (B. Russell and G. E. Moore were both schooled in the Hegelian tradition, a tradition which they later repudiated.) The fate to which Fichte, Schelling, and also Schopenhauer fell probably had much to do with the dislike of any form of idealism. It is quite ironic that Schopenhauer was lumped in with his arch-enemy, Hegel. See Brian Magee, *The Philosophy of Schopenhauer* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), 436: "The possibility of rejecting Fichte, Schelling and Hegel while preserving a view of Kant and Schopenhauer as two of the greatest philosophers of all time (which of course was Schopenhauer's own view of the matter) seems at that period to have occurred to very few people."

[3] *WWR* I, 3: "Therefore no truth is more certain, more independent of all others, and less in need of proof than this, namely that everything that exists for knowledge, and hence the whole of this world, is only object in

relation to the subject, perception of the perceiver, in a word, representation."

[4] *WWR* I, 18: "Life and dreams are leaves of one and the same book. The systematic reading is real life, but when the actual reading hour (the day) has come to an end, and we have the period of recreation, we often continue idly to thumb over the leaves, and turn to a page here or there without method or connexion. We sometimes turn up a page we have already read, at others one still unknown to us, but always from the same book."

[5] See *WWR* I, 16. Schopenhauer arguably offers a sound hypothesis, since he merely wishes to point out that there cannot be a *logical* refutation of the presupposition that the whole of life is a dream. For a similar line of reasoning, see Bertrand Russell, *The Problems of Philosophy* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989), 10: "There is no logical impossibility in the supposition that the whole of life is a dream, in which we ourselves create all the objects that come before us. But although this is not logically impossible, there is no reason whatsoever to suppose that it is true; and it is, in fact, a less simple hypothesis, viewed as a means of accounting for the facts of our own life, than the common-sense hypothesis that there really are objects independent of us, whose action on us causes our sensations."

[6] *WWR* I, 17: "The only certain criterion for distinguishing dream from reality is in fact none other than the wholly empirical one of waking, by which the causal connexion between the dreamed events and those of waking life is at any rate positively and palpably broken off."

[7] See *WWR* II, 5: "philosophy is essentially *idealistic.* Realism, which commends itself to the crude understanding by appearing to be founded on fact, starts precisely from an arbitrary assumption, and is in consequence an empty castle in the air, since it skips or denies the first fact of all, namely that all we know lies within consciousness."

[8] See *WWR* II, 5: "If accordingly we attempt to *imagine an objective world without a knowing subject*, then we become aware that what we are imagining at that moment is in truth the opposite of what we intended, namely nothing but just the process in the intellect of a knowing being who perceives an objective world, that is to say, precisely that which we had sought to exclude."

[9] See especially *WWR* I, 437: "The *Transcendental Aesthetic* is a work of such merit that it alone would be sufficient to immortalize the name of Kant."

[10] See Paul Guyer, "Schopenhauer, Kant, and the Methods of Philosophy," in *The Cambridge Companion to Schopenhauer*, ed. Christopher Janaway (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 93-137. See also his "Perception and Understanding: Schopenhauer, Reid, and Kant," in *A Companion to Schopenhauer*, ed. Bart Vandenabeele (Malden, MA.: Wiley-Blackwell, forthcoming), to which I am indebted.

[11]As Ernst Cassirer claims. See Ernst Cassirer, *Das Erkenntnisproblem in der Philosophie und Wissenschaft der neueren Zeit*, volume III, (Hildesheim / New York: Georg Olms, 1971), 433: "Not the world, but the emergence of subjective eyesight in the world is the fact which he truly describes and for which he sets out to find a hypothetical interpretation. The merit of his doctrine lies in the preparation of physiological optics; but the price paid for this achievement in natural sciences is that it has yielded an arbitrarily narrow and limited characterisation of the critical theory's pure concept of a priority." (My translation.)

[12] As Paul Guyer argues. See note 10.

[13] Jean Paul: born Johann Paul Friedrich Richter (1763-1825), a belletrist renowned for his *Vorschule der Ästhetik*. Schopenhauer refers to him frequently.

[14] *WWR* II, 28: "Sight is an active, hearing a passive sense. Therefore, sounds affect our mind in a disturbing and hostile manner, the more so indeed, the more active and developed the mind. They can destroy all ideas, and instantly shatter the power of thought." Reason is the abstract power of thinking that receives what the understanding and the senses deliver, and is thus bound to the perceiving ear. Reason transforms empirical intuitions into abstract concepts.

[15] See *WWR* I, 199: "For sight, unlike the affections of the other senses, is in itself, directly, and by its sensuous effect, quite incapable of pleasantness or unpleasantness of *sensation* in the organ; in other words, it has no direct connection with the will. Only perception arising from the understanding can have such a connection, which then lies in the relation of the object to the will."

[16] This can be contrasted with Schopenhauer's remarks about the especially favourable effect of sunlight on the aesthetic quality of buildings.

[17] Schopenhauer seemed aware of this phenomenon. See *WWR* II, 25: "Moreover, the apparent immediacy of perception, resting on its entirely intellectual nature, by virtue of which, as Euler says, we apprehend the things

themselves as lying outside us, has an analogy in the way in which we feel the parts of our own body, especially when they experience pain, as is generally the case as soon as we feel them."

[18] Bertrand Russell gives the example of our perception of the sun. The sun that I see at this moment is the sun of about eight minutes ago. See *The Problems of Philosophy* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989), 16-17: "it takes about eight minutes for the sun's light to reach us; thus, when we see the sun we are seeing the sun of eight minutes ago. So far as our sense-data afford evidence as to the physical sun they afford evidence as to the physical sun of eight minutes ago; if the physical sun had ceased to exist within the last eight minutes, that would make no difference to the sense-data which we call 'seeing the sun'."

[19] See, for instance, *WWR* II, 3, 24, 47, 286, 403.

[20] See *WWR* II, 24: "The fact that *in the case of seeing* the transition from the effect to the cause occurs quite unconsciously, and thus the illusion arises that this kind of perception is perfectly direct and consists only in the sensation of sense without the operation of the understanding - this fact is due partly to the great perfection of the organ, and partly to the exclusively rectilinear action of light. In virtue of this action, the impression lends itself to the place of the cause, and as the eye has the capacity of experiencing most delicately and at a glance all the nuances of light, shade and colour, and outline, as well as the data by which the understanding, in the case of impressions on this sense, takes place with a rapidity and certainty that no more allow it to enter consciousness than they allow spelling to do so in the case of reading. In this way, therefore, the illusion arises that the sensation itself gives us the objects directly."

[21] For the intellect as the instrument or tool (*Werkzeug*) of the will, see: *WWR* I, 292; II, 205, 214, 215, 220, 225, 229, 398, and 641.

[22] See *WWR* II, 269: "If the *intellect* were not of a secondary nature, (...) then everything that takes place without it, in other words, without the intervention of the representations, such, for example, as generation, procreation, the development and preservation of the organism, the healing of wounds, the restoration or vicarious repair of mutilated parts, the salutary crisis in diseases, the works of animal mechanical skill, and the activity of instinct in general, would not turn out infinitely better and more perfect than what takes place with the aid of the intellect, namely all the conscious and intended achievements and works of men. Such works and achievements, when compared with those others, are mere botching and bungling."

[23] See *WWR* II, 199: "The remarkable phenomenon that in this fundamental and essential point all philosophers have erred, in fact have completely reversed the truth, might be partly explained, especially in the case of the philosophers of the Christian era, from the fact that all of them aimed at presenting man as differing as widely as possible from the animal. Yet, they felt vaguely that the difference between the two was to be found in the intellect and not in the will."

[24] On the pure will-less subject of knowledge, see especially *WWR* II, 367-375.

[25] *WWR* I, 178: "[We] sink ourselves completely therein, and let our whole consciousness be filled by the calm contemplation of the natural object actually present. (...) We *lose* ourselves entirely in this object, to use a pregnant expression." See also *WWR* I, 185: "Only through the pure contemplation describe above, which becomes absorbed entirely in the object, are the Ideas comprehended." See also *WWR* I, 185-186: "Genius is (...) the ability to leave entirely out of sight our own interest, our willing, and our aims, and consequently to discard entirely our own personality for a time."

[26] Plato, "Phaedo," in *The Last Days of Socrates*. Trans. Hugh Tredennick (London: Penguin, 1969), 111.

[27] *In this respect*, Kant's analysis of beauty is closer to Plato's than Schopenhauer's. See Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Judgment*, § 1, *Akademie-Ausgabe*, 5: 204.

[28] See Bart Vandenabeele, "Schopenhauer on Aesthetic Understanding and the Values of Art," *European Journal of Philosophy*, 16 (2008): 194-198 for a more extended account of the differences between Plato's and Schopenhauer's views of the experience of beauty.

[29] See Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Judgment*, § 3, *Akademie-Ausgabe*, 5: 206: "the presentation is referred solely to the subject and is not used for cognition at all, not even that for that by which the subject *cognizes* himself." See also, *ibid.*, 20: 222-223.

[30] See, for example, Christopher Janaway, *Beyond Selflessness: Reading Nietzsche's Genealogy* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 194: "The vision behind Schopenhauer's theory of aesthetic experience is Platonic, not Kantian."

[31] An exception can be found in *WWR* II, 198, where he concedes that "being known of itself contradicts being-

in-itself."

[32] Robert Wicks, *Schopenhauer*, (Malden, MA.: Blackwell, 2008), 98.

[33] See Bart Vandenabeele, "Schopenhauer's View of Aesthetic Experience," in *A Companion to Schopenhauer*, ed. Bart Vandenabeele (Malden, MA.: Wiley-Blackwell, forthcoming).